Securing the Population from Insurgency and Subversion in the Second Emergency (1968-1981)

Submitted by Weichong Ong, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Research in History, August 2010.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Abstract

Divided into five core chapters, this thesis examines the success and failures of both the insurgent that was the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and the counterinsurgent (Malaysia and to a lesser extent Singapore) during the Second Emergency (1968 to 1981). The conflict is set within a paradigm built upon the four key touchstones of utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. Anglo-American Counterinsurgency practice in Malaya and Vietnam as well as the doctrine of People's War and Maoist mass persuasion will be comparatively examined within the framework of the abovementioned four touchstones to set the backdrop for the debate on the Second Emergency. The CPM's strategy of anti-colonial armed struggle from 1948 to 1960 will be compared with that of its post-colonial armed revolution between 1968 and 1981. Key themes exploited by the CPM in its propaganda to revolutionise the thoughts and actions of its target audience and its impact will be analysed. Likewise, the counter-measures adopted by both the Malaysian and Singapore governments in response to communist insurrection and subversion will be elucidated. A significant part of this thesis is dedicated to an assessment of the Malaysian COIN doctrine of KESBAN. In a comparative study of the continuities and departures between colonial and post-colonial COIN approaches and practices, the strategies adopted in the First Emergency will be juxtaposed with that of the Second - particularly the evolution of KESBAN and the concept of 'Comprehensive Security'. Most importantly, the fundamental 'Why' question, namely - Why did the emergent post-colonial states of Malaysia and Singapore triumph; and why did the CPM's armed revolution failed yet again will be addressed. In providing an answer, this study revisits both the interior and exterior terrain of manoeuvre available to both sides of the conflict and explains why and how the CPM's strategy was inadequate for the geopolitical and geostrategic terrain of its day.
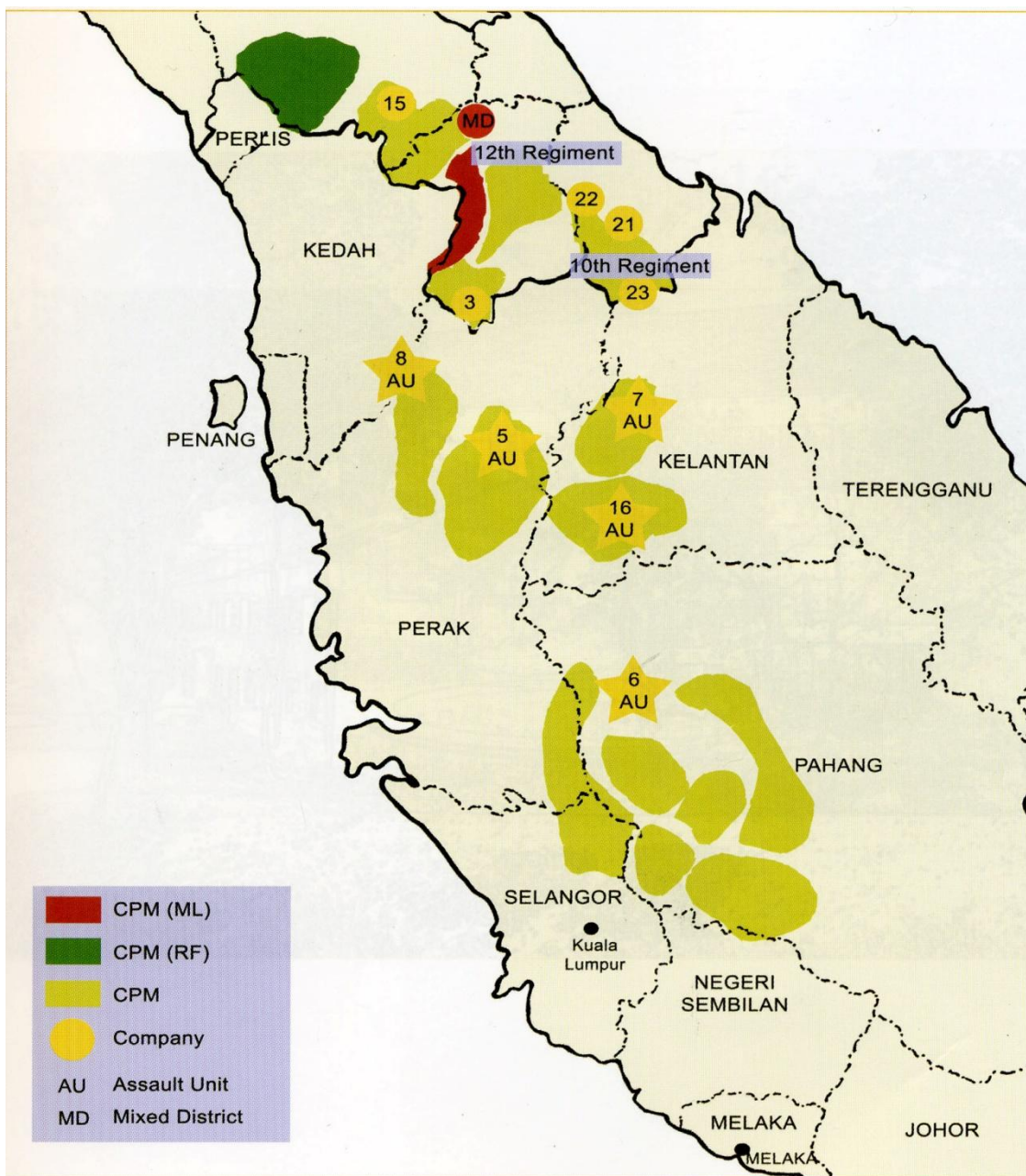
Contents

Page

Maps (pages 4 and 5)

CPM Strength and Disposition in Peninsular Malaysia and Southern Thailand – 1977

Major Units of the Malaysian Army and Police Field Force in Peninsular Malaysia - 1977

Map Showing CPM Strength and Disposition in Peninsular Malaysia and Southern Thailand – 1977

(Copyright © 2009 Internal Security Department, Singapore)

Map Showing Major Units of the Malaysian Army and Police Field Force in Peninsular Malaysia – 1977

5

1.

Introduction: Revolution and Counterrevolution in Southeast Asia

Why the Second Emergency Matters

In the words of Julian Paget, the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) is a: 'classic example of a communist takeover bid, based on insurgency and guerrilla warfare'.[1] The Emergency is also a rare model of an insurgency defeated by the state and, as such, 'the' paradigm for successive insurgency/counter-insurgency (COIN) operations. Reflecting this singular status, there is now an extensive literature on the subject; particularly COIN concepts and doctrines derived from the methods and approaches of the forces deployed throughout the Emergency's lengthy course. The significance of propaganda to the containment of the Communists' appeal among the civilian population, Malaya's ethnic Chinese community in particular, has been extensively documented by both Susan Carruthers and Kumar Ramakrishna in their seminal works on the issue.[2] Their work, although revisionist in other respects, is orthodox in its central focus on the decisive middle years of the Malayan Emergency, between the formulation of the Briggs Plan from 1950 to Sir Gerald Templer's implementation of Britain's 'Hearts and Minds' approach thereafter. This highpoint of the Emergency is discussed in more detail below. What becomes clear is that there is no comparable body of work – either in quantity or quality – relating to the Second Malayan Emergency, the focus of this thesis.

The Malayan Communist Party's (MCP) decisive defeat in 1960 led many academics and COIN experts to overlook the resurrection of its armed struggle in 1968 (known after 1964 as the Communist Party of Malaya or CPM for short). If only by implication, then, most scholars continue to regard the so-called 'Second Emergency' (1968-1989) as a non-event. Most, if not all, recent published work on the MCP tends to focus on the earlier Malayan Emergency. In 2004, the proceedings of a two-day workshop that placed Chin Peng, Secretary General of MCP alongside a panel of invited scholars at the Australian National University (ANU) in 1999, were published as *Dialogues With Chin*

---

[1] Julian Paget, 'Emergency in Malaya' in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *Guerrilla Strategies: A Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, 270.
[2] Susan Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds:British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-insurgency 1944-1960* and Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: the Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds 1948-1958*.

Peng. These proceedings provided valuable insight into the strategic direction of the MCP's armed struggle, but the questions posed by the panel of scholars were overwhelmingly concentrated within the timeframe of the Malayan Emergency. The focus on the late colonial period continues. Typical in this regard is Anthony Stockwell's most recent article on Chin Peng, which begins with the quote: 'Fifty years ago, the name Chin Peng was feared almost as much as Osama bin Laden is today. So wrote the Hong Kong-based journalist, Philip Bowring…it was a time when Chin Peng was Britain's enemy number one in Southeast Asia'.[3] Unsurprisingly, Stockwell's article is overwhelmingly concerned with Chin Peng's role in events rooted in the Emergency period. What transpired after 1960 - namely, the reorganisation of the CPM and the subsequent revival of its armed struggle - has yet to receive anything like the attention heaped upon the Emergency. We still await rigorous scholarship that deals specifically with the Second Malayan Emergency period, whether its antecedents from the early sixties or its aftermath and final conclusion in 1989. If the historiography of this period remains underdeveloped, the obvious question to ask is: why? A partial answer lies in the central part played in official discourse by nation-building narratives in Southeast Asia during the post-1945 decolonisation interregnum. And the Malaysian authorities, in particular, needed a unifying story to tell.

Malaysia, according to Stockwell 'was constructed from previously disconnected parts which lacked an integrating, pre-colonial core and whose commonality…rested merely on experience of various forms of British rule'.[4] With the exception of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand, much the same can be said of Singapore or any of the Southeast Asian states that were cobbled together in the wake of post-war imperial retreat. Post-war independence presented an opportunity for the newly emergent states of Southeast Asia to write their own national narrative unfettered by the shackles (if not the historical baggage) of the colonial state. Indeed, for many Southeast Asian countries, forging nationhood remains unfinished business. Wang Gung Wu, arguably Singapore's most established historian, makes no bones of the fact that in most contemporary Southeast Asian countries,

---

[3] A.J.Stockwell, 'Chin Peng and the Struggle for Malaya', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 16 (3), 2006, 279-297, 279.
[4] A.J.Stockwell, 'Forging Malaysia and Singapore: Colonialism, Decolonisation and Nation-building' in Wang Gung Wu (ed), *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005, 192-3.

historians are obliged to 'contribute to nation-building efforts by writing national history'.[5] Therefore, any readily available published work that touches on communism in Malaysia and Singapore from the late sixties through to the early eighties tends to be two-dimensional at best and is usually subsumed within a nation-building nationalist narrative.

At the other end of the spectrum, scholars outside the system have challenged the national narrative, constructing alternative histories. There are problems here too. Their quest for alternatives sometimes becomes an acrimonious politicised exercise that sets 'us', the marginalised, against 'them', the monolithic state dominated by the ruling party. The 'us' reject the dominant national narrative, casting themselves as actors speaking out from the shadows on behalf of political opponents who have been denied their right to be heard as agents of history. One such work, *Paths not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, depicted Singapore as a culturally, intellectually and politically dynamic space from 1945 until the mid-1970s at which point the People's Action Party (PAP)-dominated state began its monopolisation of contemporary historical discourse. In this line of argument, the thirty years from 1945 was a golden period in which fiery political contenders - students, labour unions and representatives from ethnic and religious communities - articulated alternative visions of Singapore's future and 'between them generated a ferment of ideologies, priorities, perspectives and social visions such as mainstream official Singapore politics had never known before, and has not seen since'.[6] Academically, this approach represents a rigorous alternative to the state-centric narrative. However, when read against the grain, it reads, not as a dispassionate assessment, but as a lament for a vision of Singapore that could have been: a pluralistic, kinder and gentler Singapore far from the path of state-directed global capitalism, elitist-meritocracy, ethnic essentialism and micro social-engineering.

With nation-building as the epicentre, historical debate tends to displace broader issues that cross national boundaries and the great diversity of ethnic (indigenous and immigrant) groups, languages, cultures that are to be found in Southeast Asia. Indeed, this

---

[5] Wang Gung Wu, 'Contemporary and National History: A Double Challenge' in Wang Gung Wu (ed), *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, 5.
[6] Michael D. Barr & Carl A. Trocki (eds), *Paths not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008, 6.

begs a deeper conceptual question: can the diverse stories of such a multitude of peoples and social groups be brought under the rubric of a single narrative? Thongchai Winichakul challenged Southeast Asian historians to explore new terrains in the past by 'shifting their angles of visions, to new sites…beyond the clichéd themes and jaded narratives of national history'.[7] Winichakul suggested that the concepts of interstices (the history of the locations and moments between being and not being a nation, becoming and not becoming a nation) and margins (where the inclusion and exclusion, integration and suppression of certain meanings take place) present open epistemological spaces where hitherto displaced or suppressed histories might be hidden.[8] However, like episodes in history, historians are very much the children of their particular milieu, bound and shaped by forces unique to a specific historical moment. In contemporary Southeast Asia, politics is deeply embedded in historiography and history-writing. This is particularly true for indigenous scholars who, unlike their foreign counterparts, do not have the luxury of distancing themselves from supporting or challenging the nation-building project. In short, it is difficult for Southeast Asian historians to remain apolitical or detached from their own national histories.

That said, indigenous scholars are increasingly taking up Winichakul's call to explore the interstices and margins of Southeast Asian history, but political constraints, whether real or imagined, remain. These constraints can be practical, such as access to documents and interview subjects. Or they may reflect the personal and professional challenges intrinsic to the crossing of the unseen Rubicons represented by what is politically permissible, transgression of which may result in 'intellectual martyrdom'. On the other hand, examining Southeast Asian history from a strategic perspective that presents the rationale of both the state and non-state actors allows for a less contentious non-partisan narrative that transcends interest groups. The American historian Paul Kratoska, for one, premised the understanding of modern Southeast Asia on two pillars. One was the examination of the processes through which emergent Southeast Asian states took over existing borders and administrative mechanisms during the transition to independence. The other was the ensuing internal transformation from loosely joined collectivities into unitary

---

[7] Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan Liok Ee (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003, ix-xvii.
[8] Thongchai Winichakul, 'Writing at the Interstices: Southeast Asian Historians and Postnational Histories in Southeast Asia' in Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan Liok Ee (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003, 11-2.

9

states under the dual impetus of nationalist ideology and administrative convenience.[9] In the case of Malaysia, the insurgency waged by the CPM was the formative experience during Malaysia's first three decades of independence. Indeed, the strong centralised state that has guided Malaysia in its economic success over the last thirty years or so has its origins in the Emergency period (1948-1960) and was further, and more fundamentally, rationalised in the Second Emergency period (1968-1989). Thus, both emergencies have much to offer in explaining the formation of the Malaysian state and, albeit to a lesser extent, the Singaporean state as well. In short, the experience of state-formation and the state-centric narrative is for better or worse, the dominant story of post-colonial Southeast Asia. Presenting a strategic picture of both emergencies – but placing the second emergency to the fore of an analysis situated within the framework of state formation - remains an 'untold story'.

In many ways, the Second Emergency has always lived in the shadow of the First. The strategic approaches adopted by both the state and the Malayan Communists in the Second Emergency were substantially influenced by the Emergency experience even though the international, political and socio-economic context of the 1970s was significantly different from that of the 1950s. The same can be said for the literature on the subject. From the current U.S. COIN manual FM 3-24 to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Journal, much has been said about the utility of the Malayan Emergency COIN paradigm for contemporary practice. Indeed, for many COIN practitioners, what is of relevance is the inaugural Malayan Emergency while the resurrection of the CPM's armed struggle remains under-researched. The fact is that, whereas the British successfully contained the Malayan Emergency within a decade with all effective MCP armed resistance at an end by 1958, it took the Malaysian government a further two decades to contain the Second Emergency. On this basis alone, the Second Emergency is a case study that deserves analysis in its own right. The asymmetry in sources is the main reason why Southeast Asian historians have been reticent about tackling the Second Emergency. To date, most of the open-access primary sources are available in British and Australian rather

---

[9] Paul H. Kratoska, 'Country Histories and the Writing of Southeast Asian History' in Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan Liok Ee (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003, 112.

than Malaysian and Singaporean archives. Even then, a significant portion of the Anglo-Australian material remains closed under the thirty-year rule and other statutory provisions that retain this secrecy in the interests of international relations. Some documents are there to be had, however. This PhD thesis draws upon archival material from the National Archives, London, UK (primarily the FCO and DEFE series); the National Australian Archives, Canberra, Australia; the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia; and restricted access documents from Malaysian and Singaporean sources (primarily transcripts of the CPM's clandestine radio broadcasts). Research interviews with military and diplomatic officers from the UK and Thailand are also incorporated into the chapters which follow.

From the little contemporaneous published material available, it is obvious that the CPM's revived armed struggle was a serious issue that required the combined efforts and resources of both the Malaysian and Thai governments to resolve. However, there remains a huge gap in the literature on the strategic and operational aspects of this conflict; particularly that of the CPM's strategic mass persuasion campaign and the counter-subversion efforts of the Malaysian and Singapore governments. To shed light on this much neglected subject, this thesis examines the 'Voice of the Malayan Revolution' (VMR); a clandestine radio broadcast of the CPM which ran from 1969 to 1981. The VMR constitutes the first concerted strategic propaganda campaign of the CPM that sought to win the hearts and minds of Malaysians and Singaporeans. Its goal was to subvert their respective societies and states, and so bring about the establishment of a People's Republic of Malaya (PRM). Through the VMR, major policy statements of the CPM, as well as those of its various front organisations, were disseminated, and the party's analysis of major political and socio-economic issues made known. National liberation struggles in other countries were also closely monitored and reported via the VMR, particularly those in Southeast Asia. Last but not least, the CPM's fraternal links with other Communist parties and issues concerning the international Communist movement were publicised over the VMR airwaves. The VMR transcripts examined in this thesis therefore provide an unprecedented insight into the mindset of the CPM plus those of its CCP sponsors in the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, considering the inaccessibility of CPM documents from the Second Emergency era, the VMR transcripts provide an alternative source from which the

strategy and the armed struggle of the CPM can be followed. The VMR compensates adequately, albeit not completely, for the asymmetry in available documentary sources that is still western-centric and written largely from the counter-insurgents' perspective.

While making extensive use of the VMR material, the main thrust of this thesis follows the response of the Malaysian and Singapore governments to the CPM's threat of communist insurrection and subversion. In doing so, the thesis will make plain that psychological warfare, or 'psywar', was an integral component of revolutionary war, and that the strategy and methodology of the 'revolutionary psywarrior' stood in marked contrast to that of his western counterpart or the post-colonial Southeast Asian militaries that increasingly came to look, think and act like western militaries. Any attempt at interpreting the psychological battles between the Malayan Communists and the state has largely been filtered through the western mind rather than that of the indigenous revolutionary. Drawing from empirical evidence of the CPM's strategic propaganda, it will be shown that the CPM's campaign on the psychological battlefields of the Second Emergency was fought according to the Maoist dictum that: 'thought determines action' rather than the western 'words and deeds' approach. [10] Advocates of propaganda in the Western school generally believe that effective propaganda, or persuasive communication represents the correlation and sycronisation of both words (psychological) and deeds (physical action). The Maoist propagandist, on the other hand, operated on the principle that the thoughts of the masses must first be revolutionised. Hence, rather than influence a target audience through a consistent 'words with deeds' approach, the Maoist mass persuasion approach sought to socialise the minds of the masses, thereby mobilising them into action.

The ideologically charged atmosphere of China's Cultural Revolution provided the perfect opportunity for the CPM to resurrect its revolutionary activities in Malaya and set the stage for the emergence of the VMR. In his autobiography, Chin Peng wrote that:

> Shortly before the Tonkin Gulf incident…I told the Chinese that the CPM had received Hanoi's agreement for the establishment of a clandestine broadcasting station

---

[10] Frederick Yu, *Mass persuasion in Communist China*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1964, 4.

12

in North Vietnam…Could they possibly supply the transmitting equipment? The answer was a rejection…Thus my idea for starting up our own revolutionary radio network had run into a substantial brick wall…but the situation would turn positive for us in the long run…By late January 1967, we had seen Mao. We were to be given the radio station facilities we had been seeking for three years. [11]

The CPM's clandestine radio network made its first official broadcast on 15 November 1969 from a restricted Chinese military base in Hunan, China, under the codename Project 691, transmitting as '*Suara Revolusi Malaya*' or VMR. Chin Peng was the *de facto* force behind these broadcasts. He vetted all transcripts, and personally ran the station. The VMR broadcasts were made in all four common languages of the Malayan Peninsula: Malay, Chinese, English and Tamil, as well as five other Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese and Teochew). The station's total workforce, including Chinese nationals, exceeded eighty.[12] The CPM's VMR campaign was, in retrospect, far more sophisticated than any of the propaganda methods employed by the Malayan Communists in the 'First Malayan Emergency'. This piece of evidence reveals two compelling insights. Firstly, the aim of the CPM's revolutionary war in Malaya was more than just the establishment of a 'People's Republic' in Malaya: it signified an effort to catalyse a greater Southeast-Asian revolution under the 'Red Banner' of Mao Tse-Tung. Secondly, subversive propaganda was an important weapon in a pan-global People's War waged according to the precepts of Mao's thought.

With the spread of revolutionary fervour from the Chinese Communists to their Cambodian, Burmese, Thai, Laotian, Indonesian and Malayan comrades, the 1960s and early 1970s was truly an era of revolutionary war in Southeast-Asia. The application of Maoist mass persuasion techniques in a revolutionary war not only of local, but regional, proportions makes the Second Malayan Emergency a compelling case study in the art of war. The 'Second Malayan Emergency' should thus be seen as integral to this effort to trigger greater Revolutionary war in Southeast Asia. More broadly, the 1960s and 1970s were also momentous years for Southeast Asia, which witnessed two historically

---

[11]Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History*, Singapore: Media Masters, 2003, 442-9.
[12] C.C Chin & Karl Hack (ed), *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, 368.

significant events in the development of the Cold War and changing patterns of relations with the region's massive Chinese neighbour. One was the establishment by 1975 of Communist regimes throughout Indochina (Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam), which was in no small part due to the varying degrees of military, financial, diplomatic and fraternal support from Beijing. Conversely, the death of Mao in 1976 precipitated a 'pragmatic' shift in Chinese foreign policy. By the mid-1970s, China's main strategic objective in Southeast Asia was to contain the regional expansion of Soviet political, military and economic influence. Achievement of this aim demanded Beijing's 'peaceful coexistence' with the non-communist governments of Asia including Singapore and Malaysia. As early as 1971, Zhou Enlai's strategy 'called for China to drop its open identification with and encouragement of illegal communist parties in those countries…and to return its support for fraternal friends back to the clandestine level'.[13] Beijing's tacit recognition of the Malaysian Federation and Singapore's independence meant that even clandestine support for the CPM (such as funding for VMR) soon proved impracticable for the Chinese. Deng was eventually persuaded by Lee Kuan Yew, then Prime Minister of Singapore to shut down the CPM's clandestine radio station in Hunan. The VMR's final broadcast was aired on 15 July 1981.

Taking these developments into account, this study seeks to elucidate the following three areas of historical significance:

1. The CPM's strategy for armed struggle in the Second Emergency;

2. The integral role of propaganda in Revolutionary People's War as well as the intended effect and the actual effectiveness of the CPM's subversive propaganda on its target population and most importantly;

3. The counterinsurgency (COIN) response and strategy of the Malaysian state and to a lesser extent the counter-subversion strategy of Singapore in the post-colonial era.

---

[13] Jay Taylor, *China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements*, New York: Praeger, 1976, 337.

14

The five core chapters to follow will explain the success and failures of both sides of the conflict within a paradigm built upon four key touchstones. These are the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. Only by coming to grips with these four touchstones of COIN/insurgency may the ultimate question of why the CPM's armed revolution failed be answered.

The CPM's Armed Struggle in Context

Before beginning this task in earnest, we need to examine the context of the CPM's armed struggle in Malaya. The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was founded in 1930, and during its first decade in existence its primary aim was to foment unrest against the colonial government of Malaya. After 1937, the Japanese threat caused a shift in MCP policies toward 'national as opposed to strictly labour issues', and the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) was formed to resist the Japanese occupation.[14] The MCP's active resistance to Japanese occupation during the Second World War had two consequences of lasting significance: Party cadres had amassed sizable weapons caches for future guerrilla actions, and, more significantly, the MCP had become the mouthpiece for Chinese nationalism in Malaya. The MPAJA was eventually disbanded, but it was replaced with a number of communist front organisations. One of the MCP's key post-war strategies was to gain political ascendancy through the control of labour. The MCP founded a multitude of worker groups, infiltrated older trade unions, and formed federations of unions in each of the nine Malay States as well as General Labour Union embracing the whole of Malaya.[15] Decisive influence over trade union organisation thus became the MCP's foremost weapon in its effort to control the masses. However, no mass urban uprising occurred and from 1948, the MCP switched its attention and strategy to mobilising the rural populace.

The Fourth Plenary meeting of the MCP in Singapore from 17 to 21 March 1948 marked a turning point in the party's strategy. Three resolutions were passed: the 'struggle

---

[14] James Robert Mallette Jr, *Operational Art in the Success of the Malayan Counterinsurgency Campaign*, Newport: Naval War College, 1997, 3.
[15] Ian Morrison, 'The Communist Uprising in Malaya', *Far Eastern Survey*, 17 (24), (December 1948), 281-286, 282.

for independence [taking] the form of a people's revolutionary war'; exhortation for the party to abandon its former 'ostrich policy of surrenderism' and preparation of the masses for an 'uncompromising struggle for independence without regard to considerations of legality'.[16] The MCP's open armed struggle against the British government, which began in June 1948, led to the declaration of a state of Emergency in Malaya on the 18th of that month. The MCP's application of 'enforcement terror' and violence 'without regard to considerations of legality' increasingly estranged the rural Chinese, the very masses that the party claimed to represent. Despite the surge in sporadic armed attacks from 1950 to 51, there was no real increase in the scale of the attacks; nor could the communists concentrate their forces in combined operations. The MRLA's armed operations were, on the whole, sporadic, lacking in concentrated firepower or strategic coordination, and attempts at establishing 'liberated areas' were beyond the MRLA's limited military capabilities. Unable to secure bases in populated areas the MCP had little hope of securing access to the rural population and winning them over through direct contact.

Realising the failure of its 1948 campaign, the MCP sought to salvage the situation by issuing the October Directives in 1951. These called on its cadres 'to cease unrestricted terrorism and to henceforth devote more resources to rebuilding relations with the public'.[17] These directives were issued from a position of weakness rather than strength, and were 'symptoms that showed that the MCP was in ideological trouble.'[18] In an analysis of the October Directives, John Coates concluded that the MCP's strategy 'missed its aim of extending the mass base and obtaining greater room for political manoeuvre….Its high point had been passed in 1951; from then on the party…had lost the initiative'.[19] According to Kumar Ramakrishna, by the end of 1951, the MCP had 'inadvertently provoked general aversion towards itself amongst the mass of the rural Chinese, a situation that proved impossible to redress, and all but destroyed any prospect of success in the shooting war'.[20] The October Directives was a proverbial case of 'too little too late', and 1951 proved the

---

[16] John Coates, *Suppressing insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992, 7.
[17] Kumar Ramakrishna, 'Transmogrifying Malaya: the Impact of Sir Gerald Templer (1952-54)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32(1), 2001, 79-92, 81.
[18] Anthony Short, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats: The Communist Insurrection in Malaya*, Singapore: Cultured Lotus, 2000, 309.
[19] John Coates, *Suppressing insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency*, 1948-1954, 69.
[20] Kumar Ramakrishna, Transmogrifying Malaya: the Impact of Sir Gerald Templer, 81.

crucial turning point of the Emergency. By then, the MCP had largely alienated its core of potential supporters - the rural population of Chinese labourers. It was also clear that, having failed to rally international opinion to its cause, the MCP would have to fight on alone without any prospect of external aid. By July 1960 the MCP was decisively defeated both militarily and politically and the Emergency was declared over.

In 1961, however, the MCP was persuaded by Deng Xiaoping to resurrect its revolutionary war in Malaya. According to Chin Peng: 'strategically, the whole region, Deng insisted, would become ripe for the sort of struggle we had been pursuing in Malaya for so long [and] there could be no question Deng had been persuasive'.[21] Aloysius Chin, Deputy Director of Malaysian Special Branch (MSB) Operations noted that since early 1964, the Malayan Communists were paying less and less attention to the 'constitutional struggle' and had developed a 'South Vietnam atmosphere of illegal militancy'.[22] By 1967 the Malayan Communists felt that the moment had come for the initiation of preparatory moves towards the eventual revival of the armed revolution in Malaya. Put simply, the resurgent tide of revolutionary armed struggle sweeping throughout the whole of Southeast Asia was decisive in spurring the Malayan Communists into action. On 1 June 1968, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of their armed struggle, the Malayan Communists (as we saw earlier, now known as the CPM), officially announced their intention to revive the armed struggle in Malaya.

Results were slow in coming. Between 1970 and 1974, the CPM was plagued by a series of internal splits. In January 1970, believing that the party was being penetrated by enemy agents, the leaders of the North Malayan Bureau (NMB) ordered a 'rectification campaign' that led to the execution of 200 recent recruits as well as a number of veterans. The 2nd District of the 12th Regiment refused to carry out the purge order of the NMB, and broke away from the CPM in March 1970. In the hope that Chin Peng would resolve the internal schism wrought by the 'rectification campaign, the 2nd District of the 12th Regiment continued to maintain wireless contact with the CPM. Chin Peng, however, ruled in favour of the NMB's liquidation campaign, and announced that: 'The Central Committee's policy of suppressing the counter-revolutionaries was correct and as the situation in the various

---

[21] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng*, 429-30.
[22] Aloysius Chin, *The Communist Party of Malaya: the Inside Story*, Kuala Lumpur:Vinpress, 1995, 145.

17

units is different, conclusion is reserved until a verdict by history'.[23] This decision compelled the 2nd District of the 12th Regiment to formally break with the CPM, and form its own party, the Communist Party of Malaya Marxist Leninist Faction in August 1974. The 8th Regiment similarly repudiated the NMB's purge order of January 1970 and, dismayed by Chin Peng's decision, officially announced its break from the CPM in 1973. Henceforth, orders from the 8th Regiment were no longer issued in the name of the 8th Regiment Revolutionary Committee of the Communist Party of Malaya, but that of the Revolutionary Faction (CPMRF).

The factionalism within the CPM did not result in an overall reduction of violence, but, rather, prompted the three CPM factions to compete more vociferously with one other. In consequence, according to Richard Clutterbuck, 'the terrorist incident rate in 1974-75 rose to its highest peak since 1958'.[24] Moreover, despite the three-way split, the CPM was able to bolster its ranks by actively recruiting amongst the Thai Malay population alienated by the policies of the Bangkok government, and, by 1979, the Party had managed to rebuild its combat strength to about 3,000 guerrillas.[25] The CPM's revived armed revolution during the Second Malayan Emergency lasted for twenty-one years from 1968 to 1989, nine years longer than its initial campaign beginning in 1948. It was only in 1989, after forty-one long years of armed struggle that the CPM finally laid down its arms and disbanded its guerrilla forces for good.

Comparing Psychological Warfare and Mass Persuasion

In order to assess the import of the CPM's struggle, as well as the form it took, we need to dwell a little on the meaning of psychological warfare. According to William Daugherty, the term psywar first appeared in English in a 1941 text on the use of propaganda, fifth column activities, and terror by the Third Reich.[26] Psywar itself, however, is a modern name for an ancient strategy. The 'importance of destroying the enemy's will to fight' is

---

[23] Ibid, 228.

[24] Richard Clutterbuck, *Conflict & Violence in Singapore & Malaysia: 1945-1983*, Singapore: Graham Brash, 1984, 286.

[25] Andrew Tan, 'Armed Rebellion in the Asean States: Persistence and Implications', *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence*, No.135, 2000, 83.

[26] Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 11.

18

stressed in Sun Tze's *The Art of War*.[27] Paul Linebarger viewed psywar in its broadest sense as 'the application of parts of the science called psychology to the conduct of war'.[28] At the strategic level, Daniel Learner conceived Psywar as 'a struggle for the attention, beliefs, and loyalties of whole populations'.[29] Christopher Simpson further elaborated on the concept of psywar as 'a group of strategies and tactics designed to achieve the ideological, political, or military objectives of the sponsoring organisation…through exploitation of a target audience's cultural-psychological attributes and its communication system'.[30] In sum, psywar can be defined as an instrument of war or struggle that influences the mind of an opponent for a strategic, operational or tactical purpose.

In Lasswellian terms, the 'most distinctive act' of Psywar is the use of 'means of mass communication in order to destroy the enemy's will to fight'.[31] Much along the same lines, Linebarger put forth the notion that Psywar 'is simple enough to understand if it is simply regarded as application of propaganda to the purposes of war'.[32] To that end, Linebarger groups propaganda at all levels - strategic, operational and tactical - into the following four categories:

4. Conversionary Propaganda that is designed to change the allegiance of individuals from one group to another;
5. Divisive Propaganda that attempts to split the enemy;
6. Consolidation Propaganda that is intended to insure compliance;
7. Counter-propaganda that seeks to refute enemy propaganda.[33]

Propaganda can be further classified according to its source as white (overt) propaganda, whereby the true source is clearly acknowledged; black (covert) propaganda which originates from a source 'other than the true one'; and grey propaganda which avoids

---

[27] Harold D Lasswell, 'Political and Psychological Warfare' in William E Daugherty (ed), *A Psychological Warfare Cas*ebook, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1964, 21.
[28] Paul M.A.Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, New York: Arno Press, 1972, 25.
[29] Daniel Lerner, *Psychological Warfare Against Nazi Germany: The Sykewar Campaign, D-Day to VE-Day*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971, 8.
[30] Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 11.
[31] Harold D Lasswell, *Political and Psychological Warfare*, 22.
[32] Paul M.A.Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, 40.
[33] Ibid, 46.

identification.[34] If the objective of psywar is to influence the mind, propaganda can be defined as an overt, covert or unidentified 'deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way' through the forms of conversionary, divisive, consolidation and counter-propaganda.[35] Philip Taylor argues that 'if war is essentially an organised communication of violence, propaganda and psychological warfare are essentially organised processes of persuasion'.[36] Indeed, propaganda is often taken for granted as the very embodiment of persuasion and of psywar itself.

Since the end of the Second World War, Western military thinkers have tended to view psywar or psyops (psychological warfare operations), largely as tactics to be employed in a theatre of operations, whereas Maoist theoreticians regarded mass persuasion and political agitation as a key component of class struggle and people's war. The objective of a western psywarrior is primarily to seek limited military or political gains without the use of military force. The aim of the Maoist revolutionary psywarrior, however, is to revolutionise the masses towards the complete destruction of an existing socio-economic-political-cultural system, and, in its place, establish a whole new world order. The COIN experience of the British in Malayan Emergency and that of the Americans in the Vietnam War provide an ideal testing ground from which to compare and contrast the West's attempt at countering revolutionary war in Southeast Asia with the concept of people's war and Maoist mass persuasion. The next section of the chapter shall thus examine the response of the West to a way of warfighting which differs fundamentally from western traditions. In doing so, it will elucidate the contrasting approaches that each took to winning the war.

The Culture of Revolution and Counterrevolution

In *Carnage and Culture*, Victor Davis Hanson suggested that western culture has evolved a way of war 'shackled rarely by concerns of ritual, tradition, religion, or ethics' which is so lethally precise that it now 'exercises global political, economic, cultural, and military

---

[34] William E Daugherty (ed), *A Psychological Warfare Case*book, 2.
[35] Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, 6.
[36] Ibid, 9.

power far greater than the size its territory or population might otherwise suggest'.[37] Hanson's denomination of a universal western way of war as one based on amoral military annihilation is perhaps far too sweeping, but there is a kernel of truth in his suggestion that culture is a prime determinant of how civilisations, nation states and non-state actors wage war. If the writings of Antoine Jomini and Carl Von Clausewitz have come to shape the western perspective on war, the same can be said of Sun Tze's impact in the Orient and ultimately on Maoist revolutionary war. Military commanders in the West, schooled in the Jominian and Clausewitzian tradition are trained to seek decisive military victories while their counterparts in the East eschew combat when possible. John Keegan views Oriental warfare as characterised by its peculiar traits of evasion, delay and indirectness, as distinct from the European way of war.[38] The key difference between the Oriental and Western way of war is, however, the ability of the former to 'do a better job of harnessing the perceptions and common sense of the people in contact with the enemy'.[39] This emphasis on working among the population to harness the perceptions of the masses, loosely defined as the 'Tao' in the very first page of Sun Tze's *The Art of War*, would reach its apogee with Mao's development of the people's war concept.

Although the French Revolution gave rise to the theory of 'the people in arms', 'the first great step toward mass citizen armies', the French Revolution 'unfolded in a way that never led to revolutionary war in the full modern sense'.[40] The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars were fought by patriotic citizen sons of France defending the French state against an external military threat of a conventional nature. The People's Revolutionary War that we know of today draws its inspiration not from revolutionary France, but from the experiences of Mao's supporters as he led the Chinese Red Army in its protracted war against both the Japanese in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) and the Nationalist Army of Chiang Kai Shek in the Chinese Civil War (1927-1950). Revolutionary People's War as Mao knew it, unfolds in three distinct stages. The first stage is defensive, characterised by guerrilla operations and the building up of

---

[37] Victor Davis Hanson, *Why the West has Won: Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam*, London: Faber and Faber, 2001.
[38] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, London: Pimlico, 2004, 397.
[39] John Poole, *Phantom Soldier: The Enemy's Answer to U.S. Firepower*, Emerald Isle, NC: Posterity Press, 2001, 13.
[40] John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, 'Revolutionary war' in Peter Paret (Ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy; From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986, 824.

21

an underground organization within the population. Preparation for the counter-offensive takes place in the second stage whereby the tempo of guerrilla operations is increased in tandem with the expansion of the underground infrastructure and population control. Upon reaching the point of equilibrium, the third and final stage, the strategic counter-offensive is launched culminating in open warfare until the achievement of complete revolutionary victory.[41] Waged amongst the masses, by the masses, and for the masses, People's War ultimately becomes war personified. People's War in its apotheosis obfuscates the lines between the people, army and the state, and in so doing forges a *rocher de bronze* link between the people, the revolutionary forces, and revolutionary ideology.

From Algeria to Vietnam, Mao's vision of people's war became the preferred weapon of anti-colonial revolutionary movements, communist or otherwise. Since the end of the Second World War, Maoist-inspired revolutions based on the people's war model have swept through Southeast Asia like a 'raging prairie fire'. The two most carefully studied of all the Southeast Asian revolutionary struggles are those of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) against the British in Malaya, and that of the Vietminh, Vietcong and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DVRN) in Vietnam. With good reason, these two case studies have become 'meta-models' in the art of revolutionary war and COIN. The successful containment of the Malayan Emergency spelt the only victory won by a Western democracy against practitioners of revolutionary warfare in Southeast Asia, while Vietnam stood out as the first case of people's war to have succeeded in defeating two major western powers in succession. As we shall see, even in the contemporaneous observations of British officialdom, parallels were drawn between American COIN practice in Vietnam and Malaysian COIN practice in Peninsula Malaysia as well as the similarities in Vietcong and CPM excellence in booby-trap and jungle fighting skills. Indeed, part of the following chapter of this study shall rely on the above two Southeast Asian COIN paradigms to explain the COIN approaches of the Americans (dominated by military annihilation), and the British (shaped by an imperial policing experience that led to the development of an integrated civil-military response that demanded the use of minimum force), as well as the

---

[41] Robert Thompson, *Revolutionary war in World Strategy 1945–1969*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1970, 5.

22

theory and application of Maoist revolutionary warfare in Southeast Asia – particularly the model adopted by the CPM.

The narrative is organised into five core chapters. The second chapter discusses the development of the First Emergency and the legacy that it left for the Second Emergency. The First Emergency and relevant reference points in the Vietnam War as well as the doctrine of People's War and Maoist mass persuasion will be comparatively examined within the four touchstones of COIN framework (utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda). In short, the second chapter sets the backdrop from which the revival of the CPM's armed struggle and the Malaysian government's response can be explained and analysed. The third chapter charts the CPM's strategy of anti-colonial struggle in the years 1948 to 1960 and then compares the methods adopted with those of its post-colonial struggle between 1968 and 1981. The fourth chapter follows a parallel approach, examining the CPM's application of revolutionary psychological warfare within the same period. Key themes exploited by the CPM in its propaganda to revolutionise the thoughts and actions of its target audience and its impact will be analysed. Chapter five will explore the counter-measures adopted by both the Malaysian and Singapore governments in their responses to the CPM's subversive propaganda. It also includes an assessment of the Malaysian COIN doctrine of KESBAN. Finally, this chapter links the strategies adopted in the First Emergency with that of the Second, particularly the evolution of KESBAN and the concept of 'Comprehensive Security'. In a comparative study of the continuities and departures between colonial and post-colonial COIN approaches and practices, the strategies adopted in the First Emergency will be juxtaposed with that of the Second. The sixth and final chapter addresses the fundamental 'Why' question, namely - Why did the emergent post-colonial states of Malaysia and Singapore triumph and why did the CPM's armed revolution failed yet again? In providing an answer, the chapter revisits both the interior and exterior terrain of manoeuvre available to the CPM in order to explain why and how its strategy was inadequate for the geopolitical and geostrategic terrain of its day.

2.

Fighting Big Wars and Small Wars: Approaches to COIN and Maoist Revolutionary Warfare in Perspective

By examining the British experience in the Malayan Emergency, we are able to identify a distinctive experience that shaped British military culture and determined the colonial authorities' response to revolutionary violence in Southeast Asia. There is no doubt that the Malayan Emergency had a profound impact in the decolonisation process and the shaping of the Malaysian state, its institutions, strategic culture and COIN approach to the Second Emergency. At the same time, the Americans were waging their own COIN campaign in Vietnam. That event, too, had an influence on the tactics of the CPM insurgents during the Second Emergency which subsequently shaped the operational and tactical responses of the post-colonial Malaysian security forces. Thus the insurgency in Vietnam will be addressed to the extent of defining American and Vietcong operational and tactical approaches of relevance to the Second Emergency. Each of the three campaigns (the First Emergency, the Second Emergency and the Vietnam War) should be treated as distinct events in their own right, but it is a worthwhile intellectual exercise to provide an overarching sense of how these conflicts relate to each other as part of a COIN narrative – particularly the continuities and departures between the First and the Second Emergency. In short, the main aim of this chapter is to briefly lay out the course of the First Emergency and the legacy that it left for the Second Emergency. This chapter provides the necessary conceptualisation and backdrop from which the development of the Malaysian government's response can be explained and rationalised. This chapter will also examine the concept of revolutionary people's war and contrast it against western perceptions of war-fighting which again sets the scene for discussing the CPM approach to revolutionary warfare in the subsequent chapters.

The conceptual focus of this chapter will be on the British and Maoist-revolutionary approaches in the four key components of strategy we identified earlier: the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. It is the state's performance within this interconnected quadrant ultimately

dictates the success or failure in countering revolutionary war - simply because it is through them that the power of the word and deed is most keenly felt by the population and the revolutionary. Many students of COIN have acknowledged the importance of the 'credibility' factor but few have addressed its pertinence within an integrated approach to COIN and counter-revolution. In a people's war, these four integral facets are of as much relevance to the revolutionary as it is to the counter-revolutionary. Since the revolutionary invariably starts out as the weaker military force, adopting an integrated population-centric approach tied to a credible cause is of paramount importance. Indeed it is in these four crucial areas of the Insurgency/COIN paradigm that the battle for hearts and minds takes place. With the First Emergency and the Maoist People's War model as the main reference points, this chapter will thus demonstrate that revolutionary wars are by their ontological nature, 'credibility wars' waged within the population. Hence, at both the strategic and operational levels, winning credibility amongst the target population is the cornerstone - the *sine qua non* in any COIN campaign or attempt to subvert and overthrow an existing government.

The development of a population-centric mindset during the course of a campaign or within an institution such as the army cannot be taken for granted. The mindset of the military organisation is to a large extent shaped by its collective operational experience. The predilection towards certain strategic and operational methods would give rise, in due course, to a particular military culture—the 'beliefs and attitudes within a military organisation that shape its collective preferences toward the use of force'.[42] Military culture shapes a nation's preference for limited wars or total wars, protracted wars or lightning wars, small wars or big wars. In the case of the British Army, Hew Strachan observed that Empire, and not Europe, has been the more continuous element in British military experience over the past 200 years. Since 1792, Britain has fought continental forces only in the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), the Crimean War (1853–1856), and the two World Wars (1914–1918 and 1939–1945). Thus, although the theory of war has been

---

[42] Robert M. Cassidy, 'The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The Salience of Military Culture', *Military Review* (May–June 2005), 53–59, 53.

Eurocentric, the practice of the British Army was shaped by colonial and imperial 'historic practices'.[43]

By the early twentieth century, the British Empire had reached its zenith, spanning every continent on the globe, while covering a quarter of the world's land mass. Since this age of 'high imperialism', the British Army's focus was on imperial policing that made small wars the norm, and large-scale annihilatory conventional war the exception. It was partly due to a history of limited resources that the British Army has not viewed technology as a "be-all and end-all solution".[44] Confronted with a hostile situation, the British have been more likely to opt for a low-profile integrated civil-military response that would eschew large commitments of military resources, with particular emphasis placed on the civil rather than military aspects. The failings and sometimes appalling excesses of the second South African War (1899–1902), the Anglo-Irish War (1919–1921), and the Amritsar Massacre (1919) drove home the crucial lesson of minimal force, and the principle that the government cannot act with the same abandon as its political opponents without undermining the very legitimacy of its own rule.[45] Shaped by its historical role as the primary agent of imperial policing, the British Army has largely been an instrument of limited war, built to achieve limited goals at minimal cost. Such is modern British military culture and the British way of war—a decentralised approach that avoids excessive use of military force, a preference for small rather than big, and one that draws strength from its past experiences and its inherent flexibility. In short, the bedrock of British COIN success lies, at least in theory, in a highly integrated minimal force COIN practice that neither alienates a target population nor undermines its legitimacy and credibility.

The American way of war, on the other hand, is the very antithesis of the British small war tradition. After the success of the American War of Independence (1775–1783), in which irregular action played a crucial role, the U.S. Army turned its back on small wars, and fought its wars under the precept that they were crusades to be

[43] Hew Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare' in David Chandler & Ian Beckett (Eds.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 422.
[44] Robert M. Cassidy, The British Army and Counterinsurgency, 59.
[45] Thomas R. Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919–1960*, New York: St Martins Press, 1990, 20.

won completely. The American Civil War (1861–1865), the Spanish-American War (1898), and both World Wars are all united by this idea. Since then, the focus of the U.S. military has been on waging large wars and using its untrammelled might to crush or bleed dry opponents. Russell Weigley's eponymous classic on the American way of war is as relevant today as it was published just at the end of the Vietnam War. Weigley puts that:

> In the history of American strategy, the direction taken by the American conception of war made most American strategists, through most of the span of American history, strategists of annihilation … the wealth of the country and its adoption of unlimited aims in war cut development short, until the strategy of annihilation became characteristically the American way in war.[46]

With American supremacy in material wealth, technology, and weaponry (both conventional and nuclear), the annihilative/attritional approach of destroying one's opponent via the overwhelming firepower and resources of its military juggernaut often seemed like the surest way to win a war. Indeed, Eliot Cohen defines the two dominant characteristics of American strategic culture as 'the preference for massing a large number of men and machines, and the predilection for direct and violent assault'.[47] Jeffery Record admits that; rooted in American political and military culture, Americans are frustrated with limited wars, particularly counterinsurgent wars … And Americans are averse to risking American lives … Expecting that America's conventional military superiority can deliver quick, cheap, and decisive success.[48] Thus, for most of the twentieth century, U.S. military culture, with the exception of the Marine Corps, generally embraced the conventional big war paradigm at the expense of developing a coherent strategic/tactical approach to small wars and insurgencies. The institutionalised preference for big wars proved to be a serious impediment in developing a successful

---

[46] Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of US Military Strategy and Policy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977, xxii.
[47] Eliot A. Cohen, 'The Strategy of Innocence? The United States, 1920–1945' in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox & Alvin Berstein (eds.), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 464.
[48] Jeffery Record, 'The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency', *Executive Summary*, No. 577 (September 2006), 1.

American COIN approach at all levels: strategic, operational and tactical. The consequence of such a failure was to rear its ugly head in Korea and, later, Vietnam.

Utility of Military Force: The British in Malaya

The performance of the U.S. military as a whole in both the First and the Second Indochina War from 1950 to 1972 depicts the triumph of the big guns tradition. One anonymous U.S. Army general remarked: 'I'll be damned if I will permit the U.S. Army, its institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions to be destroyed just to win this lousy war'.[49] Just as the U.S. Army could never bring itself to forsake its Jominian tradition, likewise, neither the Navy nor the Air Force could repudiate the Mahanian concept of seeking the decisive naval battle, and the Mitchellian notion of the decisiveness of air power.[50] To most of the top brass, going against this 'trinity of decisiveness' was tantamount to destroying the very fabric of the American military institution. Upon entry into military hostilities proper after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, the USAF sought to obliterate its opponents from the air, while the U.S. Army's strategy represented by that of General Westmoreland was focused on the destruction of the enemy's military forces. Last but not least, guided by its past COIN experience, the USMC pursued the diametric approach of political-military pacification rather than military annihilation. In truth, four distinct wars were waged by the U.S. military in Indochina: a conventional ground war waged by its army, a coercive strategic air campaign against North Vietnam, an aerial interdiction campaign against the Ho Chi Minh Trial, and an attempt by the USMC at political-military pacification. As different wars were run by separate command entities divided by service affiliation and irreconcilable differences on how to win the war, the American mission in Vietnam inevitably became 'Balkanised'.[51]

---

[49] Robert M. Cassidy, 'Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly', *Military Review* (September–October 2000), 41–53, 41.

[50] Antoine Henri de Jomini (1779–1869) and Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840–1914) propagated the ideas that the destruction of the enemy's forces was the main objective of warfare, on land and at sea respectively. On the other hand, Billy Mitchell (1879–1936), believed that air power with its ability to strike deep into the industrial vitals of the enemy was the decisive force that made all other military forces obsolete.

[51] Jeffery Record, 'How America's Own Military Performance in Vietnam Aided and Abetted the North's Victory' in Marc Jason Gilbert (ed.) *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, New York: Palgrave, 2002, 121–122.

Unlike their American cousins, the British successfully avoided the 'Balkanisation' of the Malayan Emergency through its traditional integrated civil-military approach, in which all armed services and security forces operated under civilian control and the maxim of minimum force. In an attempt to forge closer civil-military cooperation, improve efficiency and prompt coordinated action, Lieutenant General Harold Briggs, Director of Operations, reformed the Malayan administration by introducing the War Executive Committee (WEC) system at federal (FWC), state (SWEC) and district (DWEC) levels. The WEC was, in effect, a network-centric system that eliminated duplicate efforts, and provided a conduit for the rapid and effective exchange of intelligence that ultimately translated into better operational and tactical results on the ground. Briggs's tenure also saw the gradual move away from large-scale army sweeps towards a more effective system of small-unit patrols. He realised that the conduct of massive sweeps by large units were counterproductive. Instead, small patrols that utilized the skills of native trackers, intelligence provided by surrendered enemy personnel (SEP) and Special Branch infiltrators to target selected terrorists with the minimum force required were increasingly used.

The British regimental system facilitated the practice of decentralisation as British Army units were accustomed to deploying smaller units for extended periods throughout the empire.[52] A British general in Malaya quipped: 'As far as I can see, the only thing a divisional commander has to do in this sort of war is to go round seeing that the troops have got their beer'.[53] In the dense jungles and sprawling plantations of Malaya, battalion commanders perforce yielded tactical control of their companies, company commanders yielded control of an action to the platoon leader, who in turn utilised self-sufficient two-to-three day small patrols commanded by sergeants and corporals.[54] Not only did the flow of intelligence increase from the closer contact between soldiers, police, civil servants and the locals, given the initiative, young officers learned to react quickly and effectively. In short, the British Army realised and acknowledged that the key to operational success in small wars was not the preponderant use of force

---

[52] Robert M. Cassidy, The British Army and Counterinsurgency, 56.

[53] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1974, 61.

[54] Robert Brown Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, London: Macdonald & Jane's, 1976, 847.

exemplified by heavy artillery and air bombardment, but rather the willingness to fight like their indigenous opponents on their own terms.

Offensive air support, problematical in the dense jungle conditions of Malaya was generally used with great economy of force. The most important contribution of the RAF in the Emergency, however, was the provision of transport support in the troop-lifting, supply-dropping, casualty-evacuation and liaison-missions roles which considerably increased the mobility and flexibility of the ground forces as well as their ability to sustain extended periods of jungle operations. In addition, crop spraying, leaflet dropping and loud-hailing carried out by the air transport forces contributed largely to the success of the food denial and psychological warfare campaigns.[55] By 1954, the lack of evidence about the effectiveness of air-strikes ensured that offensive air support was limited solely to a harassing role - except when first rate target intelligence on pinpoint or small area targets was available.[56] In the words of a serving British officer in Malaya, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Ian Hywel Jones:

> We concluded that given accurate information as to a target then there would be merit in considering bombing as a means for attacking it. But to use bombing on a random basis would really be far too costly. And could well perhaps do more harm than good.[57]

In fact, the RAF presence in Malaya never went beyond its peak strength of seven squadrons in 1950, and less than 70 aircraft were available for offensive air support. Aircraft were, however, used extensively for psychological warfare in leaflet and loudspeaker operations. During the peak year of 1955, 141 million leaflets were dropped. Indeed, by the end of the Malayan Emergency, 'there were few insurgents who had not been showered by leaflets or heard a message to surrender broadcast from aircraft', and interrogations revealed that the MCP guerrillas considered loudspeaker aircraft highly effective in inducing surrenders.[58] As the MCP withdrew deep into the jungle areas, the

---

[55] Malcolm Postgate, *Operation Firedog: Air Support in the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1992, 29.
[56] Ibid, 75.
[57] John, A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 105.
[58] Simpson, Jay Gordon, 'Not by Bombs Alone', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 22 (Summer 1999), 91–98, 94–98.

30

dropping of leaflets and the broadcast of messages from the air was often the only means of making contact. Indeed, without aerial means of propaganda dissemination, much of the effect of the psychological warfare campaign would have been nullified.[59] Unlike offensive bombing, which had mixed success, the use of air power in psychological operations was highly effective in eroding the morale of its fighters and crippling the MCP's physical strength.

This minimal force approach was based on the long-held British assumption that insurgency is not a military problem but a policing task and therefore a civil problem. In a contemporary analysis of the small wars that flared throughout the British Empire in the 1920s and 1930s, Sir Charles Gwynn argues that 'the principal police task of the Army is … to restore [civil control] when it collapses or shows signs of collapse'.[60] Thirty years later, in 1951, the Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton would put before Parliament: 'The Emergency is in essence a police rather than a military task. More troops would add little to the impact … In short, I do not recommend any increase in troops'. Rather than commit more troops to the fight, Lyttelton pushed for the creation of the Home Guards to boost the numbers and effectiveness of the police force in Malaya. In his opinion, 'once the training and re-training of the police and paramilitary forces have been completed, police action, including the better provision of information, will render military action gradually more effective and, I hope, ultimately unnecessary'.[61]

The British Army at the dawn of the Cold War was well familiar with the techniques involved in countering a politico-military insurgency. John Nagl draws attention to the fact that, of the 1,219 hours spent by mid-grade officers at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College, none was devoted to the study of revolutionary warfare or the impact of Mao while 190 hours were spent on conventional infantry operations. On the other hand, officers at the British Army Staff College had to go through 45 of 1,042 hours of instruction on Small Wars and

---

[59] Malcolm Postgate, *Operation Firedog*, 115.
[60] Charles Gwynn, *Imperial Policing*, London: Macmillan & Company, 1939, 5.
[61] John, A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 77.

Policing Duties and another six on the study of Warfare in Developing Countries.[62] In the British Army, it was readily accepted that internal security operations were the norm rather than the exception. The accumulated experience from more than a century of imperial policing led to the development of a limited war perspective in the British Army—one that has been highly adaptable to operating in a COIN environment. As will be demonstrated later, the emphasis on a population-centric approach that focused on policing the population and population control, rather than going for the total military solution, became a vital key in suppressing the Communist insurgency in Malaya.

Britain's response to the Communist threat in Vietnam came in the form of the dispatch of the British Advisory Mission (BRIAM) to Saigon in September 1961, with the aim of imparting lessons learned from the Malayan Emergency. Sir Robert Thompson, the former Minister of Defence of Malaya and leader of the mission, was unable to convince the Americans that the focus on military solutions to political problems was counterproductive. The explicit endorsement of the strategy of military annihilation and attrition by the American top brass was to govern the entire conduct of the war. In 1966–1968 alone, American air munitions expenditure in Indochina (2,865,808 tons) exceeded the total tonnage of bombs dropped during the whole of the Second World War in both the European and Pacific theatres (2,057,244 tons).[63] The prevalent belief among American commanders was that air power could be depended upon to cripple the DVRN's capacity to wage war. The largely agrarian economy of North Vietnam however had few targets of economic or military significance. The application of air power as a decisive 'quick-fix' was also a common practice during the Second Emergency – particularly in the early years of the conflict.

Another prevalent feature of the Vietnam that also became widespread during the Second Emergency was the insurgent tactic of the concealed ambush. Often at the time and place of their choosing, Vietcong guerrillas would fire at American troops from concealed positions within villages. Eager to engage the elusive enemy, American soldiers would fall for the bait, and assault the hamlets with heavy artillery, naval gunfire, tactical air support and helicopter gunships. As we shall see in the subsequent chapters, the CPM adaptation of

---

[62] Ibid, 50.
[63] Guenter Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, 99.

Vietcong concealed ambush tactics and the tactical response of the Malaysian security forces were remarkably similar to what transpired in the Vietnamese countryside. The significant difference was at the strategic level. The Malaysian Federal government realised the importance of a comprehensive approach and in time incorporated the security forces rather than allow them to dominate the overall COIN effort. This acceptance of the use of minimal force (even in theory) was a distinct influence of the First Emergency. In order for the successful practice of minimal force to take place, there must be a unity of effort between both the civil and military authorities in an environment where the military forces cooperate rather than dominate. Again, the historical antecedents for such an approach during the Second Emergency years were derived from the experience of British colonial COIN in the First Emergency.

Shaping the Civil-Military Relations Model of the First Emergency

Since the nineteenth century, the British Army developed a history of close cooperation with civil administrators in the maintenance of the *Pax Britannica*. In a COIN environment, the British Army's role was that of providing the security umbrella under which the crucial tasks of effective civil administration and the winning of hearts and minds could be carried out. As such, the army essentially operated as a police force under civilian control. In Malaya, this principle was readily accepted and practised by all—soldiers and civil servants alike. Although a soldier by profession, Sir Gerald Templer, High Commissioner, Malaya insisted that 'the fighting of the war and the civil running of the country were completely utterly interrelated' and refused to allow a 'military takeover of what essentially remained a civil problem'.[64] Another Malayan veteran, Major General Richard Clutterbuck maintained that 'military assistance has often been of less importance than their aid in supporting effective civil administration and helping the government to improve the lot of its people rather than to allow it to decline or relapse into chaos'.[65] During his tenure as Director of Operations, Harold Briggs brought in a civilian, Hugh Carleton Greene, to set up the Emergency Information Services (EIS) to coordinate all psyops efforts in Malaya. In the minds of Briggs, Templer, and Clutterbuck, there was no question that the Malayan Emergency

---

[64] Robert Brown Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 851.
[65] Richard Clutterbuck, *Guerrillas and Terrorists*, London: Faber, 1977, 16.

33

demanded an integrated civil-military solution with an emphasis on the 'civil' rather than the application of extensive military force. With the military operating in support of civil power rather than in place of it, the Malayan Emergency was never militarised and most importantly never 'brutalised'.

Despite the tradition of subordinating military forces to civilian authority in times of civil emergency, early attempts at a coordinated civil-military effort lacked unity of effort. Synergy was injected into the administration with the introduction of the Committee system by Briggs. Civilian members at all levels of the Committee system far outnumbered those of the military except at the federal level. Rather than rely on military intelligence units, the system came to depend on localised insights provided by the indigenous Special Branch. Military liaison officers in the organisation would in turn translate such information into operational intelligence. Over time, the Committee system forged a highly integrated civil-military structure that functioned in a synergised manner. In fact, most units had their headquarters set up in Joint Operations Rooms run by the police. A veteran commented that 'this close cooperation between the military and the police was the secret of all successful operations'.[66] As we shall see later, the integrated civil-military structure developed in the First Emergency was to be replicated by the post-colonial authorities - albeit to suit the context and requirements of the Second Emergency.

Cooperation was further extended beyond the police-military relationship into the local Malayan community. Karl Hack argued that because of the local ethnic, social and political divisions, the British were able to 'screw down' the Communist supporters.[67] He further maintained that the integrated civic, military and political measures adopted by the British blunted the resentment caused by coercion.[68] Indeed, the complex demographic and social intricacies of Malaya were the biggest advantage the British had in the Emergency. With the promise of Malayan independence, the British were able to win the support of the

---

[66] Joel E. Hamby, 'Civil-Military Operations Joint Doctrine and the Malayan Emergency', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 32, 2002, 54–61, 57.
[67] Karl Hack, 'Iron Claws of Malaya: The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 30 (1), 1999, 99–125, 99.
[68] Karl Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation in South East Asia: Britain, Malaya and Singapore 1941–1968*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001, 129.

Malay majority and isolate the Malayan Communists who were overwhelmingly Chinese. With regards to the Malayan Chinese community, the British-engineered alliance between the Nationalist Malay United Malay National Organization (UMNO) and the Chinese business-orientated Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) provided the political foundation for the successful containment of the Emergency. This, according to John Cross, a British jungle warfare specialist 'was crucial to British success because it provided a stronger base of support than that possessed by the embattled MCP'.[69] Relations with the European planters and miners were close from the start. However, it was the inclusion of Malay and Chinese officials in policy discussion and formulation that developed the much coveted grassroots confidence between the population and the Security Forces. The British experience demonstrated that the high level of civil-military cooperation achieved in Malaya was a decisive factor not only in defeating the MCP militarily, but also in establishing a political solution.[70] Again the co-opting of local political support as part of a comprehensive population-centric approach was a hallmark of the First Emergency that was subsequently revised to suit the political and socio-economic landscape of the Second Emergency.

Population Security

The civil-military administration in Malaya regarded its primary mission during the Emergency to be that of providing security to the people, with the subsequent aim of separating the guerrilla from the people. In Clutterbuck's opinion, the most important lesson of the Malayan Emergency was 'that the villager is more subject to terror by the *man with a knife* living inside the village at night than by the guerrilla with a gun coming in from the jungle outside'.[71] In order to separate the 'man with a knife' from the population, Briggs implemented 'the largest social revolution ever known in Asia; the resettlement of 600,000 squatters into New Villages; a revolution which … was to prove a brilliant, unorthodox tactic in the war against guerrilla Communism; one which military leaders would study in every future Asian war'.[72] Anthony Short lauded Briggs' plan as the 'basic

---

[69] John Newsinger, 'Counterrevolution The Malayan Example', *Monthly Review*, 45(9), 1994, 19–30.
[70] Julian Paget, *Counter-insurgency Campaigning*, London: Faber and Faber, 1967, 78.
[71] Richard Clutterbuck, *Guerrillas and Terrorists*, 39.
[72] Noel Barber, *The War on the Running Dogs: How Malaya Defeated the Communist Guerrillas 1948–1960*, London: Collins, 1971, 101.

analysis and prescription had set the pattern that was to be followed through to a successful conclusion … and a proper appreciation of what was required in the new villages may be seen as the blueprint for success'.[73] By March 1953, the attributes necessary for a successful New Village had been defined as:

> A modicum of agricultural land and the granting of long-term land titles, an adequate water supply, a reasonably well-functioning village committee, a school which could accommodate at least a majority of the children, a village community centre, roads of passable standards and with side drains, reasonable conditions of sanitation and public health, a place of worship, trees along the main street and *padang,* an effective perimeter fence, a flourishing Home Guard, a reasonably friendly feeling towards the Government and the police.[74]

The fundamental objective of the New Villages was to isolate the insurgent from the population and protect the population from subversion that, according to Thompson, is the prerequisite for uniting the people in community spirit in positive action on the side of the government.[75] Briggs' strategy of resettling the Chinese squatters in 'New Villages' (continued by Templer) proved to be a highly successful 'carrot and stick strategy' that solicited cooperation from the rural Chinese in exchange for a more secured and prosperous way of life.

Briggs and Templer recognised that the decisive tactical element in Malaya was the village police post rather than the army battalion. Both insisted that no New Village should be occupied until the provision of adequate police protection. Briggs oversaw the initial phase of the expansion of the police force that grew from nine thousand to 45,000 within a short span of six months.[76] Above all, Briggs knew that a happy ending to the Emergency depended on the active cooperation of the rural Chinese. Briggs sought to

---

[73] Anthony Short, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats, the Communist Insurrection in Malaya*, Singapore: Cultured Lotus, 2000, 502.
[74] Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948–1960*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004, 173.
[75] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 124–125.
[76] Robert Brown Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, 845.

convince the Chinese population that their future was in an independent Malaya rather than a Malaya dominated by the Chinese Communists. As part of his efforts to achieve this political end, Briggs gave the Chinese a stake in their own security. In his Directive No. 3 of 25 May 1950, Briggs stated: 'The time has come when selected Chinese should be recruited as Auxiliary Police and where necessary armed with shotguns to take their share in anti-bandit operations'.[77] Realising the significant role that the local Chinese auxiliary policemen could play in isolating the Communists both physically and mentally from the rural Chinese, Templer continued the policy of arming the Home Guard, and even equipped it with some armoured cars. Not only were few weapons lost, the Home Guard proved to be a valuable link between the security forces and the populace, thus considerably improving the security of the villages.[78] In short, the establishment of a permanent police presence in the New Villages and the empowerment of the rural Chinese sent two crucial messages to the Chinese population. First, the government was doing its best to protect them, and second, the government trusted them and was sincere in its efforts to include them in the building of a new independent Malaya.

Initially, the resettled villagers might have felt compelled to cooperate with the authorities out of fear. In time, however, the rural Chinese began to see the government as the provider of physical and socio-economic security. The subsequent transformation of the New Villages into thriving small towns with modern amenities encouraged families to stay put. Kumar Ramakrishna maintained that the British were gradually able to secure the confidence of not only the rural Chinese but also that of the MCP rank and file through the propaganda of its deeds that promoted the physical and socio-economic security of both the rural Chinese and MCP cadres.[79] To put it bluntly: 'with security came loyalty'.[80] The government's ability to provide for the security of the people and ensure a stable secure progressive socio-economic environment demonstrated its credibility, and was a key factor in winning the hearts and minds of the rural Chinese. In short, the

---

[77] John, A. Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, 74.
[78] Julian Paget, *Counter-insurgency Campaigning*, 66.
[79] Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda; The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds 1948–1958*, Surrey: Curzon, 2002, 4.
[80] Robert Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency, the Commonwealth's Wars 1948–1966*, London: Routledge, 1991, 116.

New Villages played a pivotal role in securing the entire rural Chinese population from the MCP – thereby turning the strategic tide decisively in favour of the counterinsurgent.

The development and importance of the New Villages cannot be understated. The New Villages of the First Emergency era fundamentally shaped and changed the physical and socio-political landscape of post-colonial Malaysia to such an extent that the presence of the state was now felt in hitherto 'black areas'. More importantly, the resettlement of the First Emergency period created purpose-built townships whereby the surveillance, policing and control of the Chinese population became a much easier task for the post-colonial authorities. Indeed, the population security apparatus developed in the First Emergency was the bedrock upon which the post-colonial Malaysian state could further build on. As we shall see in the subsequent chapters, there were remarkable similarities in the development and implementation of population-centric approaches between the First and Second Emergencies that enabled both the British and later Malaysian governments to secure the population. The cognisance of population-centricity as the sine qua non was deeply reflected in the British practice of pouring in immense resources to win over the hearts and minds of the population.

Propaganda in the Population-centric Approach

Thompson postulated that in the battle for the hearts and minds of the people, it is the mind that counts: 'What the peasant wants to know is does the government mean to win the war? Because, if not, he will have to support the insurgent. The government must … instil the confidence that it is going to win'.[81] Briggs appreciated the fact that one of the best methods to instil confidence into the population is effective government propaganda. As noted earlier, Hugh Carleton Greene was brought in by Briggs to set up the EIS, which was to be a civilian institution that handled all of the government's conduct of public relations and dissemination of public information. The British clearly believed that since the Emergency was essentially a civil problem, a supra-civilian Information Services would be the best organisation to coordinate and conduct the entire psywar effort. The British further avoided any militarisation that would undermine its credibility. If military assets

---

[81] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 146.

were utilised, it was in the dissemination and distribution role, in the form of leaflet drops and voice aircraft sorties by the RAF in the skies, and on the ground by troops on patrol.

The following fundamentals of the government's psywar efforts were laid out by Greene:

> To raise the morale of the civil population and to encourage confidence in government and resistance to the communists with a view to increasing the flow of information reaching the police; to attack morale of members of the MRLA, the *Min Yuen* and their supporters and to drive a wedge between the leaders and the rank and file with a view to encouraging defection and undermining the determination of the communists to continue the struggle.[82]

Greene also formulated what was to be the government's long-term surrender policy of 'fair treatment' of all Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEPs). Having realised the 'critical psychological vulnerability posed by the powerful materialistic impulse of the average rural Chinese peasant and terrorist', Greene deduced that the 'offer of attractive rewards to induce these peasants to betray the terrorists would intensify the anxieties of waverers in the MRLA'. Hence, Greene set about rationalising the existing rewards programme.[83] Briggs, Thompson and Templer were all convinced that persuading the guerrillas to surrender would be a much more effective method of destroying the MCP than killing them, and staunchly backed efforts of the IES at inducing surrenders.

The revitalised psywar deeply vexed the Communists. As contact between guerrillas and government propaganda increased, the MCP was forced to divert its resources into countering government propaganda. The sheer volume of communist counter-propaganda suggested that from 1951 onwards, the government's psywar was starting to make its effects felt.[84] The main reason for the success of the government's strategic propaganda campaign, and vanguard of its efforts, was the psywar section of the IES.

---

[82] Anthony Short, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats*, 417.
[83] Kumar Ramakrishna, 'Bribing the Reds to Give Up: Rewards Policy in the Malayan Emergency', *War in History*, 9(3), 2002, 332–353, 339.
[84] Anthony Short, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats*, 421.

The psywar section led by C. C. Too, a local Chinese, consisted mostly of ex-MCP guerrillas, which never exceeded 30 in number. Too's fundamental rules in psywar were: 'don't preach', 'don't theorise', "never say I told you so' and 'no propaganda based on hatred'. Too further believed that 'every item of propaganda must be factual and true', to the extent of admitting in a leaflet that a Communist guerrilla whose death he had publicised was alive due to an error in identification.[85] This emphasis on the truth had the intended effect of boosting the credibility of government propaganda not only in the eyes of the population, but those of its opponents.

In appreciation of Too's unparalleled knowledge of the MCP and local conditions, Thompson gave Too a free hand as much as main policy would allow and was resolutely behind Too in his 'no hate' and 'nothing but the truth' approach. The 'no hate' policy not only encouraged droves of Communist guerrillas to surrender, but also SEP cooperation with the security services. This in turn greatly increased the flow of invaluable intelligence, something that cannot be gained by simply killing off the insurgents. The British approach to psywar in Malaya can thus be summed up as one that adopted a civil rather than militaristic outlook, avoided hate, strictly adhered to the truth, prevented the guerrilla from seizing the initiative, and based on local conditions rather than an imposed preconceived European perspective. More importantly, the British approach to pyswar during the First Emergency was based on a population-centric approach specifically designed to win over a particular population group. In short, without population-centricity, the First Emergency psywar effort would have gone off-target and failed to convince its audience of its credibility.

In the subsequent Second Emergency, both the insurgent and the counterinsurgent would again battle for the hearts and minds of the population. In the post-colonial context, a significant departure would be the Malaysian government's complete local ownership of its overall COIN effort as an independent state. Interestingly however, in the propaganda of the CPM, the Malaysian Federation was constantly portrayed as a product of neo-colonialism. The CPM did not view the First and Second Emergencies as separate struggles but part of a greater effort to create a people's republic that disregarded

---

[85] Noel Barber, *The War on the Running Dogs*, 118.

the formation of the independent nation states of Malaysia and Singapore. In short, the distinction between its colonial and post-independence opponents was irrelevant in the CPM's grand narrative of its armed struggle of 'using the countryside to surround the cities'. This idiosyncrasy in CPM strategic propaganda was a marked influence of Maoist revolutionary mass persuasion. Thus, in order to adequately explain the peculiarities of CPM psywar methodology, it would be necessary to visit the conceptualisation of People's War and revolutionary mass persuasion.

Tempering the Elemental Force of People's War

In Malaya, the British were able to counter the MCP's attempt at waging People's War not by guns alone, but through an integrated approach that embraced both the civil and military spheres. This was necessary as People's War is a mastery blend of political violence, psychological warfare, propaganda and mass mobilisation. Travelling through a China ravaged by the dogs of war since the collapse of the Qing dynasty, the American Journalist Jack Belden observed that: 'A People's War is an intensification of the already violent nature of war…more passionate, more savage and more personal than any other type war yet known'.[86] Waged amongst the masses, by the masses and for the masses (doctrinally-wise), People's War ultimately becomes highly personalised and war personified. People's War in its apotheosis obfuscates the lines between the people, army and the state, and in so doing forges an immutable link between the people, the revolutionary forces and revolutionary ideology. Ever since Mao's Red conquest of China, this form of revolutionary violence has become a model for many of the world's revolutionaries past and present. Despite taking the Western democracies by storm, Mao never did claim that his concept of People's War was a radically new paradigm of warfare. Like Clausewitz, Mao recognised that 'war is the continuation of politics' and since 'war itself is a political action', 'victory is inseparable from the political aim of the war'.[87] Indeed neither Mao's strategy nor tactics in insurgent warfare were revolutionary. The titanic force of peasant rebellions that often brought about the collapse of old dynasties and the rise of a new unifying power harkens back to the millennia-old peasant rebellions of ancient China. However

---

[86]Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970, 221.
[87] Mao Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol I, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965, 152-3.

41

by waging insurgency within the framework of a highly ideologised political doctrine designed to mobilise the masses, Mao added a whole new dimension to an ancient way of war. Walter Laqueur noted that:

> The Communists were not just another party or clique of warlords; they had an ideology that at one and the same time provided an explanation of the world and a guide to action for changing it…they had a method to mobilize the masses that was more effective, more in line with Chinese realities than that of the Kuomintang or the warlords.[88]

Unlike their Nationalist opponents, the Chinese Communist realised that 'a latent power for good or evil lay coiled within the energy and frustration of the peasant masses'.[89] It was Mao's ability to agitate, mobilise, temper and weld the elemental force of China; its hundreds of millions of rural masses that allowed him to revolutionise China as well as much of the Third World.

Rupert Smith argues that Revolutionary war, while based on 'competing triangular relationships', possesses a characteristic that is common to both sides, the people; with 'the government, the security forces and the people' forming one triangle and 'the revolutionaries, their ideology and their putative administration and the people' the other. While the government seeks to separate the people from the Revolutionary, the objective of the Revolutionary is to break the link between the government and the people.[90] Indeed, although the end goals of the Revolutionary and the Counterrevolutionary might differ, the means to victory are fundamentally the same; a campaign amongst the people that utilises an integrated approach within the four integral pillars of military force, civil-military relations, population security and propaganda. In a People's War, mastering the elements of military force, civil-military relations, population security and propaganda are of as much relevance to the Revolutionary as it is to the Counterrevolutionary. Moreover, since the Revolutionary

---

[88] Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, New Brunswick, Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998, 245.

[89] William W. Whitson, The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics: 1927-71, London: Macmillan, 1973, 468.

[90] Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, London: Penguin, 2006, 176.

42

invariably starts out as the weaker military force, adopting an integrated approach tied to a credible ideology and political cause is of paramount importance. Indeed, Revolutionary People's War is never bound to the confines of military action but rather a unity of the military, political, social, economic and psychological.[91] This section of the thesis will analyse the integrated approach utilised by the Revolutionary to bring the revolution to the masses and the process by which mass mobilisation and mass persuasion takes place.

The People's Army

Unlike the highly specialised professional armed forces and security services of the West, a Revolutionary Army is more than just a military force. A soldier in a Western army is trained to be highly skilled specialist in a specific vocation, plying his craft as an infantryman, a radioman, a combat engineer, a combat medic and etcetera. On the other hand, his counterpart in a 'People's Army' is more than just a combatant:

> The [Red] Army is not only a fighting force, it is mainly a working force…In urban work they should learn how to be good at dealing…with the bourgeoisie, good at leading the workers and organising trade unions, good at mobilising and organising the youth, good at uniting with and training cadres in the new Liberated Areas, good at managing industry and commerce, good at running schools, newspapers, news agencies and broadcasting stations, good at handling foreign affairs, good at handling problems relating to the democratic parties and people's organisations, good at adjusting the relations between the cities and the rural areas and solving the problems of food, coal and other daily necessities and good at handling monetary and financial problems…The army is a school. Our field armies of 2,100,000 are equivalent to several thousand universities and secondary schools.[92]

---

[91] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Trans and Introduction by Samuel B. Griffith II, Baltimore, Maryland: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992, 56.
[92] Mao Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol IV, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961, 337-8.

In waging 'People's War', a 'People's Army' becomes politicised and rejects the high level of specialisation common to all Western professional armed forces. On top of war-fighting, a soldier of a 'People's Army' is also a school-teacher, a foot-doctor dispensing medical aid to the rural masses, a worker in industry, a diplomat on the international stage and above all, a tool of political mass mobilisation and action. Ultimately, it is the revolutionary political objective that shapes the role of the 'People's Army' with 'People's War' waged within the ambit of that same political context.

A Western professional army exists as a separate sphere in the very society it serves to protect; with its own distinct values, laws, customs and way of life often incomprehensible and removed from the civilian masses. On the other hand, a 'People's Army' in maintaining the primacy of the political sphere as its key principle and rejecting professionalism becomes part of rather than separated from the masses. Maria Macciocchi observed that in the Chinese Red Army:

> A soldier recognizes him [his commanding officer] just as the worker recognizes the leader of the revolutionary committee or the person in charge of his shop. He personally knows him from his work, and not because of some external rank or stripe… Discipline in the Chinese army is strong because it is something conscious, not because it is due to the presence of sergeants in the barracks, but because it is born of a political commitment to defend proletarian power.[93]

In its conduct towards the civil populace, soldiers of the Chinese Red Army were strictly governed by eight simple rules devised at the 1928 Second Maoping Conference.[94] This form of conscious mutual respect earned though deeds and actions rather than an enforced professional hierarchy ultimately translates into an immutable relationship that binds the

---

[93] Maria Anotonietta Macciocchi, *Daily Life in Revolutionary China*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972, 383-4.

[94] Replace all doors when you leave a house; return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep; be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can; return all borrowed articles; replace all damaged articles; be honest in all transactions with the peasants; pay for all articles purchased; and be sanitary. Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, Middlesex: Pengiun, 1972, 200.

'People's Army', the political leadership and the people; hence precipitating the revolutionary mobilisation of the people.

Odoric Wou posits that the Communist Revolution in China consisted of a series of 'local revolutions'. Wou uses the *Dubalian* (Eight-Neighborhood Pact) in Henan to illustrate the sociopolitical process of how the Chinese Communists made use of local community self-defence in wartime to build up its military capability and undermine Nationalist state power locally. He argues that the inability of the Nationalists to protect localities seriously discredited them. On the other hand, by leading local residents in patriotic resistance, the Communists were able to gain popular support and became an effective contender for local power which locals identified themselves with.[95] Indeed Edgar Snow, one of the few Western journalists that were able to slip through the Nationalist blockade into Communist held areas noted that amongst the peasants:

Many of them were very free in their criticisms and complaints, but when asked whether they preferred it to the old days, the answer was nearly always an emphatic yes. I noticed also that most of them talked about the soviets as *womenti chengfu* – 'our government' - and this struck me as something new in rural China.[96]

This feeling of belonging and of having a stake in government brought to the Chinese masses a sense of self-determination.[97] Without that crucial personalised element which links the interests of the locals and masses to those of the Revolutionary cause, People's War is bound to fail. Explaining the raison d'etre of the Chinese Red Army, Mao wrote:

They think that the task of the Red Army, like that of the White army, is merely to fight. They do not understand that the Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution…The Red

[95] Odoric Y.K. Wou, 'Community Defense and the Chinese Communist Revolution: Henan's Du Eight-Neighbourhood Pact', *Modern China*, 25, 1999, 264-302, 289-295.
[96] Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 257.
[97] Chalmers A. Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962, 3.

Army fights not merely for the sake of fighting but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organise them, arm them, and help them to establish revolutionary political power. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence.[98]

A fundamental component of the Chinese Red Army is its political arm consisting of propagandists, political officers and political fighters. A parallel system of military and political officers extends right down to the company level. While at the platoon and squad levels, *Zheng Zhi Zhan Shi* (political fighters) were selected from the ranks as 'progressive' models for fellow soldiers.[99] The short-term effect of such a system is a fighting force which is highly motivated, politically conscious and aware of the need to maintain good civil-military relations. The long-term outcome however extends beyond the military sphere. As the People's Army begins to interact with the masses, the attitudes of the people slowly become revolutionised and there will come a time when the distinction between the state's army and the People's army becomes nonexistent in the minds of the people. Once the people have embraced the People's Army as their own, the unity between the people, the revolutionary forces and revolutionary ideology will have been achieved.

People's War is fundamentally about winning over the masses in which political organisation, instruction, agitation, indoctrination and mobilisation takes precedence over all else. People's War is thus waged using a Unified approach in which military and political action is forged into a single force and brought to the masses. In People's War, the objective and the utility of force is determined by a single unwavering unified political goal; the overthrow of an existing government and the establishment of revolutionary political power. In other words, the nexus of People's War is unity; the unity that exists between the political leadership, the Revolutionary Army and the masses in advancement of the revolutionary cause. If such is achieved, it will be virtually impossible for any intervening power to impose its will no matter great its military strength.

---

[98] Mao Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol I,106.

[99] Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power*, 80-82.

Revolutionary Mass Persuasion

Crucial to the success of People's War is the use of psychological warfare in the form of mass persuasion; a process that utilises 'all feasible vehicles of human expression and means of influence' in order to bring the largest possible number of people into close contact with the Revolutionary Party. [100] The concept of *xin li zhan* (psychological warfare) is however as old as the Chinese way of war. Sun Tze's notions of victory by deception and destroying the enemy's will to fight have since become indispensable tenants of Chinese strategic and military culture. Within the context of its role in People's War, the inferior firepower of the Chinese Red Army before 1949 meant that psychological warfare was a virtue of necessity and a 'decisive substitute for firepower'. [101] The Chinese Communists have always attached great importance in psychological factors and this faith in the power of ideas were reinforced by successes in political action.[102] Indeed, by 1945, the Communists had won the propaganda war. They were viewed in liberal circles as incorruptible capable reformers whereas the Nationalist government could project no such image. [103] In the struggle to win popular support amongst the Chinese masses, the Chinese Communists moved the practice of *xin li zhan* onto a higher plane. Unlike the imperial forces of old, the Communists were able to use *xin li zhan* as a means to galvanise and mobilise the elemental force of China's rural masses.

To Mao everything depended on the masses which constituted both the audience and the vehicle of mass persuasion. The key to understanding Mao's revolutionary mass persuasion is the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist dictum that 'thought determines action' and that 'if people can be made to think correctly…they will naturally act correctly'. Fundamental to the Chinese Revolution is the process of class struggle and the concept of class consciousness. The main purpose of propaganda is

---

[100] Frederick Yu, *Mass persuasion in Communist China*, 4.
[101] William W. Whitson, The Chinese High Command, 438.
[102] A. Doak Barnett, *Communist China and Asia: Challenge to American Policy*, New York: Vintage Books, 1960, 75.
[103] Jack Grey, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to 2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 283.

47

thus to 'awaken, heighten, and sharpen the class consciousness of the masses'.[104] The Marxist-Leninist-Maoist propagandist operated on the principle that the thoughts of the masses must first be revolutionised upon which a new social, political, economic and cultural order would then emerge. Rather than seeking to influence a target audience through a consistent 'words with deeds' approach, the Maoist mass persuasion approach attempts to socialise the minds of the masses to create a 'New Socialist Man' for the 'New Socialist State'. In Revolutionary warfare, ideology precedes and in many ways defines the formation of the New State and its society.

In the battle for the 'truth', propaganda is a potent psychological weapon that presented the platform for transforming aggrieved feelings into revolutionary thoughts and action. It must be noted that to a Revolutionary propagandist, half-truths were as good as the whole truth so long as they are persuasive enough to be credible, and most importantly persuasive enough to agitate the thoughts of the masses. The 'truth' is thus defined by the power to socialise the minds and actions of the masses rather than matching words with deeds. Revolutionary Psywar methodology is a blend of White, Black, Grey, Conversionary, Divisive, Consolidation and Counter Propaganda adapted to meet the requirements of a protracted revolutionary war. Revolutionary Psywar is in essence 'Plug and Play Psywar' which each component utilised according to the various scenarios and stages of the protracted revolutionary armed struggle.

Frequent shifts in Maoist propaganda practice should not obscure the underlying consistency in its strategic objectives and any modifications should be rationalised as adaptations to the special conditions of the Chinese Revolution.[105] Mao stresses that the cadre's capacity for effective practical struggle differs fundamentally from the assumptions of dogmatism and that practice is more important than adhering to dogmatic theory.[106] Theories, doctrines, dogmas and ivory-tower scholarship were considered by Mao to be irrelevant if not translated into action. In order for mass persuasion to be effective, 'psychological warfare output must be a part of the

---

[104] Frederick Yu, *Mass persuasion in Communist China*, 10-11.

[105] Franklin W. Houn, *To Change a Nation; Propaganda and Indoctrination in Communist China*, New York: Crowell-Collier, 1961, 7.

[106] Brantly Womack, 'Theory and Practice in the Thought of Mao Tse Tung' in James Chieh Hsiung (ed), *The Logic of Maoism: Critiques and Explication*, London: Praeger, 1974, 2.

48

everyday living and fighting of the audiences to which it is directed'.[107] To Mao's mind, communication must be to be 'from the masses to the masses', and that party leadership must stem from the same practical 'from the masses to the masses' process.[108] However, Mao's doctrine of the 'mass line' like many of his other intellectual formulations was double-ended; while it asserted the need to consult the masses, it also reiterated central control and leadership.[109] Fundamentally, Mao understood that for mass persuasion and mass mobilisation to succeed, the masses must be brought into the closest possible contact with the Revolutionary Party.

In Maoist Revolutionary doctrine, no partition exists between the political and military spheres. The same can be same in the relationship between art and propaganda. To a Maoist propagandist, the only distinction lies in what was understandable through experience and what was not. Drawing from the experience of his Yanan days, Mao concluded that:

> The spread of political propaganda throughout the rural areas is entirely an achievement of the Communist Party and the peasant associations. Simple slogans, cartoons and speeches have produced such a widespread and speedy effect among the peasants that every one of them seems to have been through a political school.[110]

The main tool of Revolutionary Psywar, or 'oral agitation', is face to face communication and maximum possible interaction with the masses carried out by millions of propagandists at the ground level. With an emphasis on attaining the closest possible direct contact between the masses and party cadres, Revolutionary 'oral agitation' provides a continuous flow of information on the 'psychological climate of the people', which in turn gives the Revolutionary an 'incontestable element of superiority'.[111] The effectiveness of Maoist political propaganda can partly

---

[107] Paul M.A.Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare*, 26.
[108] Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol III, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965, 119
[109] John King Fairbank, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1987, 257.
[110] Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol III, 47-8.
[111] Frederick T. C. Yu, 'Communications and Politics in Communist China' in Lucian W. Pye (ed), *Communications and Political Development*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963, 295.

be explained by its sheer simplicity; simple face to face forms of communication directed at the grassroots with the maximum possible level of direct interaction. Liu Shaoqi, the second Chairman of the PRC after Mao, emphasised that in mass mobilisation:

> Members of the work teams should visit and talk with the peasants, household by household…The language and examples used should be easy for the local peasants to understand and should have a sense of personal immediacy for them. Once they grasp the meaning, their political consciousness will be enhanced. Once awakened, the peasants become anxious to do something.[112]

In the practice of propaganda art, dramatic troupes of 'Red thespians' moving from village to village performing simple acts that the peasants can relate to were one of the most potent weapons used to awaken the peasants. These troupes performed 'Living Newspaper' scenes that dramatised military, political, economic, and social issues in an understandable and entertaining way. Likewise, doubts and questions of the sceptical peasantry were answered in a similar fashion.[113] In predominantly Muslim areas, plays based on local historical and social contexts were staged. Posters, leaflets and newspapers, in both Chinese and Arabic were also distributed.[114] In short, the dramatic troupes became an effective face to face propaganda tool that were utilised to allay the fears of the people, win their confidence and enhance their political consciousness.

The emphasis on direct face to face contact and communicating in ways that connect with the masses though time-consuming allows the Revolutionary to penetrate into the minds if not hearts of the masses. It brings the masses into direct contact with the Revolutionary ideology and persuades though politicisation, social control or a combination of both. People's War and Maoist mass mobilisation is a continuous process that results in the penultimate symbiosis of the masses, the People's Army and the revolutionary cause, or explained in Clausewitzian terms; a symbiotic unity of the

---

[112] Liu Shaoqi, *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*,Vol VI, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1981, 235-6.
[113] Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 145.
[114] Ibid, 299.

50

people, army and the state. It is clear that Maoist mass persuasion plays an integral role in mobilising the masses for People's War, but how exactly does it persuade?

In Mao's own words, it persuades by linking 'the political mobilisation for the war with developments in the war and with the life of the soldiers and the people'. In order for People's War and mass persuasion to succeed, it must relate to the everyday struggles and lives of the masses which meant fulfilling the existential needs of the rural masses and providing a sense of security and stability where there was previously none. Hence, socio-economic work amongst the masses is the wellspring of security and stability that persuades by establishing a correlation between the revolutionary political struggle with the everyday lives of the masses. On the paramount necessity of establishing unity between the lives of the masses and Revolutionary war, Mao wrote:

> If we want to win…We must lead the peasants' struggle for land and distribute the land to them, heighten their labour enthusiasm and increase agricultural production, safeguard the interests of the workers, establish co-operatives, develop trade with outside areas, and solve the problems facing the masses - food, shelter and clothing, fuel, rice, cooking oil and salt, sickness and hygiene, and marriage. In short, all the practical problems in the masses' everyday life should claim our attention. If we attend to these problems, solve them and satisfy the needs of the masses, we shall really become organisers of the well-being of the masses, and they will truly rally round us and give us their warm support.[115]

In People's War, economic construction is always carried out in tandem with traditional warfighting. Cadres are expected to engage in economic work as well as military duties. In practical terms, there was no other alternative for the Chinese Communists. The guerrilla war was also a production war. The development of local economies in the Communist base areas was of existential importance; crucial in

---

[115] Mao Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol I, 147-8.

sustaining the isolated Chinese Red Army and winning popular support amongst the population that it dwelled.

In a war that is heavily dependent upon mass support, the provision of socio-economic stability in base areas is crucial in winning the hearts and minds. Liu Shaoqi warned that:

> If the economic burden in the base areas is so heavy for the people…it might damage our bonds with them, cause the people outside the base areas to fear and reject leadership by our Party and our army, or create doubts among the people about the Communist Party's ability to lead.[116]

By working on the land, a sense of solidarity between the 'People's Army' and the masses is developed and reinforced; particularly when contrasted with the behaviour of previous armies that took from the land. Edwin Hoyt, a correspondent based in China in the 1940s observed that: 'this brought the Red Army and the Red organisation closer to the people than the Guomindang had been since the days of National Revolution'.[117] This feeling of solidarity was further encouraged by the 'support the government and love the people' and the 'support the army' campaigns which were celebrated by the exchange of gifts, feasts and ceremonial meetings between army units and the local populace whereby army leaders would publicly criticise their behaviour towards the civil population, and offer compensation for any damages.[118] This perceived sense of solidarity between the civil population and the 'People's Army' is the vital factor that ensured the survival and eventual success of the Chinese Red Army.

In the base areas held by the Chinese Communists, the synthesis of tax reform, rent reduction, promotion of mutual aid and redistributive programmes, 'cumulatively ushered in a silent revolution' that 'simultaneously empowered the poor and deepened and tightened the reach of the party down into the village'.[119] Indeed, by implementing select

[116] Liu Shaoqi, *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, 223.
[117] Edwin P Hoyt, *The Rise of the Chinese Republic: From the Last Emperor to Deng Xiaoping*, Da Capo Press, 1991, 198.
[118] John Gittings, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, 57.
[119] Mark Selden, *China in Revolution: The Yenan Way Revisited*, Armonk, New York: ME Sharpe, 1995, 221.

socioeconomic reforms in concert with its mobilisation efforts in resisting the Japanese, the Communists were ultimately able to build political legitimacy in the countryside.[120] The socio-economic development component of 'People's War' is just as important as the warfighting element. Both had complementary roles in the process of mobilising the people at the populist and elitist levels. Failure in the socio-economic sphere will create a sense of apathy or worse alienate the population, while success wins credibility in what is essentially a population-centric credibility war.

It is not difficult to understand why the Chinese rural masses were persuaded by Mao's cadres. In light of the tumultuous warlord years of the 1920s and 30s followed by the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the average Chinese peasant was constantly at the mercy of the Japanese Army, corrupt KMT provincial officials and rapacious warlords. In a land where the rural masses 'ate bitterness' (Chi Ku), Mao's vision of a Revolutionary New China was more than persuasive. Indeed, the potential for Revolutionary war exists in any society where grievances run deep within the masses. Revolutionary People's War seeks to exploit those grievances not through the narrow confines of military action but rather a blend of the military, political, social, economic and psychological that ultimately results in mass mobilisation and the overthrow of an existing socio-political order. Revolutionary victory is only possible through an integrated approach which integrates all military, political, social, economic and psychological means with the masses as its focal point. In People's War, the population as defined by the masses constitutes the centre of gravity, the hub of its power, and mass mobilisation is the key to unlock that power.

Throughout both the First and Second Emergencies, the Maoist People's War model was the strategic template on which the MCP/CPM adhered to with unwavering faith. The CPM leadership tried to adapt the People's War model to its own revolutionary struggle in the First Emergency with little success. Another attempt to do so in the Second Emergency again met with strategic failure. If the CPM propaganda, manifestos, constitutions and other items of information of both Emergencies were anything to go by, the cumulative evidence suggested that the

---

[120] William Wei, 'Political Power Grows Out of the Barrel of a Gun: Mao and the Red Army' in David A. Graff & Robin Higham (ed), *A Military History of China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002, 245.

senior party leadership was well-versed in the theory and concepts of People's War – including the paramount importance of winning over the masses. Why then did the CPM's relentless efforts at mass persuasion fail to seize the hearts and minds of its target population? Having set the conceptual backdrop for both the counterinsurgent and insurgent within the four key touchstones of the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda, a partial explanation for the aforesaid question can be proffered in following chapter which details the strategy of the CPM in both Emergencies.

3.

Strategy of the CPM's Revived Armed Struggle: Retreat, Reform and Revival (1948-1981)

If the Chinese Revolution was the adaptation of Marxist-Leninist doctrine to Chinese conditions, the CPM's armed struggle and strategic propaganda campaign exemplified its efforts to replicate the success of the Chinese Communists in Malaya. This chapter will chart the strategic history of the CPM from 1948-1981 and compare the CPM's strategic approach to its anti-colonial struggle (1948-1960) with that of its post-colonial struggle (1968-1981). Since much ink has been spilled on the First Emergency, the focus will be on the distinctive facets and organisational aspects of the evolution of CPM strategy during the Second Emergency. This chapter begins with a brief examination of the CPM's strategy for the anti-colonial phase of its existence, followed by that of its 'resurrection strategy'. Drawing from CPM manifestos, constitutions and other items of information released via the VMR as well as Australian and British records, the chapter reconstructs the evolution of CPM strategy in the post-colonial phase of its armed struggle. In short, this chapter will cover the antecedents, push-pull factors, planning and execution of the CPM's revived armed struggle as well as a comparative analysis of the CPM's anti-colonial and post-colonial strategies.

From 1948 to 1981, the CPM's template of revolution was largely based on the Maoist doctrine of 'using the countryside to surround the cities'. However, this was not always the case. As explained in the introduction, the immediate post-war strategy of the MCP was based on the Soviet model of urban struggle rather than the Maoist way of rurally-based guerrilla war. For three years, the MCP fought to gain political ascendancy through labour agitation and control of the trade union movement. Infiltration and control of the trade unions thus became the MCP's main instruments in its efforts to ferment an urban uprising. The MCP however overestimated its hold on the labour movement. In the chaotic transition from war to renewed colonial occupation of 1945 to 1946, workers might have revolted, but by 1948, many Indian and Chinese labour leaders

were actively discouraging labour-militancy with increasing success.[121] The Trade Unions (Amendment) Ordinance of June 1948 effectively forced the dissolution of all MCP-backed trade unions and dashed all hopes of a popular workers' uprising. By June 1948, in light of its failure to mount mass city protests and work stoppages, the MCP shifted its strategy to that of the armed struggle.

The long term military strategy of the Malayan Communists in 1948 was based on the Maoist model envisaged in three phases. Phase one entailed the use of guerrilla warfare and terrorism to disrupt the Malayan economy and the communications of the colonial authorities. Phase two would see the establishment of communist governments on liberated rural areas similar to the Soviets established by the Chinese Communists in the Yenan days. The final Phase would culminate in the joining up of liberated areas followed by a mass uprising that would sweep the British away. Despite the inadequate British response during the first five months of the insurgency, the opening phase of the Malayan Emergency was fought to a stalemate without the MCP ever gaining the initiative. Since the MRLA could not concentrate its forces in combined operations, its 'surge' in armed attacks from 1950 to 51 was sporadic and did not represent any real increase in scale or impact. The limitations to the MCP's military strategy was demonstrated by the fact that even at the height of MNLA violence, the British continued to govern and the MRLA never succeeded in forcing the British administrative withdrawal from key areas.

Realising the failure of its late1948 strategy, the MCP leadership sought to salvage the situation by issuing the October Directives which called on its cadres to cease unrestricted terrorism. The October Directives proved to be too little too late. According to Kumar Ramakrishna: 'By the end of 1951, the MCP had inadvertently provoked general aversion towards itself amongst the mass of the rural Chinese, a situation that proved impossible to redress, and all but destroyed any prospect of success in the shooting war'.[122] As mentioned above, the MNLA's armed operations were on the whole sporadic. They lacked force-concentration, attacks were ill-coordinated and attempts at establishing

---

[121] In April 1948, only 13,000 man days involving less than 1 percent of the labour force were lost in Malaya. Malayan Union Labour Department Monthly Reports June 1948 in John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency*, 16.

[122] Kumar Ramakrishna, 'Transmogrifying Malaya: the Impact of Sir Gerald Templer (1952-54)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol 32 (1), 2001, 79-92, 81

liberated areas were beyond the MNLA's limited military capabilities. Moreover, the use of unrestricted terrorism alienated the majority of the rural Chinese masses; the very people that the MCP depended upon to keep its revolution alive. The MCP never quite got beyond phase one of its plan and were instead defeated in the guerrilla phase of its armed struggle.

Reminiscent of Mao's Long March, the MCP began a phased withdrawal of its main combat units to the jungles of Southern Thailand in April 1952. Unlike the Chinese Red Army, the MRLA never did establish a secure base in Southern Thailand from which it could regain the operational initiative. From its peak strength of 8,000 fighters in 1951, the MCP's combat strength was whittled down to a rump of less than a thousand hard-core cadres by 1958. Indeed, by 1954, prospects of winning the armed struggle in Malaya looked rather bleak. In April 1954, the Second Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties in the British Commonwealth passed six resolutions, the last of which called for the armed struggle in Malaya to be ended by 'the method of peace'. This shift from armed struggle back to 'peaceful coexistence' implied that revolution through violent means no longer enjoyed legitimacy in the eyes of International Communist movement.[123] By then, any hopes of external aid were dashed. The MCP thus returned to the means of peaceful struggle in 1954. Chin Peng was however unwilling to accept the party's dissolution and surrender; pre-conditions laid down by the Tunku in exchange for involvement in main stream Malayan politics.

The formal declaration of Malayan independence on 31 August 1957 further undercut any room for political manoeuvre. Thus, the deteriorating military situation was further exacerbated by a new political environment that offered bleak prospects of salvation either through external intervention or political brinkmanship. The MCP leadership's response was contained in the issues of a manifesto declaring the party's intentions to pursue 'democratic means within constitutional limits' in tandem with its guerrilla methods. The MCP's 1957 manifesto duly illustrates a dual approach that attempted to reconcile the Soviet and Chinese models as well as the schisms within party leadership over the movement's long-term direction. However, by 1958, the 'operational realities of irreversible military failure', the 'unsalvageable political position of the Party' coupled with

---

[123] Kumar Ramakrishna, 'Anatomy of a Collapse: Explaining the Malayan Communist Mass Surrenders of 1958', *War and Society*, Vol 21 (2), 2003, 109-133, 128.

the generous *Merdeka* amnesty produced mass surrenders which effectively ended the shooting war.[124] A similar picture is painted by Karl Hack who views the 1956-1958 period as one in which the intensified use of amnesties combined with operations in key areas and mass betrayals resulted in 'a virtual collapse of the MNLA within Malaya' and a 'virtual mothballing of the military struggle'. Hack makes another critical argument, namely, that by August 1957, the MCP was 'on its way to becoming not a Malayan-based party, but a mainly Thai-based, Communist organisation in exile'.[125] July 1960 witnessed the final mopping-up phase of operations by Malayan security forces, by which point, the government in Kuala Lumpur felt it safe enough to declare the Emergency over.

Recognising the failure of its initial armed struggle, The MCP issued its 1958 'Put away the flags and Silence the Drums' Directive. The remaining 500-odd cadres now in Southern Thailand were demobilised and encouraged to enter Thai civilian life to act as 'sleepers' or at least remain in touch with the Party.[126] Most of the MCP's Central Committee members were exfiltrated to Beijing which became the MCP's new headquarters for directing the political and later armed struggle in Malaya. As early as 1961, most of the MCP's Central Committee members were effectively persuaded by Beijing that the time was ripe for a second attempt at armed revolution. Bearing witness to the events of the Cultural Revolution, the Beijing-based MCP executive could not help but feel inspired. From 1962 to 1968, the ground in Southern Thailand was slowly readied for revolution. Old networks were reactivated, Kuomintang and criminal gangs targeted and new training camps were set up in the border area. MCP strength within this region grew from 300 to 2,000 cadres in the first year, with a core of about 800 fighting personnel by 1964.[127] By 1967 preparatory moves for a renewed armed revolution in Malaya were at an advanced stage. On the 20th anniversary of their armed struggle, 1 June 1968, the

---

[124] The Merdeka amnesty was explicit in what potential SEP could expect: if they proved themselves loyal to Kuala Lumpur and gave up their communist activities they would be helped to regain a normal. The terms were carefully worded to respect guerrilla sensitivities: the politically sensitive and embarrassing term 'surrender' was avoided and replaced with the rather innocuous phrase 'come out of the jungle'. Ibid, 117-133.

[125] Karl Hack, 'The Long March to Peace of the Malayan Communist Party in Southern Thailand' in Michael J. Montesano & Patrick Jury (eds) *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2008, p.180

[126] Ibid, p.181

[127] Ibid, 182.

Malayan Communists, now known as the CPM officially announced their intention to revive the armed struggle in Malaya.

For the MCP, victory in Malaya depended on 'using the countryside to encircle the cities'; yet 'the Botanic Gardens [in Singapore] were not countryside'.[128] In an urban environment unsuited for a rural insurgency, legal 'united front' action necessarily took precedence over guerrilla warfare. In other words, the MCP had to adopt different strategies for both Malaysia and Singapore. Whereas revolutionary success in Malaysia depended upon the dove-tailing of the MCP's military and political efforts, its actions in Singapore were largely based on subversion and political activism. Through MCP-controlled trade unions and a legal political front, the MCP sought to dominate the communist/socialist movement in Singapore and ultimately the island-city-state. The high point of the MCP's political activism in Singapore was in 1954 when open united front activities were made possible under the Rendel Constitution passed in the same year. Under the Rendel constitution, political parties and trade unions could be legally formed to serve as front platforms for the communist movement. During the heydays of the communist/socialist movement in Singapore, the united front consisted of the People's Action Party (PAP), the Barisan Socialists (BSS) and numerous trade unions (many of which were front organisations of the MCP). The demise of the MCP's united front strategy came in the 1960s, when the non-communist faction of the PAP, led by Lee Kuan Yew, succeeded in gaining leadership and control of the united front effort to end colonial rule.

Between mid-1961 and the end of 1966, the CPM was preoccupied with the twin tasks of sending cadres away from Singapore to escape impending capture and the prevention of the proposed merger between Singapore and Malaya which would destroy the MCP's efforts to rebuild its strength.[129] Prior to Singapore's entry into the Malaysian Federation, Lee Kuan Yew won the backing of both Tunku Abdul Rahman and the British government (sponsors of the merger plan) to crackdown on pro-communist elements of the

---

[128] Dennis Bloodworth, *The Tiger and the Trojan Horse*, Singapore: Times Publishing, 1986, 312.
[129] Lee Ting Hui, 'The Communist Open United Front in Singapore: 1954-66' in Lim Joo-Jock & Vani S (eds), *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984, 121.

united front. The withdrawal of most of the MCP's Singapore-based cadres to Indonesia and the netting of most the remaining cadres in Operation Cold Store on 2 February 1963 deprived the Singaporean communist movement of adequate leadership to sustain its activism. When Singapore left the Malaysian Federation on 9 August 1965, the pro-communist faction of the united front movement refused to recognise the independence of Singapore which it judged to be false and boycotted parliament. This resulted in an irreconcilable split within the socialist movement in Singapore which effectively confirmed the PAP's virtual dominance in government. By 1966, any hopes of winning over Singapore through legal and constitutional means via a united front strategy were at an end.

Many of the CPM's Singapore-based cadres that made it to Indonesia were redeployed to the Thai-Malaysian border to resume the armed struggle. Right up to the mid-seventies, the communist front in Singapore continued to feed recruits to the Sixth Assault Unit (6 AU) operating in Pahang.[130] The CPM's efforts at subverting the Singaporean masses however continued unabated. The VMR broadcasts available twice daily in Singapore on 9590 k c/s and 7305 kc/s in the 31 and 41 metre bands was an all important link between the CPM leadership in the PRC and its urban subversion effort in Singapore. Singapore's Internal Security Department was quick to recognise that the VMR broadcasts were 'expedite means of giving broad outlines of tactics to the communist underground and front organisations and party supporters and sympathisers'.[131] On 29 July 70, the Singapore Telecoms Department began jamming the VMR station but such efforts were not completely effective.[132] The VMR continued to be a source of inspiration and instructions for CPM supporters and sympathisers well into 1981 when the VMR station was finally shut down by the CPM's Chinese sponsors.

According to the VMR broadcasts made over a four-day period to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the CPM, the official party line delineated the CPM's political and armed struggle into four historical periods:

---

[130] Dennis Bloodworth, *The Tiger and the Trojan Horse*, 315.
[131] Internal Security Department (Singapore) Files, *The Voice of the Malayan Revolution*, 26 May 1971.
[132] Ibid.

1. The first period was that of the pre-war underground struggle which began in April 1930 and ended in December 1941;

2. The Second period was the period of the Anti-Japanese National Liberation War (AJNLW) from December 1941 to August 1945;

3. The third period was the post-war period of peaceful struggle from August 1945 to June 1948;

4. The fourth period was that of the Anti-British National Liberation War (ABNLW) from June 1948 to 'today'.[133]

The CPM clearly perceived its post-68 armed struggle as part of the same continuum as its 'Anti-British-Liberation-War'. This rhetoric stemmed from the CPM worldview that post-independence Malaysia and Singapore never were sovereign states but remained as British neo-colonies. Rhetoric notwithstanding, the CPM's post-68 armed struggle was a distinct historical episode that unfolded in three phases:

1. The first phase was characterised by the infiltration and movement of CPM groups into Peninsular Malaysia and the re-establishment of an underground mass support and supply infrastructure from 1968 to 1973;

2. The second phase was in 1974: This was a watershed year that witnessed an increased armed violence as all three CPM groups tried to outdo each other;

3. The third and final phase was from 1975 to the end of the CPM's armed struggle in 1989 and the signing of the Haayai Peace Accords. However, in light of the lacuna in archival material, only the 1975-1981 period of the third phase will be covered in any detail.

---

[133] The 50 years of the CPM Part I (23 June 1981), The 50 years of the CPM Part II (24 June 1981), The 50 years of the CPM Part III (25 June 1981), The 50 years of the CPM Part IV (26 June 1981) in Wang Gungwu and Ong Weichong (eds), *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, Singapore: RSIS, 2009, 55-81.

The above three-phased rubric of the CPM's post-68 armed struggle reflects the CPM's methodical efforts to replicate the success of Mao's three-staged People's War in Malaya – step by step, stage by stage. For the CPM, Mao's People's War model remained the proven method of achieving revolutionary victory. From the strategic perspective, the 'using the countryside to encircle the cities' strategy adopted by the CPM from 1961 onwards was very much a carbon-copy replication of its Emergency-era approach to revolution. There were however marked distinctions between the colonial (1948-1960) and post-colonial (1968-1981) periods of the CPM's attempts at revolution - particularly in geopolitics, political economy, demographics and tactics.

Compared to the 1948 to 1960 period, the geopolitical space between 1968 and 1981 was shaped by the rapidly shifting dynamics of the Cold War with serious ramifications on the CPM's armed struggle. The most fundamental shift of them all was the increasing engagement between the PRC and the non-communist states of ASEAN in the 1970s that eroded the PRC's support for the CPM's armed revolution. On the local battleground, the Northern Malaysia states of Kedah, Perak and Kelatan - renowned 'black areas' of the First Emergency-era became once more the main 'cock-pit' of the CPM insurgents and government security forces in the Second Emergency. In recognition of the vulnerability of its border states to communist subversion, the Malaysian government invested heavily in various development schemes to integrate these economically backward states with the rest of the country. Indeed, strides made in the development of the post-colonial Malaysian and Singaporean political-economies severely dampened the CPM's call to revolutionary violence. One of the major failures of the MCP during the First Emergency was its lack of appeal to the Malay masses. In the Second Emergency, the CPM tried to rectify this 'demographic' problem by creating various Malay-Muslim front organisations such as Parti Persaudara'an Islam (PAPERI) and Malayan Islamic Fraternal Party (MIPF). The CPM was able to recruit large numbers of Thai-Malays, but despite its best efforts, support from the Malays south of the Thai border remained lacklustre. As with the MCP during the First Emergency, the CPM of the Second Emergency remained a largely Chinese dominated movement will limited appeal to the Malay majority. On the tactical front, small-unit actions reminiscent of the First Emergency remained the modus operandi of the revived armed struggle. In the Second Emergency, however, training

assistance provided by its Vietcong counterparts vastly improved the tactical competence of the CPM's armed units particularly in small-unit tactics, booby-traps tactics and ambushes. These various continuities and departures in geopolitical, political-economic, demographical and tactical conditions and their influence on CPM strategy will be constantly touched upon later in this chapter.

Rekindling the Revolutionary Flame (1968-1973)

The CPM's formal announcement of its intention to capture political power through armed struggle on 1, June, 1968 also marked the explicit rejection of all constitutional means of political engagement. The systematic transformation of all CPM united front activities into underground operations in support of the armed struggle was well underway by 1967. Instructions to initiate the switch came in a 1967 secret directive that stated:

> What form of struggle should be adopted?...The most important is the armed struggle of the masses, i.e. People's War. The so-called 'peaceful road', 'constitutional road' and 'parliamentary road' are all sham revolutions…The leftwing progressive parties, trade unions and revolutionary masses organisations must…gradually revolutionise the masses until they are ready to embark on People's War…penetrate deeper into the towns, corporations, mines, estates, villages, schools and various centres, pay particular attention to the rural areas, perform well the masses propaganda and organisational work in the rural areas…intensify the illegal struggle and consolidate the underground fortress in order to ensure…that we will not be without resources in the face of the white terror.[134]

Since 1968, CPM cadres and armed units have infiltrated into Malaysia from Southern Thailand with the aim of re-penetrating the 'black areas' – strongholds of the CPM in the First Emergency. In these localities, relatives, former CPM sympathisers and personal contacts could be relied upon for support and assistance in the creation of an underground mass support infrastructure. Indeed, these former CPM bastions were to serve as 'stepping

---

[134] Malaysian Government White Paper, *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Department, 1971, 11-12.

stones for the creation of a network of guerrilla bases that would eventually envelop the entire Peninsula and constitute the spring boards from which the armed struggle would be launched'.[135] In short, the infiltration and movement of CPM groups into Peninsular Malaysia and the re-establishment of an underground mass support and supply infrastructure constituted the opening and all-important build-up phase of the CPM's armed struggle from 1968-1973.

The re-establishment of an underground mass support and supply infrastructure was not the only objective of infiltration. The CPM needed to familiarise itself with the local topography which had changed considerably over the years as a result of federal land development schemes. The steady influx of infiltration groups into Peninsular Malaysia thus allowed the CPM to develop a better picture of the conditions prevailing on the ground. With familiarity with the terrain came increasing confidence. The initial shallow probing missions gradually increased in range frequency and scope. On 10 December 1969, the CPM staged its first sabotage in Malaysian territory by blowing up a railway bridge at Kok Mak near the border town of Padang Besar which was followed up by a night attack on the town's local police station on 14 December.[136] It must be noted that at this early stage of the armed struggle, these armed attacks were designed to test the reaction of the security forces and for the propaganda effect of publicising the credibility of the CPM's armed struggle rather than any serious attempt to challenge the security forces head-on. The considerable racial polarisation in Peninsular Malaysia since the 1964 elections and the advances of the non-Malay opposition parties roused latent fears among a considerable section of the Malay electorate that 'they might one day lose control of what they see as their own country'.[137] The May 13 1969 Riots that followed provided an opportunity for the CPM to increase the frequency of its probes into Peninsular Malaysia which were intended to discover the degree of support that the CPM could gain upon the re-establishment of its presence in the country.[138] The CPM however was ill-placed to take full advantage of the situation and exploit the fall in public confidence in the Alliance government.

---

[135] Ibid, 6.
[136] Ibid, 4.
[137] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/806, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1969, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 14 January 1970.
[138] Ibid.

Indeed, the focus in the early years from 1964 up to the May 13 1969 Riots was very much on building up the CPM's support and supply infrastructure. Since 1964, the CPM had been actively recruiting Thai Chinese and Malays in the border provinces of Southern Thailand. The Chinese recruits come mainly from the Betong and Sadao areas where a significant Thai-Chinese population is present while the Thai-Malays are largely from Narathiwat.[139] In the 'badlands' of Southern Thailand, the CPM managed to establish a level of influence and authority primarily with the rural Chinese squatters by chasing away the bandit-robbers plaguing the border area, sharing food and providing hope and empowerment to deprived youths. Indeed, the CPM considered the largely Chinese Betong Salient inhabited by about 29,000 Chinese, 5,000 Thais and 2,000 Thai-Malays as a 'liberated area'.[140] At the outbreak of the second shooting war, the CPM had a HQ in the Betong Salient and three regiments deployed along the Thai border areas facing Peninsular Malaysia: the 8th Regiment in the Sadao area, the 12th Regiment in the Betong Salient, and the 10th Regiment in the Weng district. All three regiments had subordinate assault units (AUs) in Kedah, Perak and Kelantan respectively.[141] As a result of a sustained recruitment drive in mid-1969, the CPM was able to increase its combat strength in Southern Thailand from an estimated 1100 to 1300 in February 1970 to an estimated overall strength of 2,000 in October.[142] These armed regiments were supported by the Malayan Communist Youth League (MCYL) which boasted an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 members in Southern Thailand.[143] Control of the Thai border areas provided the CPM with permanent bases from which it could launch cross-border operations into Malaysia and safe havens in which to organise, train, raise subscriptions from the local population, purchase weapons from the Thai black market and regroup when pursued by security forces.

The capture of a deserted CPM 12th Regiment camp on 1 May 1970 by a Malaysian-Thai joint operation indicated that the CPM's presence in Southern Thailand was clearly more than a temporary arrangement. The camp was surrounded by a ditch and a strong

---

[139] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/819, Note by the Ambassador, Bangkok: Situation in South of Thailand, British Embassy, Bangkok, 31 March 1970.

[140] Karl Hack, The Long March to Peace of the Malayan Communist Party in Southern Thailand, 189.

[141] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/71/2042, Communist Terrorist Organisation, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 4 November 1971.

[142] Ibid.

[143] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assement No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973, ANZUK Joint Intelligence Committee, 6 October 1971.

fence, and contained well constructed weather-proofed huts, showers and a large two-storey building built to accommodate about 150 insurgents.[144] The 'live and let live' approach adopted by the Thai security forces in the early years of the Second Emergency meant that the insurgents were given at least twenty-four hours notice before any Malaysian-Thai joint operation, meaning that such operations did little more than keep the CPM on the move.[145] This amicable arrangement suited both parties well. The Thais could focus their main COIN effort against the more serious threat of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) further north and the CPM could build up its strength. In 1970, the estimated strength of the three CPM regiments in Southern Thailand was listed as 226 in the 8th Regiment, 566 in the 12th Regiment and 220 in the 10th Regiment.[146]

The importance of the CPM's Thai bases cannot be emphasised enough. Upon the winding down of the CPM's united front activities, many of the CPM's hard-core cadres formerly engaged in the constitutional struggle with the Labour Party of Malaya (LPM) and Partai Rakyat Malaya (PRM) went underground to pave the way for the forthcoming armed struggle. Some of these cadres were sent to its bases in Southern Thailand for further training. As the communist underground progressed from the preparatory stage to the establishment of jungle operational bases, many of these highly-trained cadres were infiltrated back into Malaysia in the latter half of 1969. One such group was able to establish a series of jungle operational bases in the Kulim area in Kedah while another revived contacts in the Sungei Siput area in Perak which were then used to support the establishment of similar bases in the area.[147] Concealed food dumps were also set by the CPM underground in areas where the jungle bases were established. In short, the main objectives of these infiltration groups were to penetrate the area, recruit and train locally, return cadres to Thailand for training, establish bases, training camps and supply dumps, revive the communist underground network and avoid contact with the security forces wherever possible. In the eventuality of contact, the CPM units which were 'infinitely

---

[144] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Comments by Defence Attache Bangkok on Situation near Thai-Malaysian Border, British Embassy, Bangkok, 13 May 1970.
[145] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, CT Camps in Amphoe Betong, British Embassy, Bangkok, 28 May 1970.
[146] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/694, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September 1970, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 22 October 1970.
[147] *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, 16-17.

superior in jungle craft than either the army of the Police Field Force [PFF] units', would possess the tactical advantage.[148]

Once an area had been penetrated by CPM infiltration groups, arrangements were made to transfer recruits from other Malaysian states to bolster the CPM presence in the area. In areas selected for eventual penetration, underground organisations laid the groundwork for the anticipated return of CPM. Concealed food dumps were established and cadres sent into jungle hide-outs for training.[149] The revived Min Yuen network was to play a crucial support role in all these operations. During the First Emergency, the Min Yuen was the MCP's life-support-system responsible for its intelligence, finance, logistical supply and link to its mass organisations. The Min Yuen was to reprise its crucial life-support once more in the Second Emergency – particularly in the former 'black areas' where CPM sympathisers and links of kinship lingered on. The establishment of operational jungle bases and supply dumps in tandem with the revival of its clandestine network in Malaysian territory was a crucial element of the CPM's phase one plan to build the necessary underground infrastructure to sustain an extended insurgency – an impossible task without the arteries, eyes and ears of the Min Yuen.

On 30 May 1970, the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution' was outlined over the VMR:

(i) Overthrow the colonial rule of the British imperialists and their puppets, and establish a Malayan People's Republic;

(ii) Safeguard the people's democratic rights and respect freedom of religion and creed;

(iii) Confiscate and nationalise the enterprises of the imperialists and their running dogs, and protect national industries and commercial enterprises;

(iv) Abolish the feudal and semi-feudal land system, implement the system of 'Land to the Tiller'; and abolish usury;

(v) Improve the livelihood of the workers and poorly-paid employees, and implement the policy of parity of treatment to both male and female workers;

---

[148] DEFE 11/694, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September.
[149] *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, 22.

(vi) Implement the policy of equality in all respect for people of various races, oppose racial discrimination and strengthen the unity among the races;

(vii) Establish a strong People's Armed Force;

(viii) Develop a patriotic, democratic and scientific culture for all races, and oppose the imperialist and feudal culture;

(ix) Support the people of North Kalimantan in their struggle for national self-consciousness, and support the liberation struggle of all oppressed peoples.[150]

In mid-1970, the CPM was in no position to implement any of the above grandiose aims. The armed units of the CPM were in no position to mount a credible challenge to the authority of the Malaysian government. The 'worker-peasant' alliance lacked sufficient mass support to lend substance to the CPM's vision of land-industrial-labour-social reform even at the town level and at the regional level, the party's links with other pro-Beijing revolutionary movements were largely fraternal. Nevertheless, the appeal of the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution' to disaffected sections of the Malaysian population.

In October 1970, the CPM penetrated just three areas: northeast of Kulim in Kedah, near Grik in Perak and the Tanah Merah district in Kelantan. By September 1971, at least 4 additional areas in Perak State were found to have been penetrated by CPM infiltration groups. In addition, the CPM group at Tanah Merah moved further south to the Dabong/Kembu area. An estimated 225 to 300 insurgents were operating in all seven areas – a two-fold increase from the 110 to 160 estimate of October 1970.[151]A Malaysian Armed Forces Brigadier-General admitted that in the old hunting grounds of the First Emergency era, 'the social and economic position of the people in the rural areas was...being given special attention by the CTs to seek out recruits'.[152] The rich and poor divide within the Malay community and racial discrimination faced by ethnic Chinese in Malaysia (particularly after the 13 May race riots) were issues exploited by the CPM in its rural recruitment drives. Indeed, in an effort to develop a 'multi-racial capability', Malays from

---

[150] Outlines of the CPM's Struggle for the Fulfilment of a New Democratic Revolution (30 May 1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, p.13.

[151]AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assement No. 1/1971.

[152] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Intelligence Briefing Given by Chief of Staff and DMI for Air Commodore Cornish, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 December 1971.

the predominantly Malay10[th] Regiment were transferred to the predominantly Chinese 12th Regiment to assist in the penetration and recruitment of Malay communities in Perak.[153] In Kelantan, the 10th Regiment instructed its supporters to organise themselves into cells of the PAPERI - a CPM Muslim front organisation responsible for Malay recruitment.[154] In short, the exploitation of volatile issues close to the hearts of both the Malays and Chinese rural masses provided a platform from which the CPM could reach out to both ethnic communities.

In an attempt to revolutionise the hearts and minds of the Malaysian population, cells of the various underground fronts were tasked with bringing the message of the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution' to the masses. The Malayan National Liberation Front (MNLF) was the main underground organisation responsible for much of the CPM's efforts to create a mass support base in Peninsular Malaysia and was recognised by the security forces as the largest and best organised communist front organisation. By 1971, cell members of the MNLF have penetrated as far south as Johor – the southernmost state of Peninsular Malaysia. In the Northern states of Kedah, Perlis and Perak, there was a link between the MNLF state committees, the CPM armed units and underground cells but this relationship did not apply to MNLF cells in the southern Malaysian states which were largely inspired and controlled by messages from the VMR.[155]

Front organisations such as the Malayan Peasants Front (MPF) were established to organise the 'worker-peasant' alliance. The Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia (PRSM) and the Labour Party of Malaya (LPM) were two radical left-wing parties particularly responsive to CPM manipulation. Both parties were largely Chinese-based, with the PRSM operating in the rural areas and the LPM in the towns and cities. Both parties suffered from weak leadership and a lack of popular support. Nevertheless, the LPM and PRSM provided 'a valuable reservoir of supporters' through whom the communist underground organisation could be extended.[156] Members of de-registered pro-communist trade unions, intellectuals and students provided another source of potential support for the CPM

---

[153] AWM 122/71/2042, Communist Terrorist Organisation.
[154] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, Malayan Islamic Fraternal Party, Information Research Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 24 January 1973.
[155] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Intelligence Briefing Given by Chief of Staff and DMI for Air Commodore Cornish.
[156] AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assessment No. 1/1971.

movement.[157] The potential of channelling the highly impulsive energies of students into mainstream communist activism was also not lost on the CPM. The party leadership paid great attention to the harvesting of these young minds – particularly those of students in Chinese-medium schools. To that end, branches of the MCYL were established throughout the peninsula to penetrate Chinese-medium schools and coordinate student activism.

Likewise in Singapore, the three principal targets for communist subversion were radical left-wing parties, students in Chinese-medium schools and trade unions. April to June 1970 witnessed an increase in the number of left-wing disturbances in Singapore. The child of a British serviceman was accidentally killed by a CPM booby-trap bomb in April. Several fake booby traps attached with CPM flags were also found in various locations. On 14 June, a demonstration organised by expelled students from a Chinese High School, but later taken over by militant members of the BSS culminated in a bus being burned in spectacular fashion.[158] A British High Commission brief on the above indicated that: 'none of this points to any marked deterioration in the security situation but it does underline the fact that pro-communist sentiment among certain small sections of society including the young – has certainly not been silenced'.[159] Indeed, however prone the Chinese-medium high schools and Nanyang University might be to communist subversion, 'such small group cadre activities had been continuously monitored and hounded by the state security apparatus [that] their efficacy was limited'.[160] On the labour front, communist influence on Singaporean trade unions declined significantly. In March 1967, there were thirty pro-communist trade unions with a total membership of some 31,000. Five years on, there remained only thirteen pro-communist trade unions of which only three were affiliated to the BSS and two aligned to the CPM. Their total membership stood at 6,500 – or six percent of the 112,000 members who belonged to the eighty-five non-communist unions.[161] By 1972, the few remaining pro-communist unions were weak and there was a lack of solidarity between them and the pro-communist BSS.

---

[157] Ibid.
[158] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/879, Internal Security, British High Commission Singapore, 7 July 1970.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Hong Lysa and Huang Jianli, *The Scripting of A National History: Singapore and its Past*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008, 132.
[161] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1779, State of Security Assessment - Singapore, Security Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 11 January 1973.

The BSS itself was plagued with internal dissension and its call for 'extra-parliamentary struggle' in the form of demonstrations, protests and boycotts was generally unpopular with the Singaporean public. In the run-up to the 1972 Singapore general election, the Information Research Department (IRD) of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) noted that:

> [BSS's] tactics and its stilted language paraphrased from Radio Peking and [VMR] have become unintelligible to the general public. Its continued insistence that Malaysia does not exist and Singapore is not an independent state is also too removed from reality for the increasingly sophisticated Singaporeans to accept.[162]

Unlike in 1968 when it boycotted the election, the BSS participated in the 1972 general election but did not win any seats. The decision of the BSS Chairman, Dr Lee Siew Choh to contest the 1972 general elections split the party into those who supported the move and a dissident faction that maintained its refusal to recognise Singapore as a sovereign state. Thus the participation of the BSS in the 1972 election was to further weaken the already emaciated united front movement in Singapore. The PAP repeated the success of the 1968 election and won all sixty-five parliamentary seats with 69% of the balloted votes.[163] A South-east Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) Intelligence Assessment Committee report on Singapore concluded that:

> There is little immediate likelihood that a serious challenge to the PAP will emerge...the BSS looks increasingly ineffective as a vehicle for left-wing opposition to the PAP...There is no evidence that the Communists in Singapore are contemplating, or would be capable of implementing, a policy of armed struggle in the foreseeable future...The present Government is very well

---

[162] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1463, Barisan Sosialis and Singapore General Election, Information Research Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), 30 March 1972.
[163] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1463, Singapore General Elections, British High Commission Singapore, 5 September 1972.

entrenched...there is unlikely to be any increased popular inclination to support Communist activities, which are likely to continue at a low level.[164]

Indeed, by 1966, the BSS was no longer a viable alternative to challenge the PAP, but the 'last, pale manifestation of the united front' in Singapore.[165] By then, any centralised pro-communist organisation had all but disintegrated. Nevertheless, the CPM persisted in it attempts to subvert urban Singapore and rebuilt the communist underground in the island city-state. By 1972, the CPM underground in Singapore had reorganised its cadres to operate in scattered construction sites instead of mass organisations.[166] Just as in the Southern Malaysian States where centralised control was absent, the VMR acted as the Party's central control mechanism to inspire and galvanise into action the pockets of pro-communist sentiments and elements that remained on Singapore-island.

On 30 April 1972 at the forty-second anniversary of the inauguration of the party, the CPM adopted a new constitution which reaffirmed that: 'its revolutionary practice in the past forty years...has proved that encircling the city from the country-side and seizing political power by armed force is the only correct line in which they must pursue'.[167] In the application of its armed struggle, guerrilla tactics drawn from the Vietcong's experience were used extensively by the CPM in both defence and offense. Members of the CPM's infiltration groups were particularly well-trained in the art of ambush and the setting of booby-traps as evinced in the statement of a surrendered insurgent:

Comrade XXX was responsible for lecturing on and demonstrating military theories/tactics regarding the Vietnam War; Vietcong tunnels/trenches and Vietcong anti-personnel devices...We were taught how to rig up booby traps..laid at spots where Security Forces were likely to cover...We were also instructed in the use of explosives, such as inserting electrically detonated

---

[164] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 28 June 1972.

[165] C . C. Chin, 'The United Front Strategy of the Malayan Communist Party of Singapore, 1950s-1960s' in Michael D. Barr & Carl A. Trocki (eds), *Paths not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, Singapore: National University Press, 2008, 72.

[166] Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit

[167] The New Constitution of the CPM (31 May 1972) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia*, 14.

charges into big tree trunks in likely Security Forces' approach areas/routes as a counter-attack measure; hanging electrically-detonated mines on plants and setting up simultaneous mines.[168]

These tactics inflicted numerous casualties on the security forces and were highly effective in eroding the confidence of the Security forces. Indeed, the British were less than sanguine on the apparent inability of the Malaysian security forces to come to grasp with the CPM armed groups:

> The situation which results cannot accurately be described as one of containment by the Security Forces of the Communist terrorists so much as one of co-existence where each side goes about its business uninterruptedly and where contact between the two sides appears to be fortuitous.[169]

Indeed, more often than not, engagements were initiated by the CPM rather than at the whim of the security forces. From about mid-1970, the CPM were able to adopt a more refined pattern of engagement that matched its operations to the situation in particular localities and to the capabilities of the opposing security forces.[170]

In sum, the CPM's strategy and modus operandi for the years 1968 to 1973 in Peninsular Malaysia were as follows:

1. Activities such as ambushes were conducted to tie up security forces in border areas thus permitting maximum ease of infiltration movements;

2. Establish and operate from static and mobile bases, but do not as permanent base-camps. When attacked, the insurgent was to retreat and not to defend the installation other than as a delaying force;

---

[168] *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, 11.
[169] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1740, Communist Threat to Malaysia, Southwest Pacific Department, 6 September 1973.
[170] AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assessment No. 1/1971.

73

3. Use infiltration routes and staging points of the First Emergency where government inactivity permits;

4. The primary aim is to penetrate deep into Peninsular Malaysia, recruit from local population, conduct clandestine training, establish support of the masses for the CPM cause, alienate the government in the eyes of the people, and in so doing pave the way for the time when the government will be overthrown.[171]

From the outbreak of the armed struggle in 1968 to 1973, the CPM was able to step-up its infiltration further south into Peninsular Malaysia. The ability of the CPM largely to avoid unwanted contact with the security forces gave the CPM the opportunity to concentrate on the crucial phase one tasks of setting up an underground support and supply infrastructure, the development of its mass work and links with front organisations throughout the length and breadth of Peninsular Malaysia. At the same time, extensive exploitation of the Chinese community's perceived racial discrimination and local Malay discontent with the Federal government in the CPM's propaganda won over alienated sections of the Chinese population as well as limited Malay support. These steps were necessary to remedy the CPM's hitherto embryonic political and logistical support infrastructure, over-stretch government security forces and set the right conditions for the eventual full-fledge armed struggle that was to come. In Singapore, the decimation of the communist united front consigned the CPM to a campaign of long-distance subversion carried over the revolutionary airwaves.

1974: Turning Point of the Second Emergency

Documents captured by security forces in May 1971 revealed that both the 8th and 12th Regiments in Kedah and Perak respectively were to 'engage in a long term build-up of 2-5 years for Phase II operations' which implied either 1975 or 1976 as the kick-off point for phase two.[172] However, 1974 proved to be a turning-point year which witnessed a significant increase in communist armed violence in both Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. As explained in the introduction, by August 1974, the MCP had split into three

---

[171] AWM 122/71/2042, Communist Terrorist Organisation.
[172] Ibid.

74

different factions consisting of the CPM (central), CPMML (formerly the 2nd District of the 12th Regiment) and CPMRF (formerly the 8th Regiment). The split effectively ruined the underground infrastructure that had been built over the years as all three CPM factions tried to outdo each other in open battle with the government and amongst themselves. 1974 was also the year in which Malaysia formally established ties with the PRC. CPM's reaction to Kuala Lumpur's rapprochement with Beijing was to increase the tempo of its armed struggle in order to prove its revolutionary credentials. On the other hand, the CPMML was known to have sent out feelers to Moscow. Regardless of sponsors, the objective of all three CPM groups remained the overthrow of the legally constituted states of Malaysia and Singapore through armed struggle. In short, 1974 was a watershed year marked by spectacular acts of revolutionary violence as each CPM faction vied for the legitimacy and leadership of the communist movement in Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore.

The period from November 1973 to January 1974 witnessed an increase in the number of contacts between the security forces and communist insurgents. So much so that as early as late January 1974, 'these developments have caused speculation that 1974 will see increased CT activity in the peninsula, including areas which have been quiet since the Emergency ended in 1960'.[173] In October/November 1973, as part of its 'Southward Advance' into the heartlands of Malaysia, the CPM made a thrust through the Cameron Highlands into Central Pahang with the intention of establishing a permanent presence in the Jerantut, Kuala Lipis and Raub areas. Once in Central Pahang, the infiltrated insurgents could rely on a network of food dumps established by the MNLF. These infiltrators in conjunction with the CPM front organisations were to extend their support amongst the Chinese population in the penetrated areas.[174] The CPM's thrust into Central Pahang was however frustrated in November/December 1973 when the Security forces discovered and seized 42 of the CPM clandestine food dumps and arrested twenty-two of its cadres.[175]

By then, it was becoming evident that the communist insurgents were actively pursuing a policy of selective assassination of Chinese MSB officers – the real eyes and

---

[173] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation in Peninsular Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 1974.
[174] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1921, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1973 and Sir J. Johnston's Valedictory, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 11 January 1974.
[175] FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation in Peninsular Malaysia.

ears of the security services. The significance was not lost on Donald McD Gordon, the British Defence Attaché in Malaysia who reported that:

> The CTs seem to be maintaining a systematic programme of selective assassination of isolated SB personnel with good knowledge in exposed areas. The recent victims have all been Chinese, while the majority of new recruits into the SB are Malays (who invariably do not speak or read Chinese). With potential Chinese recruits discouraged by limited prospects of promotion an intimidated by the threat of assassination, this reinforces fears which we have previously expressed that the SB's ability to gather intelligence on the mainly Chinese CT organisation will deteriorate.[176]

The CPM was well aware that a selective assassination programme coupled with the running-down of the MSB's intelligence capabilities presented a golden opportunity to cloud the vision and muff the ears of the security services. Selective assassination was also employed as a tool of psychological warfare and to generate propaganda capital. In the case of the CPMML, Malaysian members of the Thai-Malaya General Border Committee were specifically targeted in order to relieve the pressure of government security operations in the Betong Salient. As a high-ranking committee member, Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Hashim, Inspector-General of Police (IGP) was targeted for elimination. On 4 June 1974, the IGP was successfully assassinated in Kuala Lumpur.[177] It was a clear signal that the armed struggle was no longer confined to the periphery of the countryside and border-states but brought ever closer into the metropole and urban areas.

The assassination of the IGP also announced the arrival of the CPMML on the revolutionary scene. Its existence was however kept under wraps until 22 October 1974 when the CPMML's banners, leaflets and manifestos that openly called for 'a revolt against the old revisionist clique' of the CPM were discovered throughout Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore.[178] The CPMML's October 'flag-raising' activities (organised essentially in

---

[176] Ibid.
[177] Aloysius Chin, *The Communist Party of Malaya*, 235.
[178] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation: Split in the CPM, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 October 1974.

Kuala Lumpur) and the high-profiled assassination of the IGP was intended as a show of strength in the urban areas and an open challenge to Chin Peng's leadership of the Communist cause in the Malay Peninsula. Nonetheless, the slew of CPMML-organised urban actions represented a serious rift within the CPM movement rather than a sign of growing support amongst disaffected urban Chinese.

Despite the limited effectiveness of the security forces, particularly in areas of intelligence and joint-operations, the increased contact between the security forces and the insurgents allowed the authorities to uncover hitherto hidden aspects of the CPM's plans and modus operandi. It was soon made known that since mid-1970, an estimated 200 Malaysians from various states with genuine Malaysian documentation had joined the communist insurgents. Unlike their veteran comrades from the First Emergency or those recruited in Southern Thailand, these insurgents with Malaysian identity cards had the ability to move freely throughout the country. Some were absorbed into local armed units while others established local support infrastructure in their home areas. 'Mobile groups' of highly trained cadres were set up to perform operational tasks outside of the jungle.[179] Such 'mobile groups' were thought to have been responsible for the selected assassination of five Chinese MSB officers and the IGP.[180] Indeed, between 1974 and 1978, at least twenty-three police personnel - the majority being Chinese Special Branch personnel were assassinated by these mobile groups.[181] As each CPM faction sought to outdo each other by committing their 'mobile groups' to ever more spectacular acts of urban terrorism, cadres who were previously unknown to the intelligence services became increasingly exposed.

The 'general increase in aggressiveness of the Malayan Communist terrorists in Peninsular Malaya' inspired a spate of CPM-linked activities across the Causeway.[182] In yet another hallmark CPM 'flag-display' marking the anniversary of the outbreak of the First Emergency', a number of communist flags and banners were found throughout Singapore in the week of 17 June 1974. On 20 June, a banner-attached booby trap exploded without

[179] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 July 1974.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Aloysius Chin, *The Communist Party of Malaya*, 238.
[182] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Arrests of Communist Activists in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 21 August 1974.

causing any casualties.[183] Since 22 June, over 40 alleged CPM members were arrested. Most of the detainees were relatively well-educated middle class mature persons from both the Chinese and English educational streams – 'people who had most to gain from a buoyant capitalist Singapore and who would be least likely to wish to upset the existing form of government'.[184] The fact those detainees did not quite conform to the stereotypical profile of a CPM cadre was of particular concern to the Singapore government – particularly those who were English-educated. Out of the fifteen members of the VMR's English section, five were former student activists from the University of Singapore Students Union (USSU). These with 3 other English-educated members were known to their VMR colleagues as the 'Englishmen'.[185] There was certainly a concerted effort to appeal to the English-educated students and middle-class Singaporeans. The infiltration of factories with the hope of recruiting support and sabotage as well as assassination of selected individuals at 'appropriate times' similar to the pattern of assassinations in Peninsular Malaysia were other CPM objectives in urban Singapore.[186]

The inaugural visit of Tun Razak to Beijing in May 1974, the first ever visit by a Malaysian Prime Minister to China since the founding of the PRC prompted a vehement response from the CPM. Some 100 insurgents crossed the border from Southern Thailand and blew up sixty-three pieces of heavy earth moving plant and equipment that were used to build the East/West Highway.[187] Despite the efforts of CPM at proving its revolutionary credentials, the Chinese government assured Razak that ethnic Chinese with Malaysian citizenship were no longer Chinese citizens.[188] On the issue of the CPM split, the CCP also chose not to intervene in what it considered as an internal party affair of Malaysian communists. However, the open challenge to Chin Peng's leadership and the successful elimination of such the high-profiled IGP by a dissident faction (CPMML) could not but prompt the CPM to respond. The CPM Central Committee viewed the refusal of the CPMML and CPMRF to participate in the 'Southward Advance' as traitorous acts that

---

[183] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Priority FCO Telegram No.348, British High Commission Singapore, 22 June 1974.
[184] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Arrests in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 28 June 1974.
[185] Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit, Singapore.
[186] FCO 15/1904, Arrests in Singapore, 28 June 1974.
[187] FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974.
[188] Ibid.

sabotaged the revolutionary armed struggle, and exhorted its erstwhile loyal cadres to greater effort.[189]

On the other hand, both the dissident factions asserted that 'the contradiction within the Party had first to be resolved' before any 'Southward Advance' and viewed the enterprise as 'a manoeuvre employed by the power-holders in the Central Committee to cover their sinister plan of destroying the Party and ruining the Army'.[190]The internal schism within the movement was a severe setback to the CPM's plans for a concerted 'Southward Advance' into Peninsular Malaysia. For fear of CPMML and CPMRF attacks, the CPM/MNLA incursions into the Northern Malaysian states of Kelantan, Kedah, Perak were often platoon-sized operations rather than the large scale offensive that the CPM had hoped. CPM had to prove that its 'Southward Advance was the 'correct line' and in so doing, prematurely embarked on the second phase of the armed struggle. The precipitated ratcheting-up of the armed struggle had the following consequences: the CPM's thrust into Central Pahang shook the Malaysian Government into more effective action; Cadres were increasingly exposed and made known to the intelligence services; and the piece-meal operations attrited away much of the CPM's strength. The tactical successes of the CPM in numerous small-unit engagements and the inability to the security forces to decisively engage the CPM in its strongholds in Southern Thailand masked the strategic setbacks suffered by the Malaysian communist movement in 1974 – the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Beijing and Kuala Lumpur and the breaking-up of CPM into three separate factions. Instead of rationalising and revising its armed struggle strategy, the CPM stood by its 'Southward Advance' roadmap from which there was to be no return.

Crossing the Rubicon (1975-1981)

Largely driven by local developments, 1974 was the year in which all three factions of the CPM committed themselves to the all-out pursuit of revolutionary violence. Within the Southeast Asian region, the fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh to communist forces in 1975

---

[189] Outlines of the CPM's Struggle for the Fulfilment of a New Democratic Revolution (30 May 1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 13.
[190] Aloysius Chin, *The Communist Party of Malaya*, 238.

provided a considerable confidence boost to the CPM's faith in its Maoist strategy. The Communist take-over of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam was the penultimate vindication of the CPM's line that by 'using the countryside to encircle the cities...the people of a small country can defeat aggression by a big country'.[191] Nevertheless, without any real support from its erstwhile CCP patrons, the CPM's vision of revolutionary success in Malaysia remained unrealistic and unattainable. The establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Malaysia and China drove a wedge between the CCP-CPM's patron-client relationship that was to prove fatal for the CPM. Indeed, the unequivocal support of the CCP in 1961 stood in stark contrast to the winding down of the VMR station in 1981 at the behest of the both the Singaporean and Malaysian governments. All the same, as late as 1980, the VMR continued to maintain:

> [The] experience of the CPM in the past 50 years confirms that for the Malayan revolution to achieve victory, it is necessary, whatever the circumstance, to persist in the road of 'using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force': Our experience tells us that to achieve victory in our revolution, we cannot go in for the road of so-called parliamentary democracy, nor the road of armed uprising in the cities or urban guerrilla warfare. We can only take the road of using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force.[192]

With hindsight, it is all too easy to conclude that without sufficient internal support from the Malay masses and external support from the Chinese, the CPM armed struggle was doomed to failure. In 1975 however, the victories of the Indochinese communist parties in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam represented for the CPM a real hope of physical links between the fraternal communist parties of Southeast Asia. Moreover the continued inability of the security forces to come to grips with the insurgents at the tactical level well into 1977 masked the strategic setbacks from which the CPM never recovered. The 'Domino Theory' did not come to pass, but the dogged pursuit of all-out armed struggle in

---

[191] Congratulatory Message from CPM to the Vietnam Workers Party and South Vietnamese National Front for Liberation (8 May 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 184.

[192] Long live the CPM - In Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the CPM Part 1 (28 April 1980) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 33.

the 1975 to 1981 period was a last throw of the dice that the CPM leadership was compelled to take.

In Singapore, the CPM clung on to their long-cherished goal of re-establishment of the Communist United Front of workers, students and intellectuals.[193] To that end, its subversive and recruitment efforts were widened to include distinctly bourgeois groups such as journalists, lawyers, marketing executives, ballet dancers and teachers. One such cell organised by lawyer G Raman aimed to:

> Force the government to release hardcore communist detainees in readiness for the general elections due 1976/77. The released detainees could then group and rebuild the Communist United Front to complement the armed struggle of the CPM. In part this was in association with Euro-communists, exerting pressure through the Socialist International.[194]

The success of the CPM in subverting and recruiting certain sections of Singapore's urban middle class came as a 'surprise rather than alarm' for the Singapore government.[195] Nonetheless, ISD's arrest of a ballerina, a dancing school principal and a sales manager who subsequently confessed their involvement in clandestine communist activities over television in 1976 revealed that the CPM's strategy of recruiting members from all classes in society, especially the middle and upper classes was becoming a cause of concern.[196] In 1977 further arrests and confessions of a public accountant, a lawyer, a company secretary, a property manager, and a journalist led the Singapore government to classify communist subversion as the most serious threat to Singapore's security.[197] Unlike the intimidating thoroughness of control exercised by the Communist United Front in the 1950s and 60s, the

---

[193] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, A Southeast Asian Looking to 1980, Address by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the National Press Club Luncheon, Canberra, 21 October 1976.

[194] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2232, Singapore: Arrests and Security (December 1976-March 1977), British High Commission Singapore, 12 April 1977.

[195] FCO 15/2158, A Southeast Asian Looking to 1980.

[196] Jon S T Quah, 'Meeting the Twin Threats of Communism and Communalism: The Singapore Response' in Chandran Jeshurun (ed), *Governments and Rebellions in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985, 190.

[197] Ibid, 207.

81

'parlour communists' of mid-1970s Singapore were 'all too ready to opt out when the going began to get rough'.[198] Nonetheless, the CPM's efforts at subversion and rebuilding its urban underground infrastructure in Singapore continued well into the 1980s.

In the CPM's main area of operations, the building of the Temenggor Dam in Perak posed a serious threat to the CPM's continued ability to carry out operations in the whole of Peninsular Malaysia. The eventual completion and flooding of the dam and the completion of the East/West Highway would 'act as a physical barrier against CTO infiltration from Thailand, forcing the CTO to seek other, more, difficult, routes'.[199] Attempts were therefore made to set up coastal supply routes in Perak State.[200] Additionally, attempts were made to sabotage the construction of the Temenggor Dam and East/West Highway as well as attacks on the security forces protecting and involved in the construction efforts. On 14 March 1976, a soldier from the Malaysian Engineers was killed and three others wounded by a booby-trap in the Temenggor Dam area.[201] The CPM was well aware that Perak was a crucial 'centre of gravity' that it must dominate.

To that end, the CPM continued its efforts to win the cooperation of the Malay rural masses in the Northern Malaysian states by increasing the presence of Malay-led CPM units in Perak and Pahang.[202] In addition to its traditional Chinese rural-squatter audience, the CPM's New Draft Agrarian Programme also attempted to seduce the poor Malay rural masses with promises of land redistribution and assurances of the compatibility of communism and Islam. The programme pledged to:

(a) Confiscate the cultivated land of the British monopoly capitalists, including

rubber plantation, oil palm plantation, coconut plantation, tea plantation, etc., and turn it over to the people's republic. Agricultural workers will take part in its management on the

---

[198] FCO 15/2158, A Southeast Asian Looking to 1980. FCO 15/2232, Singapore: Arrests and Security (December 1976-March 1977).
[199] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 August 1976.
[200] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up December 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 12 December 1975.
[201] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up March 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 April 1976.
[202] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.

basis of developing national economy, ensuring the improvement of the workers' livelihood and working conditions and promoting the workers' welfare.'

(b) Confiscate the cultivated land including plantation and padi field as well as agricultural installation, building, etc., belonging to the bureaucratic organs, big bureaucrat-capitalists and national traitors. The plantations shall be turned over to the people's republic. Padi fields shall be allotted gratis to those peasants having little or no land;

c) Confiscate the waste land and virgin forest land occupied by the bureaucratic organs, big bureaucrat-capitalists and big plantation owners and allot it gratis to those peasants having little or no land;

(d) Confiscate the land included in the various land development schemes of the reactionary government and allot it gratis to the participants of these schemes. Abolish all debts which have been imposed upon the participants through the land development schemes for the purpose of exploiting and enslaving them;

(e) Confiscate the land of the tyrannical landlords and allot it gratis to those peasants having little or no land;

(f) Protect the plantations of the medium and small national capitalists, improve the livelihood and working conditions of the workers in the medium and small plantations and promote their welfare through consultations;

(g) Defend the justifiable right of the poverty-stricken peasants to own land. Oppose the barbarous annexation of the rubber small-holdings belonging to the poverty stricken peasants by the reactionary government;

(h) Return the land to those peasants who have been induced and forced by the bureaucratic organs to participate in so-called co-operative societies with their land and abolish the peasants' debts;

(i) Recognise the peasants' right of ownership to their land which they have opened up with their own labour;

(j) Oppose the barbarous evictions of rural inhabitants by the reactionary government, abolish new villages and resettlement areas, abolish land tax, assessment and all other taxes and duties and ensure the rural inhabitants the freedom to choose their domicile, freedom of movement, freedom to work and freedom to seek their livelihood;

(k) Oppose the savage persecution of the Orang Asli by the reactionary government and ensure their freedom to choose their domicile, freedom to till the soil and freedom of movement;

(1) Protect the land belonging to religious organisations, mosques and temples, schools, public welfare organisations and religious teachers;

(m) Abolish all debts incurred through usury;

(n) Oppose the monopoly of the fishing industry exercised by the bureaucratic organs, abolish feudal and semi-feudal exploitation of off-shore fishermen and safeguard their right to existence and their immediate interest.[203]

In practical terms, without genuine territorial control of the Northern Malaysian states, the CPM was in no position to carry out its proposed land reform programme. As with most such proclamations, the initial intended effect was to exploit potential grievances and subvert the masses with the hopes of galvanising them into action. The CPM's plans for a concerted 'Southward Advance' were impeded not only by government action but also the internecine conflict between the three CPM factions that prevented the CPM from concentrating its resources on any major operations.

---

[203] Draft Agrarian Programme of the CPM (27 December 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 16-7.

The months of January and February 1976 witnessed several armed clashes between CPM and CPMML in the Betong Salient that were 'connected with the CPMML desire to expand territorially in order to expand their sphere of influence and to force their ideology on the Old Guard as the True Believers'.[204] On 14 June 1976, several leaflets issued by the MNLF were found in Ipoh condemning its rival CPMML controlled MPLL faction for 'carrying out irresponsible and ill-planned attacks which only led to intensive police operations against all underground elements and thus directly affected subversive work by the Party'.[205] Indeed, 1975 was remembered as a year in which the MPLL embarked on a widespread urban terror campaign. On 31 March 1975, the MPLL mounted a series of coordinated attacks with home-made rockets on security forces bases throughout Malaysia that varied from an air force base in the capital to the Police Field Force (PFF) camp in Simpang Rengam.[206] These attacks were followed up with a grenade attack on the Central Brigade PFF camp in Kuala Lumpur on 4 September and the targeted assignation of Perak's Chief Police Officer (CPO) in Ipoh on 13 November.[207] Since 1975, the CPMML had been identified by the security forces as the 'fastest growing and most aggressive of the three [CPM] factions'.[208] The CPM Old Guard's and the CPMRF's actions were largely confined to limited offensives in the border areas as well as attacks on the Tememggor Dam and East-West Highway in the case of the main CPM.[209] Indeed, by January 1977, what was formerly the 2nd District of the CPM 12 Regiment had grown to an insurgent force some one thousand strong with one of its companies, 8 Company reportedly spawning a further 1, 2 and 3 Combat Companies within its own cell.[210]

In addition to its urban insurgency campaign, the CPMML were making incursions into the CPM's traditional areas around Kroh and Baling with the intention of establishing a permanent presence in the states of Kedah and Perak.[211] Such a move was a direct

---

[204] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up February 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 March 1976.
[205] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up June 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 July 1976.
[206] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur.
[207] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.
[208] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 1977.
[209] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976.
[210] FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977.
[211] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.

challenge to the CPM's authority and threatened to cut off the CPM's assault units in Kedah and Perak from CPM HQ in the Betong Salient .The CPM was also greatly concerned with the potential link-up of both the dissident CPMML and CPMRF factions. The CPM's Special District Force (fourteen percent of the CPM's total strength) played the specific role of a wedge between the CPMML in the western half of the Betong Salient and the CPMRF in the Sadao district.[212] Such an impact on the CPM's strategy and operations cannot be underestimated. Substantial manpower resources that otherwise could be committed to the 'Southward Advance' were now tied up north. Moreover, the CPMML's increased militancy proved to be a direct challenge to the CPM's leadership of the Malayan communist movement and its survival as an organisation.

At the peak of the 1975-76 violence, the estimated fighting strength of the CPM was as follows: CPM HQ (49); Special District Force (130); 12th Regiment (819); and 10th Regiment (432). The most aggressive group, the CPMML could count on strength of over 600 cadres while the smallest of the three factions the CPMRF had 159 members. These forces were augmented by underground units of about 2,400 for the CPM and about 700 in the case of the CPMML.[213] In January 1977, there were seven identified CPM units in Peninsular Malaysia. They were namely 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12 and 16 Assault Units (AU). 7 AU in Kelantan was the aboriginal specialist unit responsible for the subversion of the Orang Asli. The main threat, 8 AU which re-entered Malaysia in 1976 after retraining and reorganisation in Southern Thailand was believed to have been severely disrupted with an operational strength of about 20 cadres. 6 AU in Pahang of approximately a hundred members was responsible for the CPM's eastward expansion with the aim of subverting the rural Malays in Trengganu. 5 AU of about 127 insurgents assisted in the establishment of 6 AU's presence in Pahang and constituted the CPM's main base for expansion to the East and South. By January 1977, 5 AU was only able to maintain four Min Yuen groups and its main supply routes were severed by security operations. It was perhaps inevitable that 10AU's thirty-six strong force soon became charged with the establishment of an Eastern infiltration route. Finally, 12 AU operating in the Grik/Temenggor area was tasked with

---

[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.

infiltration from Thailand and the harassment of the Temenggor Dam and East/West Highway projects.[214]

In the jungle border areas at least, the CPM tactic of 'the well planned ambush on an easy target, the 'come on' situation to lure the unwary and the extensive use of home-made booby traps, both as camp defensive devices and deterrents to follow-up or counter-attack operations' were extensively and efficiently used to inflict 'stinging blows' on the security forces and withdraw to a secure base in comparative safety.[215] The superior tactical jungle skills of the CPM however could not remedy the attrition of its all important underground infrastructure. By 1976, the extensive crippling of the CPM's underground organisation in the Northern State towns denied the jungle-based armed units much of their existential support in the four Northern States.[216] As the security forces became more proficient resulting in the arrest and capture of many high-ranking CPM cadres, the CPM was forced to scale back on its AU-sized armed activities and concentrate on targeted assassinations and subversion. Moreover instead of reprisal attacks on the police or urban terrorism, the CPM underground turned its attention to the presumably softer targets such as members of vigilante corps and village militias, police informers and those with past associations with the military.[217]

By 1976, the CPM was forced back on the defensive in the key state of Kedah.[218] Indeed, by the first half of 1976, the main CPM effort was defensively directed toward 'building up the communist infrastructure in their existing areas of operation and consolidating their possible incursion routes on both sides of the mountain spine'.[219] MNLF pamphlets recovered by MSB outlining the objectives for the latter quarter of 1976 directed its cadres to 'reduce terrorist activity and concentrate on the re-activation of united front

---

[214] FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977.
[215] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976.
[216] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2235, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1976, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 31 December 1976.
[217] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia.
[218] FCO 15/2235, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1976.
[219] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976.

activity by concentrating on the penetration of youth groups, unions, mineworkers and student organisations'.[220] By March 1977 it was reported that:

> The increase in underground activities has continued. The [AUs] have avoided contact where possible and have concentrated their efforts on consolidating their position and, not least, survival. There have been no activity from 8 AU for 5 months and it is likely that they have withdrawn up to the Betong Salient.[221]

As 1977 wore on, it was apparent that CPM efforts to sabotage the construction of the Temenggor Dam had failed to produce results. By April, the dam was sealed and flooded with the water level reaching an old hill-top Police Field Force (PFF) camp.[222] In short, by mid-1977, not only were the CPM increasingly overstretched and forced to adopt a subversion policy, but the search for alternative infiltration and supply routes to replace those cut off by the flooding of the Temenggor Dam and the construction of East/West Highway became ever more pressing – particularly exacerbated by its now severely crippled underground lifelines.

By February 1978, under severe pressure in its normal area of operations, 6 AU were forced into Negri Sembilan for space to recover and consolidate.[223] In April of the same year, both 8 AU and 10 AU appeared to be inactive and returned to their parent regiments (12 and 10 regiment respectively) in Southern Thailand.[224] Increased security forces pressure as well as that from the other two rival CPM factions severely disrupted the CPM's underground infrastructure which was in serious need of rebuilding. By mid-1978, the CPM was on the strategic defensive and unable to move beyond the first phase of Mao's textbook definition of People's War. The

---

[220] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up October 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 1976.

[221] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up March 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 April 1977.

[222] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 9 May 1977.

[223] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up February 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 February 1978.

[224] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up April 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 May 1978.

Chartered strength of all three CPM factions (known by a minimum of three persons) in October 1978 was as follows:

Southern Thailand

CPM – 1524
CPMML – 555
CPMRF – 160

Peninsular Malaysia

CPM – 497

By then, the 3,300 or so insurgents were supported by approximately 1,000 communist underground members in Peninsular Malaysia. [225] These figures were a far cry from the initial days of the revived armed struggle just a decade ago when the MCYL in Southern Thailand alone boasted an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 members or the 2,400 or so CPM underground members just two years ago. Despite a need to rebuild its severely crippled underground strength and lifelines in the Northern States of Peninsula Malaysia, CPM Central Committee in Beijing continued to assert the correctness of its revolutionary warpath.

On 28 April 1980, the VMR proclaimed that: 'we cannot go in for the road of so-called parliamentary democracy, nor the road of armed uprising in the cities…We can only take the road of using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force'. [226] On 27 June 1980, three days before the cessation of transmissions, the VMR once again counselled against the false path of giving up the rural insurgency. It played on the spectre of the First Emergency and warned that:

---

[225] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up October 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 November 1978.
[226] 50 Years of the CPM 7th and Last Instalment (29 June 1981) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 90.

Our Party Central Committee had not made a sufficiently deep-going criticism of the Right-opportunist line adopted after the Japanese surrender and had not been conscious or fully conscious of the need to persist in the road of 'using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force': This erroneous line entailed putting an end to the armed struggle and changing the form of struggle to facilitate the accumulation of revolutionary strength and to create conditions for an armed struggle in a later period.[227]

By June 1980, it was evident that the CPM's armed struggle was becoming unsustainable and prospects for success unrealistic. Nevertheless, CPM Central Committee considered the legal constitution means an even more misguided option. With the collapse of the united front in Singapore in 1966, the CPM lost its best chance at the legal route to power. It was easy to see why the CPM placed so much more faith in its clandestine arms than any open political instrument. The CPM had intended to move into the second phase of its armed struggle sometime in 1975, but it was clear that by 1978, it was forced to take the strategic defensive. Selected assassinations of high-profile targets and acts of sabotage were spectacular, but those activities in themselves did little to further the CPM's cause of establishing a People's Republic on the Malay Peninsula. By early 1979, all three CPM factions had still some 2,400 insurgents in its safe havens in Southern Thailand but only 500 insurgents in Peninsula Malaysia supported by less than 1,000 members of the communist underground.[228] In the case of the CPM assault units active in Peninsula Malaysia, 'in all except 5 and 6 AU, the communist aim is little more than to exist'.[229] The CPM could still recruit to bolster its depleted ranks – albeit almost exclusively from the Thai Chinese population.

Why then did the CPM choose to persist in the path of revolutionary violence in 1978 when most indicators pointed towards its failure? The explanation could be found in the 'push-pull' manner that its armed struggle unfolded. The initial phase of

---

[227] 50 Years of the CPM Part V (27 June 1981) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 83.

[228] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence in Malaysia, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 March 1979.

[229] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.

the CPM's armed struggle characterised by the patient infiltration and movement of CPM groups into Peninsular Malaysia and the re-establishment of an underground mass support and supply infrastructure from 1968 to 1973 stood in stark contrast to the 'death-charge' of 1974. As argued, 1974 was a watershed year that witnessed a significant increase in revolutionary armed violence as all three CPM groups tried to outdo each other. That in itself was a paramount push factor. In the case of the main CPM group, the ability to demonstrate its revolutionary leadership was an existential matter. Moreover, the formal establishment of diplomatic ties between Malaysia and the PRC had the effect of prodding the CPM to prove its international revolutionary credentials while the success of the communists in Indochina likewise pulled the CPM in the same direction. The lack of direct high-level contacts between the Malaysian government and the CPM until the 1980s certainly did little to change perceptions. [230] The CPM's lack of dialogue with the Malaysian political establishment meant that the legal option simply was not open. If the CPM did learn anything from the First Emergency, it was better to stick to one's guns than to suffer the ignominy of surrender.

By 1975, faced with an aggressively ambitious CPMMF that sought to challenge the CPM's leadership, the CPM was pushed to respond in a correspondingly 'old guard' way of upping the ante and teaching the 'revisionist' upstarts a lesson. The challenge posed by the CPMMF's encroachment into the CPM's traditional strongholds in Perak and the flooding of the Temenggor Dam and the construction of East/West Highway threatened to cut off the lifelines which the CPM had built over the decades and possibly its survival as an organisation. That pushed the CPM to an immediate response of fighting the 'revisionists', searching for an Eastern infiltration route, maintaining pressure on the security forces in the form of selected assassinations as compared to AU-level actions, focusing on subversion and buying time to rebuild its devastated infrastructure. The Beijing-based CPM Central Committee had misread the initial tactical successes of the early years as possibilities for an eventual strategic victory. In far off Beijing, removed from ground realities in Malaysia, that promise became an all powerful pull that sustained the

---

[230] Interview with General Kitti Ratanachaya, Deputy Commander of the Thai Fifth Infantry Division (later Commander of Fourth Army Region),

dogged steadfastness in which the CPM pursued its text-book interpretation of the 'using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force' line to the very end. The manner in which this particular message of revolutionary violence was sold to the masses in post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore will be the subject of the next chapter.

4.

The Role of Mass Persuasion in Shaping a People's Republic

Critical to the success of People's War was the use of mass persuasion - a process that exploited all feasible vehicles of communications and means of influence to bring the Revolutionary Party to the masses. During the Second Emergency, the VMR came to embody the CPM's mass persuasion efforts at the strategic level. The use of a clandestine radio network might seem like a new found capability, but the operational and tactical shifts in CPM propaganda practice should not obscure the underlying consistency in strategic objectives – to revolutionise the thoughts and actions of its target audience. Thus, any modifications should be rationalised as adaptations of the Maoist mass persuasion model to the conditions of the 'Malayan Revolution'. Apart from certain departures in the selected method of communication and the specific issues exploited, there was very little to distinguish between the CPM's subversive efforts during the First Emergency and those of the Second Emergency. Indeed, there were remarkable consistencies in the methodology and practices despite the twenty-year odd hiatus that separated both Emergencies. This chapter highlights those continuities as well as the operational, tactical, and other contextual departures that did, in fact, take place.

The fact that the Maoist model was the CPM's preferred choice to revolutionary power had a significant impact on both the shooting war and war for hearts and minds. The constant reiteration of Mao's 'mass-line', indeed, more than that, the unstinting veneration of it was evident in the VMR broadcasts as well as within official CPM documents. As late as 1980, one of the preliminary statements of the CPM's New Constitution exhorted that:

> The mass line is the basic line in all the work of the Party...We must serve the masses of people, be concerned with their well-being, and pay attention to the method of work. We should have faith in the masses, be accountable to them and learn from them. We should maintain close ties with the masses, vigorously

mobilise them and firmly rely on them. We should adopt the method of 'from the masses to the masses'; take the idea of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses to carry them through. It is necessary to bring about the integration of the leadership with the masses. We should...define our task according to the demands of the local masses at the time concerned, proceed from the existing level of consciousness of the masses and certainly guide them forward.[231]

The above 'general line' evinced not only the wholesale appropriation of Maoist methodology, but also the verbatim incorporation of Mao's words into the CPM's guiding principles and practice. The aforesaid 'general line' was a textbook replication of the Maoist 'mass-line' doctrine - maximum possible interaction with the masses at the ground level in order for mass persuasion and mass mobilisation to succeed. In short, the CPM's strategic propaganda campaign during the Second Emergency exemplified the CPM's efforts to replicate 'lock, stock and barrel' the success of the Chinese Communists in creating a revolutionary mass movement that would ultimately prevail into a People's Republic.

Another Maoist method of influence adopted by the CPM was to play upon themes such as class-divide issues, exploitation by imperialists-capitalists, exploitation and corruption of traditional power-holders and the compatibility of communism with other interest groups (i.e. Islam and petty-bourgeoisie). These were recurrent themes in the VMR broadcasts which manifested themselves as the constant reiteration and reinforcement of the five following messages: first, the CPM was a party of the masses both locally and globally; Second, the masses were being oppressed and neglected by the Singapore and Malaysian governments in favour of the capitalist elites and foreign powers; third, the practice of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism under the leadership of the CPM was the only way for the masses; fourth, the people of a small country can defeat aggression by a big country; and finally a call for the masses to unite under the

---

[231] The Constitution of the CPM (31 May 1980) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 43.

94

CPM against their oppressors.[232] The CPM's practice of the Maoist concept of 'thought determines action' via the constant reiteration and reinforcement of these five recurrent themes form the main platform on which CPM sought to socialise the thoughts of the masses and mobilise them into action.

Mass persuasion also depended on the fusion of the propaganda of the word with the propaganda of the deed. On the MCP's attempts at reconciling both ends (word and deed) during the First Emergency, Kumar Ramakrishna opined that: 'despite its voluminous leaflets suggesting that it represented the oppressed masses in the fight against British Imperialism, the MCP's basic inclination to violence only destroyed its credibility in the eyes of most rural Chinese' – particularly the indiscriminate 'enforcement terror' that the MCP inflicted on the Malayan Chinese.[233] Ramakrishna further noted that while Mao saw political education as absolutely necessary in eradicating backward bourgeois tendencies amongst the party ranks and masses, the MCP regarded political education more as a strategy for imposing tight control amongst the rank and file, and seriously neglected it with respect to the wider masses.[234] It was clear that the MCP's inclination towards 'enforcement terror', and its failure to engage in political work among the masses, meant that rather than being persuasive, the MCP's propaganda efforts of the Malayan Emergency served only to discredit its cause.

By the time of Second Emergency, the CPM had gone to great lengths to remedy its earlier failings. Prior to the opening of the armed struggle proper, its efforts at winning over the local population in Southern Thailand were paying huge dividends. Protection from bandits, food-sharing, political education, prospects of empowerment and hope and the provision of Min Yuen assistance to the rural masses allowed the CPM to turn the Betong Salient into a 'Little Yenan'.[235] As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, much to the consternation of the Malaysian authorities, the CPM also became actively engaged in the winning over and recruitment of the Malay rural masses in the

---

[232] An Introduction to the Voice of Malayan Revolution in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 9.
[233] Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda*: *The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds 1948-1958*, Surrey: Curzon, 2002, 205.
[234] Ibid, 27.
[235] Karl Hack, *The Long March to Peace of the Malayan Communist Party in Southern Thailand*, 189.

economically backward border-states of Northern Malaysia.[236] Similarly, the discovery and arrests of several English-educated middle class communist activists in 1974 was a concern to the Singapore government.[237] In short, these indicators suggested that the CPM's mass persuasion efforts were reaching out to hitherto untouched segments of Malaysian and Singaporean society – a significant departure from the First Emergency.

During the First Emergency, the CPM published an underground newspaper, *Freedom News* - the party's most important propaganda organ of that particular conflict. According to Ramakrishna, the historical context of *Freedom News* was defined by five distinctively dominant themes: historical backdrop and emergence (1930-1948); rebirth amidst urban violence (1949-1951); disruption and reconstitution (1951-1953); supporting the united front strategy (1954-1955); and political defensive and ultimate dissolution (1955-1957).[238] Similarly, the VMR mirrored the political and military fortunes of the revived CPM from the ascendency of its resurrected armed struggle in 1968 to the explicit abandonment by its PRC sponsors in 1981. In charting the CPM's mass persuasion campaign of the Second Emergency period, the three-phased rubric proposed in the preceding chapter will be slightly tweaked to reflect the 'internationalist spirit' that the CPM sought to inject into is strategic propaganda. Instead of three phases, the CPM's mass persuasion campaign will be examined in two distinct periods.

The first from 1969 to 1975 was the high point of the propaganda war when the CPM tried to ride on the revolutionary successes in Indochina as well as spectacular acts of armed violence carried out by its armed units. Corresponding to its armed struggle, the CPM's post-1975 mass persuasion campaign from 1975 to 1981 was the second distinct period that reflected the tectonic shifts in international and regional developments which ultimately drained any hopes of external support. It must be noted that in practical terms, however, the CPM was unstintingly consistent in its application of Maoist mass persuasion methods in both periods – which the party viewed as the same continuum as the Anti-

---

[236] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Intelligence Briefing Given by Chief of Staff and DMI for Air Commodore Cornish, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 December 1971.
[237] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Arrests in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 28 June 1974.
[238] Kumar Ramakrishna (Intro), *Freedom News: The Untold Story of the Communist Underground Publication*, Singapore: RSIS, 2008, 6.

British struggle from the Emergency years.[239] In short, what mattered for the CPM was not the accuracy of its message but the consistency in application of the method. The constant reiteration of recurrent messages was designed for the 'thought determines action' effect. At the other end of the spectrum, selected assassinations and other highly visible violent actions were intended as propaganda of the deed. The CPM's attempts at fusing the propaganda of the word and deed from 1968 to 1981 and the impact of its efforts at its intended audience will the focus of this chapter.

Riding the Revolutionary Airwaves (1969-1975)

When the CPM revived its armed struggle in the Second Malayan Emergency, it also launched its first concerted strategic propaganda campaign. The VMR broke the airwaves of Malaya and Singapore on 15 November 1969. On that day, the socialist editorial, *Mimbar Rakyat* proclaimed the birth of the '*Voice of Revolution*' radio station and that the government's monopoly of radio broadcasts had been broken. It further claimed that for the first time, the people of Malaya were able to listen to the 'people's own' radio station, which in itself represented a victory in the Malayan people's revolutionary war, and urged the revolutionary people of Malaya to: 'raise high the great red flag of Mao Tse-Tung's thought, fiercely retaliate against and expose the counter-revolutionary statements and deception of the U.S. and British imperialists, the soviet revisionists and the puppet cliques of Rahman-Razak and Lee Kuan Yew'.[240] This particular editorial piece reveals the core strategy and methodology of the CPM's efforts at mass persuasion and subverting the populations of post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore for much of the Second Emergency.

1969 to 1970 was the opportune moment for the CPM to advance its revolutionary cause on both the domestic and international fronts. By 1969 it was clear that the U.S. position in Vietnam was becoming untenable. Behind the public facade of an expanding war effort, Nixon initiated the process of gradual

---

[239] Advance Victoriously Along the Road of 'Using the Countryside to Encircle the Cities and Seizing Political Power by Armed Force' - In Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the Anti-British National Liberation War (ABNLW) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 23.
[240] *Mimbar Rakyat*, Issue No.84, 15/11/1969.

97

disengagement from Vietnam and the Nixon or Guan Doctrine which emphasised that 'regional states would have to become considerably more self-reliant in defence terms'.[241] Equally significant local developments were afoot in the Malaysia itself. The outbreak of the May 1969 Riots in Malaysia became the precursor to three landmark decisions in Malaysian state policy: the New Economic Policy (NEP), the *Rukunegara* which laid down the five principles of national harmony for the Malaysian nation, and the declaration of a State of Emergency on 14 May 1969 which were to suspend parliamentary government until 1971.[242] While the NEP aimed at improving the economic situation of the indigenous Malays, the *Rukunegara* asserted indigenous rights such as 'respect for Islam and indigenous custom', and the prohibition of discussion on the sensitive issues of the 'special position of indigenous peoples', the national language and citizenship rights.[243] In an effort to undermine the Malaysian government, the first two policy decisions became for the CPM, the epitome of social injustice, and were extensively exploited by the CPM's propaganda to agitate, politicise and revolutionise the thoughts and actions of its audience.[244]

The MNLA saw itself as a revolutionary army of the masses and with the *VMR* as its mouth-piece, appealed to the 'farming and labouring classes to unite' and 'launch an armed revolution in order to achieve their final victory'.[245] In order to plant the seeds of revolution into the minds of the masses, the VMR portrayed the Rahman-Razak administration as a 'mere puppet of the British imperialists' that looked after the interests of the 'feudal landlords, capitalists, bureaucrats and ministers' rather than that of the masses.[246] The CPM further held that the rationale behind the NEP was to 'give concessions to foreign imperialists' and 'further suppress the toiling masses so as to strengthen the position of the Malay bureaucratic capitalists'.[247] By playing up the notion of

---

[241] Tim Huxley, 'Insecurity in the ASEAN Region', *RUSI Whitehall Paper 23*, 1993, 53.
[242] See Mary C Turnbull, *A History of Malaysia Singapore and Brunei*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989.
[243] *Rukunegara*, Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Information, 1971.
[244] Introduction: Clash of Wills: The CPM's Interpretation of State Policy in Singapore and Malaysia Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 272.
[245] Summary of Voice of the Malayan Revolution Broadcast I (22 November1969) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[246] Summary of Voice of the Malayan Revolution II (22 November1969) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[247] Summary of Voice of the Malayan Revolution Broadcast I.

social injustice and exploitation, the CPM sought to instil a sense of class consciousness in the minds of the Malayan proletariat and sow the seeds of revolution. Success of the CPM's armed revolution in Malaya hinged upon its ability to create a class conscious proletariat in Malaya and the inaugural VMR broadcasts of 1969 reflected the CPM's first strategic attempt at mass socialisation.

The CPM sought to present itself both as a local as well as a global party, and its armed struggle in Malaya in the same perspective. The CPM viewed the various 'People's Revolutionary Struggles' that raged throughout Southeast-Asia in the 1970s as inter-related and interdependent. According to a VMR transmission towards the end of 1969: 'success of the people's revolutionary struggles…in Southeast-Asia has greatly inspired the people of Malaya…in contributing to the success of the revolutionary struggle'.[248] The CPM clearly saw itself as a part of the wider 'Peoples' Revolutionary Struggle' in Southeast-Asia, as well as the global progressive revolutionary mass movement. The CPM asserted that: 'Mao's thought had spurred the oppressed people all over the world to carry out their revolutionary movement more effectively…and…grasp the great truth about political power growing out of the barrel of a gun'.[249] Reviewing global developments in the past decade, the VMR declared that the 'era of the 1970s would see the surging tide of people's revolution, the acceleration of total disintegration of imperialism and a sharp fight between the rising revolutionary force and the collapsing counter-revolutionary force'.[250] It stressed that while the American war effort in Vietnam faced severe setbacks, 'great socialist China, being the centre of world revolution, stood like a giant in the East'.[251] Through its VMR mouthpiece, the CPM portrayed its armed struggle as a crucial cog in the global revolutionary machinery - by taking up arms with the MNLA, its participants were not only liberating Malaya, but playing a role in the greater emancipation of the global proletariat.

---

[248] Summary of Voice of the Malayan Revolution Broadcast (24 December1969) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[249] To Usher in 1970 with New Victory (1 January1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[250] Welcome to the Great Era of 1970s (8 January 1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[251] Unite and Strive for the Further Advance of the People's War (1 February1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

The impact of such a message on idealistic youths and student activism was of serious concern for the Malaysian and Singaporean authorities. A student cadre of the All Penang Revolutionary Students' Union (APRSU) arrested by the Malaysian authorities revealed how he was drawn into the underground student movement:

> A leading member of the APRSU...came to my house to give me tuition in mathematics at least 2 or 3 times a week...In between tuition periods, he would introduce political subjects for discussion and told me that the Malaysian Government was not fair...the rich minority suppressed and exploited the working class majority...an stressed that everyone must contribute a part to bring about a Socialist Republic in our country under which there would be no exploitation and suppression, and everybody would be given employment and treated equally.[252]

The message particularly chimed with Malaysian youths in Chinese-medium schools. Nevertheless, as noted in the preceding chapter, the 'internationalist spirit' of the CPM's cause also had an effect on students of the English-medium University of Singapore. Five out of the fifteen members of the VMR's English section were former student activists of the USSU. From the early 1960s to 1979, all Singaporean students were required to produce a 'certificate of political suitability' prior to enrolment at the University of Singapore or Nanyang University.[253] The CPM's message for 'social justice' struck a chord with the student left. Many of the VMR's English language section members came in the mid-1970s from Singaporean and Malaysian universities.[254] Chin Peng considered these student intellectuals to be 'radical or progressive leftists' and 'liberal socialists' rather than true card-carrying communists. University students such as Juliet Chin found to be 'inappropriate material for jungle living' were assigned to the VMR.[255] In short, the influence of the intellectual left was minimal on the CPM ideology and strategy. The energetic idealism of young student intellectuals were milked for their worth but these

---

[252] *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, 28.
[253] *University of Singapore: Singapore University Courses and Curricula1978/79*, Singapore: University of Singapore, 1978.
[254] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History*, Singapore: Media Masters, 2003, 450.
[255] Ibid, 450-1.

100

student activists never were integrated into the CPM rank and file which continued to be drawn from the rural masses.

Despite their relatively small numbers, ISD Singapore 'considered these pro-Marxist English-educated activists an incipient security problem'.[256] The group included some USSU activists associated with Tan Wah Piow, a pro-communist student activist who had fled to London in 1976 and the VMR's English language section members.[257] In real terms, the spread of socialist ideology and Maoist methods of subversion to the relatively untainted English-educated was considered a peril to the continued security and prosperity of the Singapore state. This perceived threat in context can hardly be bettered by the reiminasences of Lee Kuan Yew: 'One important reason why we will not allow the remnant communist cadres in Thailand to come back without squaring their accounts with the ISD is so they will not pass their infiltration and subversion skills to a younger generation of cadres, now English-educated'.[258] Exploited but never really accepted by the CPM leadership and at the receiving end of the state's ire, student activism was perhaps the biggest loser in the wider battle for hearts and minds.

On 28 February 1970, a review of the VMR's progress since its inauguration claimed that: the VMR was the 'People's Radio' and 'trusted spokesman of the people of Malaya', had boosted the 'morale of the broad masses', 'thoroughly crushed the broadcasting monopoly enjoyed by the enemy', and that the broad masses in Malaya were now fully aware that the 'VMR always propagates the revolutionary truth of armed struggle'.[259] The CPM's strategy clearly was to engage the government in a battle of truth and undermine the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. Exploiting the local grievances of farmers and labourers, the CPM's propaganda sought to disenchant them from the government (divisive propaganda) and from there on attempt to socialise their minds (conversionary propaganda). One such broadcast claimed that peasants in Kelantan unhappy with the governments' FAMA irrigation project 'have now realized that they must

---

[256] Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story 1965-2000*, Singapore: Times Media, 2000, 137.
[257] Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit, Singapore, Lee, *From Third World to First*, 137.
[258] Lee, *From Third World to First*, 138.
[259] Boost the Morale of the People and Dampen the Spirit of the Enemy (28 February1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

101

launch an armed struggle under the leadership of the CPM to fulfil their hope of land to the tiller'. [260] In another programme condemning the Malaysian Government's indigenous rights policy, the CPM declared 'all labouring people of various races' to be the 'actual masters of Malaya' and called upon the people to 'strengthen their unity, to struggle for equality among the various races and to expand their armed struggle under the leadership of the CPM'. [261] The manifold nature of the VMR thus allowed the CPM to employ its strategic propaganda in the full spectrum of conversionary, divisive, consolidation and Counter-propaganda roles.

The intrinsic appeal of the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution' rested on the premise that an inclusive proletarian democracy would eventually be established in conformity with the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment of the Malayan Peninsula. the willingness to concede 'freedom of religion' in the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution' should be seen in this light as the Malayan Communists' attempt to adapt Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to suit the local socio-political climate in the opening phase of its mass socialisation campaign. [262] With the declaration of the CPM's 'New Democratic Revolution', the VMR propaganda campaign against the so-called exploitation and oppression of the 'imperialists and their running dogs' was further intensified. According to one such broadcast, many unemployed Malay youths were frequently shot or detained for trespassing upon British tin mines, and the Malaysian Government instead of solving the grave unemployment problem, did 'everything possible to protect the interest of the foreign monopoly capital'. [263] Another transmission along similar lines spoke of 'rampant Japanese economic expansion and infiltration' in Malaya and Singapore that the CPM attributed to the 'traitorous and sell-out acts of the Rahman-Razak and Lee Kuan Yee puppet regimes'. [264] As a result, 'capitalists were able to live in luxury while thousands of the labouring people can hardly keep their body and soul together with their meagre

[260] Awakening peasants of Kelantan (4 April1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[261] The Labouring People of all Races are the Masters of Malaya (11 April 1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[262] Outline of the CPM's Struggle for the Fulfilment of a New Democratic Revolution (30 May1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 13.

[263] Only by Carrying out an Armed Struggle will there be a Future (8 August1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[264] Down with the Puppet Cliques: Crush the Plot of Japanese Militarism (8 July1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

income'.[265] In line with the fundamentals of revolutionary Psywar to awaken, heighten, and sharpen the class consciousness of the masses, the perceptions of social injustice, of oppression and exploitation at the hands of an avaricious elite few, were constantly reiterated to agitate the VMR's listeners who it was hoped, would eventually develop a sense of class consciousness and take up the mantle of armed struggle.

In order to persuade its target audience to partake in the armed revolution and bolster the morale of its own cadres, the VMR ran frequent 'Combat News' reports and articles on the progress of the 'People's Revolutionary Struggle' in Malaya and the world over. Referring to the MNLA's actions in the first half of 1970, the VMR declared that: 'By putting into full play the strategy of people's war and guerrilla warfare tactics…The MNLA has from February to June eliminated nearly 250 enemy troops, shot down three planes and captured a large quantity of military equipment and supplies. The MNLA is growing with each battle'.[266] To the Revolutionary Psywarrior, it made little difference that the combat reports were only half-truths, so long as they were persuasive enough to be credible. Such reports conveyed the message that a small guerrilla force like the MNLA was able to match the superior manpower, firepower and resources of the Malaysian and Thai armed forces. More importantly, in tandem with developments in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, the VMR reinforced the idea that 'the people of a small country can certainly defeat aggression by a big country, if only they dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of the country'.[267] In short via a steady stream of 'Combat News' and other reports, the *VMR* attempted to persuade its audience that the 'people's revolutionary struggle' was a 'David and Goliath' tussle in which the smaller of the two would ultimately prevail.

---

[265] The Working Class and Revolutionary Masses in Singapore are Waging Struggle Against Persecution by the Lee Kuan Yee Clique (12 August1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[266]MNLA Grows with Each Battle (22 August1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[267] The Chinese People Continue to Achieve Brilliant Success Under the Great Call of Chairman Mao to Unite and Win Greater Victory (13 September1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

To mark the first anniversary of the *VMR*, the following broadcast was issued:

> The VMR has stood firm with the proletarian internationalist spirit, fervently supported the righteous struggle put up by the peoples of various countries against imperialism, revisionism and colonial rule and for national liberation. Revolutionary flames are burning and war drums are being sounded throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, volcanoes have erupted one after another on the heart of imperialist regions; crowns have fallen to the ground one after another; and imperialism revisionism and reactionaries will be buried in the revolutionary war waged by the people all over the world.[268]

The 'proletarian internationalist spirit' and the 'New Democratic Revolution' embodied the CPM's efforts to apply Mao's 'united front' concept in its strategic propaganda both internationally and domestically. The united front concept was an all-encompassing strategy that unified all actions and approaches towards the creation of the new socialist order. The emphasis that Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties place in the truism that 'thought determines action' meant that propaganda was to be a crucial component of the united front. Unlike the CPM's haphazard attempt at strategic propaganda during the Malayan Emergency which was limited in scope and outreach to a small segment of the Malayan population, the VMR worked on domestic and international sentiments and audiences alike which allowed the CPM to truly embrace a united front approach on the psychological battlefields, both within and without the boundaries of the Malaysia and Singapore. The perceived link between the CPM's revolution in Malaya with the greater international proletarian struggle allowed the Malayan Communists to assume a sense of legitimacy. The VMR's projection of the CPM's armed struggle onto the international stage allowed the Malayan Communists to project some semblance of an external united front - a capability that they lacked in the First Malayan Emergency.

According to the VMR's summary of the CPM's armed struggle during the period of 1971, the MNLA had with the 'full support of the broad peasant masses in Kelantan',

---

[268]Unify Ideology, Determination and Action under the Guidance of the Revolutionary Voice (15 November 1970) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

crushed a series of large-scale government offensives and 'carried out extensive propaganda activities and organized the people in the guerrilla zones' along the Malaysia-Thai border, and in the rural areas of Perak, Kedah and Kelatan.[269] The CPM further claimed to have 'opened new battlefields on Perak, Kedah and Kelatan, [forged] closer links with the broad masses, and [spread] the raging flames of guerrilla war to the enemy's heartland'.[270] The fact that the CPM had infiltrated many of its former village-bases in Kedah, Kelantan and Perak by 1971, and were making its presence felt in the surrounding areas would lend further credence to its claims. This expansion of the CPM's armed struggle into the so-called 'enemy's heartland' was intended as a clear signal that the Malayan Revolution was gaining ground in terms of territorial expansion and popular mass support - a message that the VMR was quick to amplify and exploit at the government's expense. Success stories of such a strategy home and abroad figured large within VMR broadcasts, which sought to persuade the masses to adopt similar action. Through the unrelenting reinforcement of the message that armed revolution was the only viable solution for Malaya and the world at large, the CPM had hoped to drill such a belief into the minds of the masses thereby inciting them into revolutionary action.

This assiduous propagation of positive developments on the Communist united front, both internal and external, served a two-purpose; One was to convert the undecided masses to the CPM's cause (conversionary propaganda); the other was to consolidate the Party's grip on its existing cadres (consolidation propaganda). In short, the constant reinforcement of the 'victory on the united front' and 'the people of a small country can defeat aggression by a big country' message was the CPM's adaptation of strategic conversionary and consolidation propaganda in its Malayan Revolution. Considerable emphasis was placed on transmitting the message that the progress of the 'People's Revolutionary War' in Indochina, particularly Vietnam, was an unequivocal sign that a communist triumph over the capitalist powers in Southeast-Asia was inevitable.[271] Vietnam was the perfect example of how the 'people of a small country can certainly defeat

---

[269] Our Army Wipes out over Three Hundred Enemy Soldiers this Year, Extending its Guerrilla War to the Enemy Heartland, (29 December1971) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 107.

[270] Welcome 1972 with New Victory (01 January1972) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[271] Warmly Hail the Brilliant Victories of the People of South Vietnam and Cambodia (29 March 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 180.

aggression of a big country if only they dare to rise in struggle, dare to take up arms and grasp in their own hands the destiny of their country'.[272] It was a clarion call for the Malayan masses to follow the example of their Vietnamese brethren and the half-truth in itself was persuasive enough to be credible. By aligning its cause with that of the Vietnamese Communists, the CPM had the opportunity to sell its Malayan Revolution as a legitimate struggle against the oppression of the 'imperialists' and their 'running-dogs', while at the same time, undermine the legitimacy of its adversary's actions.

The VMR certainly portrayed the Singapore Government as a puppet of the Americans; one that cooperated in the slaughter of the Vietnamese people. One such *VMR* report noted that:

> To meet the needs of its aggressive war in Indochina, U.S. imperialism is currently stepping up its collaboration with the Lee Kuan Yew clique to turn Singapore into its rear area…Fifty US warships sail to Singapore every year, [and] Singapore [is] the U.S. dispersing centre for its old military equipment ferried from Vietnam. To render political support to the U.S. imperialist war of aggression in Vietnam, the Lee Kuan Yew clique bans anti-war demonstrations and processions…To top it all, Lee Kuan Yew when interviewed by Newsweek in mid-July said that he would like the U.S. to maintain sufficient pressure in Southeast Asia to stop another power or groups of powers from gaining complete hegemony over the area.[273]

Hence while the CPM tried to legitimise its struggle on the local and international stage, it also attempted to challenge the credibility of its adversaries in both those spheres. The CPM's propaganda sought to impress upon its audience the belief that its adversaries were oppressors of the masses both home and abroad, whereas the CPM was the true defender of the people.

---

[272] People of the World Bound to Win (17 May1972) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[273] Lee Kuan Yew Clique is Running Dog of US Imperialism (09 August1972) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

The signing of the Paris Peace Accords on 27 January 1973 marked a significant turning point in the annals of the 'People's Revolutionary War' in Southeast Asia. It allowed the U.S. to 'slide out of a conflict that was no longer of importance in the context of the complex global situation that had developed' – particularly the Sino-Soviet confrontation.[274] The DRVN leadership believed that what 'they appeared to lose at the negotiating table' could be gained on the ground in the form of military success at the expense of the South Vietnamese forces.[275] The capture of Saigon by the communist forces in April 1975 vindicated that belief. In the rest of Indochina, the Pathet Lao Communists' complete takeover of Laos that led to the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Khmer Rouge's conquest of Cambodia in 1975 were events that mirrored those in Vietnam.[276] It seemed, as a result, that the 'Domino Theory', whereby the fall of one Southeast-Asian nation to the communists would inevitably lead to the collapse of others, was coming to pass in 1975.

Taken together the Paris Peace Accords, the Fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975, and parallel developments in Cambodia and Laos were a huge propaganda coup for the global communist movement. The CPM particularly needed the external political oxygen from Indochina to sustain its own Malayan Revolution. By April 1973, the CPM judged that:

> The development of the international situation is becoming more and more favourable to the people…U.S. imperialism has suffered serious defeat in its war of aggression in Vietnam. Great victories have been achieved by the Laotian people in their struggle against U.S. aggressions who together with their lackeys have been badly battered in Cambodia. Let us rejoice the favourable situations both within and without the country.[277]

The intense propagation of commentaries on developments in Indochina were to communicate to the Malayan masses, the idea of the 'Southeast-Asian Peoples' Revolution'

---

[274] Clive J. Christie, *Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century: A Reader*, London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998, 249.
[275] Nicholas Tarling, *Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, Melborne: Oxford University Press, 2001, 141.
[276] Ibid, 144-6.
[277] Struggle for Greater Victories (28 April1973) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

- thereby increasing their political consciousness and develop their revolutionary thoughts that would eventually be translated into action.

The perceived notion of a greater development in social consciousness amongst the masses was further amplified to encourage its growth. As the revolution wore on, the VMR broadcasted evidence of the increasing social consciousness of the masses in areas where the Malayan Communists were most active. One such broadcast in April 1973 noted that:

'Feeling indignant at the criminal acts committed by the puppet regime, the broad peasant masses in Kedah are now waging a sharp struggle by grabbing the so-called state land and resisting the puppet police sent there to suppress them. More and more peasants are currently joining the struggle for the abolition of the feudal and semi-feudal land scheme and for the implementation of land to the tiller system'.[278]

The above broadcast is the quintessence of how Maoist mass persuasion was adapted to Malayan conditions for the socialisation of Malayan minds to create the 'new Malayan Socialist man' for the new socialist People's Republic of Malaya. The broadcast commemorating the forty-third anniversary of the CPM presented the apparent growing social consciousness of the Malayan masses and how these thoughts were increasingly being acted upon by the people. According to the broadcast:

The working class in our country has deeply realised that only by relying on a national democratic united front…can…the task of the new democratic revolution be fulfilled…Since the beginning of 1973, the struggle against suppression, exploitation and persecution by the working class in our country was intensified. Class consciousness of the working masses in our country has

---

[278] Splendid Struggle of the Peasants (19 April1973) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

been greatly raised. Twenty strikes and other forms of struggles were carried out by workers in the First Three months of 1973.[279]

This palpable surge of class consciousness was necessary to maintain the momentum of the CPM's revolution. The VMR was in fact, a vital tool in the development, maintenance and expansion of the Malayan class consciousness, and ultimately, the whole mass socialisation effort fundamental to the success of the Malayan Revolution.

While western Psywarriors tend to be specialised operators playing a limited specific role in a larger operation or campaign, revolutionary Psywarriors were multi-roled 'storm-troopers' equally adept at guerilla warfare, propaganda work and most importantly, political work among the masses. This fundamentally opposed approach to Psywar reflects the crucial role of Psyops in revolutionary war. The CPM argued that:

> In order to consolidate and expand the united front, it was necessary to…launch mass movement in all fields…thus integrating the revolutionary armed struggle with the revolutionary mass movement. It was necessary to…mobilise to the fullest extent the broad masses and carry out in a wide-spread manner a mass campaign to support and join the National Liberation Army. In enemy-dominated areas, it was necessary to make efforts to consolidate and continuously expand all revolutionary mass organizations, encourage the masses to tune in to the VMR, intensify revolutionary propaganda and use various forms and methods to make close contacts with the people of all social strata.[280]

In short, unlike the highly specialised and restricted western approach to Psywar which was distinct from the military campaign, Revolutionary Psywar was a symbotic part of the united front in which the guerrilla and Psywarrior were one and the same, and the physical and psychological battles fought on the same plane.

---

[279] Struggle for Greater Victories (28 April1973) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.
[280] CPM is the Force of the Core Leading the Revolution in Malaya in Commemoration of the Forty-fifth Anniversary of Founding of CPM (29 April1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

The VMR had throughout its broadcast history, linked the Malayan Revolution with that of the greater 'People's Revolutionary War', but 1975, in terms of the actual socio-political developments in Southeast-Asia and impact on the CPM's armed revolution was particularly significant. With the establishment of Communist regimes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. from Indochina, 1975 certainly signified the epoch of the 'People's Revolutionary War' in Southeast-Asia. In view of recent contemporary developments in Indochina, 1975 was the opportune moment for the CPM to expand its revolution in Malaya on all fronts, in both the physical and psychological realm as well as in terms of interior and exterior manoeuvre. Indeed 1975 hinted at the possibility that the CPM might finally be able to establish strong enduring physical links with its Communist comrades in Indochina, thereby inordinately increasing its united front and prospects of success in its revolutionary struggle.

The VMR hailed the 'liberation' of Phnom Penh on April 17 by the Khmer Rouge as a 'great victory of historical significance [that] has given a big inspiration and strong support to the revolutionary struggle of the Malayan people and the oppressed people and oppressed nations the world over'.[281] On 1 May 1975, the central committee of the CPM sent a lengthy congratulatory telegram to the Central Committee of the Vietnam worker's party for the successful 'liberation' of Saigon and whole of South Vietnam. The telegram was incorporated into the VMR broadcast for 8 May which stated that:

> By persisting in the protracted people's war to crush the counter-revolutionary
> strategy of U.S. imperialism, the Vietnamese people have made big
> contributions towards the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle of the
> Southeast-Asian people and the people the world over…The great victory of the
> Vietnamese people…is also the common victory of the Malayan people and the
> revolutionary people of the world...The great victory of the Vietnamese people
> is a new and great inspiration to the revolutionary armed struggle of the people
> of Malaya. Under the leadership of the CPM…the Malayan people are
> determined to continue to stand together with the Vietnamese people and the

---

[281]Most Warmly Hail the Great Victory of the Cambodian People (22 April1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 181.

revolutionary people of the world, persevere in smashing all the counter-revolutionary plot of the enemy and carry the revolutionary armed struggle in our country through to the end.[282]

It is obvious that the CPM strove to establish an image of correlation between its own revolution with that of the Vietnamese to increase the legitimacy of its struggle, and strengthen its united front. Events in Indochina in 1975 certainly did inspire the CPM in their own revolutionary struggle, and there is no doubt that: 'the great victories of the national liberation wars in Vietnam and Cambodia have exerted a great influence on the revolution of the Southeast-Asian countries including Malaya'.[283] The impact of events in Indochina on both the word and deeds of the CPM was immense. Observing events from Beijing, the CPM leadership was certain that:

> The tide was turning inexorably in the communist world's favour, particularly as far as South East Asia was concerned… Ultimately, [they] were hoping regional developments would continue moving to [their] advantage to the point where [they] could begin absorbing new recruits. [They] were looking to building up a 3,000-strong army once more.[284]

The fall of Saigon and Phnom Penh was the penultimate vindication of the CPM's line that 'the people of a small country can defeat aggression by a big country', by 'using the countryside to encircle the cities'. Building upon the momentous events in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, 1975 provided the perfect platform for the CPM to further revolutionise the minds and actions of the Malayan masses, expand the Malayan Revolution, and establish greater links with the Communists in Indochina.

---

[282]Congratulatory Message from CPM to the Vietnam Workers Party and South Vietnamese National Front for Liberation (08 May 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 184.

[283]Resolutely Support the Important Statement of the CPM, Issued by the Central Committee of the Malayan National Liberation Front (05 June 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, CD-ROM.

[284] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng*, 453.

Lee Kuan Yee and Abdul Razak, Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia respectively, however believed that the Domino Theory 'was now obsolete'.[285] Razak was confident that although: 'the Domino theory...may give some encouragement to the [communist] terrorists lurking in our jungles'...'Malaysia [faced] no immediate danger arising out of the communist victories in South Vietnam and Cambodia [as] the situation in Indochina and that in Malaysia [were] different'.[286] In short, while the CPM clearly perceived its revolution to be part of the greater 'People's Revolutionary War' in Southeast-Asia and tried to ride on that franchise, ground realities precluded any substantial links between the CPM and its Indochinese counterparts. In order to cut off the CPM from its external political oxygen, and undermine the relationship between the Malayan Communists and their Indochinese comrades, both the Singapore and Malaysia governments were prepared to officially recognise communist control of a unified Vietnam and in the case of Malaysia establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the PRC. As in the case of the CPM's shooting war, these setbacks further encouraged the CPM to prove its revolutionary credentials by stepping up its mass persuasion campaign.

Three key events of 1974 to 75 significantly shaped the trajectory and results of the CPM's quest for a people's republic. At the highest level, the shift in the PRC's foreign policy and the warming of relations between the non-communist states of Southeast Asia and the PRC changed the complexion of the Cold War. China's once deep-rooted links with the communist parties of Thailand (CPT), Malaya (CPM), Indonesia (PKI) and the Philippines (CPP) were adversely affected by Beijing's new strategy of divorcing its 'party-to-party' relations from its 'government-to-government' ones. The result was a noticeable reduction of aid to Pro-Beijing Southeast Asian communist parties - including the closure of the VMR radio station in China.[287] Next, at the regional and intermediate level, the communist take-over of Indochina by mid-1975 paradoxically led not to the fruition of the domino theory, but dissension and conflict within the communist camp which 'set the stage for a move towards a measure of regional stability and cohesion in the rest of Southeast Asia' –

[285] 'Lee, Razak Hold Talks on Vietnam Issue', *The Straits Times*, 01/05/1975.
[286] 'Red Victories Pose No Threat', *The Straits Times*, 05/05/1975.
[287] Tim Huxley, 'Recent Military Developments in Southeast Asia: Their Implications for Australia's Security', *Basic Paper*, No.2, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1983, 14.

notably between ASEAN and the Vietnam-dominated bloc .[288] On the other hand, the CPM were compelled and inspired to follow in the violent footsteps of their Indochinese comrades. Similarly, at the local level, the open split within the CPM movement led to an internecine all out struggle between the three competing factions. Like its shooting war, the subsequent 1975 to 1981 phase of the CPM's mass persuasion campaign was locked into the spirit of the 'final push'.

The Final push: Sustaining Mass Persuasion Through the Waves of Change (1975-81)

It cannot be emphasised enough that the Western 'words and deeds' approach to Psywar is fundamentally different from the Maoist 'thought determines action' one. Therefore, to analyse the CPM's the most sustained foray into mass persuasion using the 'words and deeds' methodology would be incongruous and ultimately misleading. To a Revolutionary Psywarrior, propaganda has to be persuasive enough to agitate minds and thoughts, and its truth is defined by the power to socialise the minds and actions of the masses rather than matching words with deeds. Revolutionary Psywar therefore does not fit into any western-centric model, but is a blend of White, Black, Grey, Conversionary, Divisive, Consolidation and Counter Propaganda adapted to meet the requirements of a protracted revolutionary war. In short, Revolutionary Psywar has to meet the various stages and conditions of the protracted revolutionary armed struggle. The manifold nature of the 'thought determines action' approach thus allowed the CPM to employ its VMR mouthpiece in the full array of conversionary, divisive, consolidation and Counter-propaganda roles in accordance with situational changes. Moreover, in tandem with the spike in CPM armed violence, the vehemence and intensity of the VMR broadcasts of the 1975 to 1981 period masked the severe problems caused by the shift in Chinese foreign policy and the three-way split within the CPM movement.

Instead of exploiting the CPM split for propaganda capital, government authorities in Malaysia and Singapore chose to focus on highly visible incidents of CPM armed violence to maintain the spectre of a much revived communist threat. More than anything else, the Malaysians tend to attribute tactical successes to the vigilance and professionalism

---

[288] C.M.Turnbull, 'Regionalism and Nationalism' in Nicholas Tarling (ed) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol 4, From World War II to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, 296.

113

of their security forces rather than the serious internal schisms within the CPM movement.[289] For CPM Central Committee however, the three-way split was a serious set-back to plans for the Southward Advance. From 1975 to 1981, broadcasts that addressed the split were constant features on the VMR. While quick to condemn the 'handful of chieftains of the anti-Party clique' in the Second District of the 12th Regiment, the CPM Central Committee nonetheless:

> Sincerely call[ed] upon the broad ranks of our cadres, Party members and fighters in the Second District to distinguish the counter-revolutionary features of the so-called Marxist-Leninist Faction, resolutely draw a clear line of demarcation between themselves and this handful of enemy agents, bravely free themselves from their control and come back to the side of the Party and the people.[290]

Clearly, Party Central Committee did not wish to close its doors to any 'misled' cadres. This 'open-door' stance was an act of pragmatism. The loss of manpower and key areas of operations in the Betong Salient to the other two dissident factions threatened the very existence of the CPM - hence the appeal for reconciliation. The available documents do not shed much light on the effectiveness of the Central Committee's call for 'misled' cadres to return to the fold. The persistence of the message reflected the urgency of the strength-retention problem. Nonetheless, the refusal to admit the 1971 purge as a 'mistake' was a notable absence from the broadcasts. It is debatable if a formal apology for the 'purge' would have had any positive effect. An analysis of VMR broadcasts suggests that perceptions of Central Committee's aloofness from ground realities and grievances that arose from the purge were never adequately addressed. Indeed, calls to 'resolutely stand on the side of the CPM Central Committee to wage a tit-for-stat struggle with the Marxist-Leninist Faction' rather than feelers for reconciliation set the predominant tone for the

---

[289] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up February 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 March 1976.
[290] Strip off the mask of the so-called Marxist-Leninist Faction Part II (07 February 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 226.

VMR on the issue.[291] The CPM had to be the leader of the Malayan Revolution – on that there could be no compromise.

This uncompromising stand dictated much of the CPM's words and deeds as each faction strived to outdo each other. In Singapore, the explosion of a booby trap attached to a communist banner on the anniversary of the State of Emergency in Malaya, the discovery of CPMML leaflets and banners denouncing the split were isolated incidents in 1974 which in reality announced a new tempo of urban subversion and in the case of Malaysia, urban violence.[292] On 26 August 1975, a mobile unit of the MNLA succeeded in damaging the National Monument in Kuala Lumpur. The highly visible and dramatic incident just days before Malaysia's National Day was described over the VMR as follows:

> A mobile unit of the MNLA meted out due punishment to the reactionary regime by blasting the so-called National Monument in Kuala Lumpur...the monument is a symbol of British colonialism. It is the most despicable piece of sculpture aimed at disparaging the heroes of our people who have fought against the colonial rule. Standing on the monument, four figures represent the British imperialist mercenary soldiers and another one with the bogus national flag in his hand...The two lying beneath the feet of the mercenary soldiers actually represent the dauntless MNLA fighters who have shed their blood for the cause of genuine independence...Thus, the revolutionary action taken by our army to blast the monument is justifiable.[293]

The poorly laid and mistimed explosive device went off at 0520 hours instead of 0600 hours thus failing in the twin objectives of destroying the monument and killing the flag party at the morning flag raising ceremony.[294] The attempted destruction of the National

---

[291] What is Sham is after all a Sham – To Look at the Question of the Marxist-Leninist Faction in Perspective Concluding Part (14 July 1977) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 263.

[292] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2072, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1974, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 13 January 1975.

[293] Our Army Successfully Blasts the So-called National Monument and Warmly Congratulate the Mobile Unit of Our army for its New Victory in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 123.

[294] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur.

115

Monument was conceived as a visible display of the CPM's ability to strike at will on targets in the capital – and more importantly its revolutionary leadership to the CPM rank and file, CPM sympathisers, potential recruits and the two CPM dissident factions. The attack formally signalled the CPM's intent to challenge the CPMML's campaign of urban violence. The CPM went so far as to appropriate a successful MPLL action as its own. The 3 September 1975 attack on the PFF Central Brigade HQ in Kuala Lumpur was claimed by the VMR to be the work of one of its Flying Squads which resulted in 65 government casualties.[295] In fact, the attack was carried out the MPLL and the actual casualties incurred by the PFF amounted to two killed and fifty-one wounded.[296] In an attempt to reassert and prove its revolutionary leadership, every single available means of mass persuasion - including grey and black propaganda from less than credible sources was justified.

The blowing up of the National Monument was followed up an increase in targeted assassinations of security personal and suspected informers. Again, these incidents were played up by the VMR as demonstrations of the CPM's revolutionary leadership – particularly around key dates on the revolutionary calendar:

> On the eve of the 27th anniversary, our mobile unit again shot and killed another enemy agent Low Kam Fook, the Deputy Superintendent of Batu Gajah Detention Camp...On 20 June, with the support of the broad masses, our mobile unit gunned down the bogus Ipoh Special Branch agent Wong Siong Seng. These...mark the advent of the 27th anniversary of the glorious Anti-British National Liberation War.[297]

Targeted assassinations and other propaganda of the deed actions had a role in undermining the morale of the security forces and the faith of the citizens in the ability of the government to secure the country. The fact that virtually all of the victims of target assassinations in 1975 were members of the security forces was designed to impress upon

---

[295] Our Army's Flying Squad Attacks Bogus Police Field Force Brigade headquarters and kills 65 Enemy Men (20 September 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 124.

[296] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.

[297] Our Army's Mobile Unit Annihilates Four Enemy Agents in Johore and Perak in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 126.

116

its audience the legitimacy of the CPM's cause.[298] More importantly, in face of the open challenge by the CPMMF and the highly aggressive CPMML for leadership, eye-catching acts of violence were deeds that proved the CPM's credentials as the foremost revolutionary party in the Malay Peninsula. Other highly visible actions that the CPM exploited for propaganda capital were the clandestine planting of flags and distribution of leaflets in widely dispersed areas of Malaysia and Singapore.[299] As with most CPM actions, its urban agitprop efforts were exaggerated by the VMR. A November 1975 broadcast claimed that:

> In Singapore and Johore broad masses of people went haywire on seeing red flags fluttering in the sky. In some places, people even passed the leaflets on to friends or neighbours after reading them...Their enthusiastic response to this campaign has eloquently illustrated...That the plot of the enemy and his agents, the so-called Marxist-Leninist Faction for carrying out anti-Party activities to shake the confidence of the people in the CPM led by Comrade Chin Peng in the past three months had completely gone bankrupt [and] That the political consciousness of the people and their ability to distinguish fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds had further been raised and enhanced. [300]

The 'flag-displays' sent strong signals to the CPM's rival factions but such open demonstrations together with highly visible acts of violence had the tendency to disclose erstwhile hidden subversives and provided state authorities with the justification to crack down on suspected communist sympathisers and activists. 1975 was a year in which all three factions of the CPM demonstrated their ability to operate not just in the jungle but also in the main urban centres of Peninsula Malaysia. [301] The surge of such open demonstrations in capabilities however led to a severe bleeding of strength that decimated the all important CPM urban underground infrastructure – a setback from which the CPM never recovered.

---

[298] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2126, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 1976.
[299] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation: Split in the CPM, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 October 1974.
[300] Red Flags are Fluttering all over the Place (11 November 1975) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 128.
[301] FCO 15/2126, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1975.

The arrest of Samad Ismail, Managing Editor of the New Straits Times and his colleague Samani Amin, News Editor of the Berita Harian in 1976 under the Malaysian Internal Security Act (ISA) shook Malaysia.[302] Both Samad and Samani were prominent members of the Malay intelligentsia particularly Samad who was one of Tun Razak's confidential advisors. The arrests showed that communism had penetrated even UMNO.[303] Prior to his arrest in Malaysia, Samad was earlier arrested in Singapore in 1951 for 'engaging in communist activities as a CPM member and [was] on record as having been directed by CPM cadres operating in Indonesia'.[304] On 1 September 1976, Samad admitted in a televised public confession that 'he had some success in converting the younger group in UMNO to his way of thinking'. The right wing of UMNO led by the UMNO Youth and Partai Islam (PAS) seized the opportunity to spearhead a call for UMNO to purge its ranks of pro-communist elements and apply political pressure on the Prime Minister.[305] The Hussein Onn administration was in no danger of collapse but the conservative elements within UMNO were on the political ascendant. In short, rather than galvanising the masses into action, the open displays of CPM revolutionary violence had the unintended effect of sparking a clap-down on the political left and further weakening the CPM movement.

Since the success of the CPM's armed revolution in the Malayan Peninsula hinged upon its ability to create a class conscious proletariat, the masses had to be convinced that they were being oppressed and neglected by the Singapore and Malaysian governments and their policies. By the mid to late 1970s, the rapid growth of both the Malaysian and Singapore economies certainly convinced the majority that an UMNO-led coalition in Malaysia, and a PAP-dominant government in Singapore was preferable to a People's Republic of Malaya. Nonetheless the CPM sought to agitate the masses - particularly in the rural Northern Malaysian states where long-term federal development schemes such as FELDA were slow to bear fruit. The CPM were quick to exploit the teething problems of these projects for propaganda capital.

---

[302] Richard Sim, 'Malaysia: Containing the Communist Insurgency', *Conflict Studies*, 110, August 1979, 1-17, 5.
[303] Turnbull, Regionalism and Nationalism, 301.
[304] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.
[305] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up September 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 October 1976.

A recurrent theme played up by the VMR was the alleged corruption and exploitative nature of these schemes. When the Third Five-Year Plan for Malaysia was announced, the VMR was quick to reiterate that:

> Only by abolishing the neo-colonial and feudal agrarian system and by making the peasants, agricultural workers and other labourers in the rural areas masters of the land can the problem of rural poverty be solved. However the reactionary government has acted in a diametrically opposite way by giving large tracts of land gratis to big foreign plantation owners as well as big domestic landlords and big bureaucrat capitalists under the signboard of developing agriculture and increasing employment opportunity in rural areas. As a result, the problem of rural poverty far from being solved has become more and more acute...This cannot but greatly accelerate the process of class polarisation in the rural areas... This is the actual content of the restructuring of society peddled by the Hussien Onn clique.[306]

In short, this line of propaganda aimed at the rural masses with an emphasis on the low-income Malays was a direct appeal to the poorer and landless farmers of both ethnic groups to reject the government's New Five-Year Plan which the VMR argued would place a disproportionate amount of the country's resources and wealth into the hands of foreign conglomerates and a small minority of the Malay elites.

Despite the involvement of British companies such as Harrison and Crossfield in federal land development schemes, the FCO assessed that: 'it is the failure of [the Malaysian] government to respond to the genuine needs of the rural population rather than the appeal of communism which has the greater effect'. The same report noted the 'the erosion of public support for the government' in communist sanctuaries in the border areas where 'a number of Malay plantation workers in Kedah...were quite open in their support for the guerrillas.' On the subversive threat posed by the CPM, it concluded that even though the total number of CPM

---

[306] The Rural Development Plan that Widens the Gap Between the Rich and the Poor (21 August 1976) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 300-1.

supporters might be relatively small, 'it is the potential subversive threat that Malaysian MSB consider to be the most important factor'. [307] This so-called 'potential subversive threat' was well-articulated in the VMR's appeal to visceral feelings of neglect and exploitation and its utility as a latent tool of socialisation.

The use of federal development schemes as means of social control was a key message propagated by the VMR. On that score, much attention was given to the FELDA scheme – a government programme designed to win over the very same rural masses targeted by the CPM. The implementation of the FELDA scheme and its transformational impact on the landscape and the communities of the Northern Malaysian states will be discussed in the next chapter. The relevance of here was the very real threat posed by FELDA to the CPM efforts of winning over the rural masses in the border region. In February 1981, just months prior its shutdown, the VMR ran a critique of FELDA as an insidious tool of government social control:

On the surface, FELDA seems to be run on a rather progressive basis [but]...A FELDA community is not like the traditional kampong community. The settlers of a scheme are mostly former landed peasants, fishermen, and ex-servicemen...uprooted from their kampongs and planted in the land schemes. In this newly planted community there are no village headman, no village traditions. In their place are functionaries and a set of rules and regulations. All of these are imposed on the community...The debt trap...is by far the most effective policy FELDA has adopted in controlling the settlers. Because of their debts, the settlers are robbed of their right to sell their agricultural produce to dealers of their own choice. Under the rules laid down, settlers must sell their produce to FELDA even if the prices offered are lower than market prices; otherwise it'd be an offence, and an offender is punishable by the FELDA code. The punishment includes confiscation of their produce, suspension of credit purchase at the FELDA shops, and expulsion from the scheme without compensation. That is not all. Because of the debts, FELDA is able to run the

---

[307] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 September 1977.

120

schemes such that rules are extended to almost every aspect of life of the community, making it more like an institution of rules and regulations than an independent community of farmers. What has been imposed on the settlers is a social structure in which FELDA is the authority while the settler is a subject who must be obedient to FELDA... FELDA is an institution to exercise control over the settlers economically, politically and socially.[308]

Despite its Marxist-Leninist vitriol, such articles represented an attempt at constructive criticism of government policy. The constant reiteration of the state social control peril associated with FELDA however reflected a very real fear of the CPM. By 1977, major development projects such as the FELDA scheme, the MUDA irrigation project, the building of the Temenggor Dam and the East/West Highway had vastly changed the landscape and socio-economic conditions of the rural North – much to the consternation of the CPM.[309] These shifts in local conditions not only paved the way for the Malaysian government to secure the local population by draining the CPM of its 'living spaces' and sanctuaries but also had a huge impact on the credibility of the CPM's revolutionary agenda.

If the Maoist 'using the countryside to surround the cities' template was the CPM's preferred formula to winning the local shooting war, the CPM's interpretation of socialism and external policies were constantly in tune with that of the CCP's. A detailed examination of the VMR broadcasts from 1969 to 1981 reveals that not once did the CPM deviate from Beijing in matters of socialist doctrine and foreign policy. The formal establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the PRC and the U.S. in January 1979 were attributed by the VMR to 'the new victories won by the Chinese people in their socialist revolution and socialist construction or in their support for the struggle of the people of various countries against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism' rather than

---

[308] FELDA, a Vehicle of Social and Political Control (21 February 1981) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 345-8.
[309] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 9 May 1977.

the pragmatism of Deng's foreign policy.[310] When the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in December1978, the VMR promptly labelled the Vietnamese as 'aggressors' and 'hegemonists'. The subsequent conquest of Cambodia by Vietnam was pronounced by the VMR as 'thoroughly expos[ing] the expansionist character of the Vietnamese authorities and the ambition of Soviet social-imperialism for hegemony in the Asian-Pacific region'.[311] The Chinese response to the Vietnamese annexation of Cambodia came in a cross-border invasion of Vietnam on 17 February 1979. The fact that the Chinese were the first to strike across the border did not prevent the VMR from proclaiming:

> On 17 February, frontier troops of the Chinese People's Liberation Army launched a counter-attack against the Vietnamese aggressors in the border areas of Kwangsi and Yunan...The action taken by the Chinese army and people in countering the armed incursion of the Vietnamese...is a just action. The Malayan people firmly support the Chinese people's just war to defend their frontier region and counter attack the Vietnamese aggressors.[312]

The VMR broadcasts made it glaringly clear that the CPM was firmly in the pro-Beijing camp. It also painted a very rosy picture of CCP-CPM relations that seemed to be free from conflict. What the VMR does not tell us however, is the flux and evolution of the CCP-CPM relationship; from one of active support; to fraternal support; and finally abandonment of the CPM's cause. More tellingly, it does not explain the rationale behind the CPM's resolute support for the CCP which did not waver even in the face of less than positive developments such as the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and Malaysia.

If these statements were linked to the broader relationships at play, the CPM's steadfast pro-CCP stance could be deciphered. In light of the acrimonious internal split, any admission of any serious error by CPM Central Committee would further dissolve the

---

[310] The Significant Victory of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line in Foreign Affairs (21 December 1978) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 203.
[311] Editorial: Resolutely Support the Just Struggle of the Kampuchean People (20 January 1979) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 205.
[312] The Just War in Self-defence (24 February 1979) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 209.

leadership credentials of the CPM in the eyes of the rank and file and potential supporters. Moreover, having thrown in their lot completely with the Chinese since the early 1960s, turning to the Soviets was simply not an option. Clearly, to antagonise its CCP sponsors would have sounded the death knell for the CPM. Thus, every single item of the VMR indubitably took a pro-Beijing line. Despite slim chances of success, the only realistic option for the CPM was to stick to its guns in the hope of proving its revolutionary credentials to its CCP sponsors. To antagonise the Chinese at the risk of losing all forms of support would be tantamount to suicide. However, that should not disguise the fact that the top CPM leadership were firm believers of the Maoist model – a belief which even the mortal passing of Mao did not shake. Deng's pragmatic 'open-door' policy of engaging the non-communist ASEAN bloc including the states of Malaysia and Singapore did not go down well with Chin Peng who in his memoirs accuse Deng of holding personal grudge.[313] Profuse in its praise of Maoist thought, not once did the VMR carry an article in praise of Deng. The Deng-era VMR's articles were pro-CCP, but they were by no means pro-Deng. In short, the VMR's and CPM Central Committee's steadfast faith in Maoism was a reaction to Deng's new post-Mao-era policies. In light of the Sino-Soviet split, the pro-Beijing CPM had even less room room for manoeuvre when it came to choosing sides.

Without ready access to CPM documents of the Second Emergency period, it is not possible to provide an adequate explanation to the CPM's inability to devolve from the Maoist model of People's War and mass persuasion or even develop a foreign policy of its own. As we have seen in this and the previous chapter, the Vietnamese model provided not only the basis of the CPM's guerrilla 'Viet-Cong' tactics but also inspiration for success. However, in the denouement of the Sino-Soviet split and that between the Vietnamese and the Cambodian communists, the Chinese-backed CPM had to walk the walk with Beijing or risk losing everything. The failure of the CPM to develop a genuinely distinct Malayan socialist model translated into a lack of success of its mass persuasion campaign. The penultimate aim of the CPM's mass persuasion campaign was to revolutionise the masses towards the destruction of the existing socio-economic-political-cultural system of the Malayan Peninsular, and in its place, establish a new socialist order in the form of the

---

[313] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng*, 459.

People's Republic of Malaya. Such a feat was only possible through the development of a sense of class consciousness and class struggle amongst the Malayan people.

In the CPM's attempt to advance the class consciousness of the masses, and the cause of its armed revolution, the VMR was an indispensable tool. The VMR was vital to the development of the Malayan class consciousness, and the whole mass socialisation effort on which the success of the Malayan Revolution ultimately hinged upon. However despite its sustained propaganda campaign, the CPM failed to generate any significant level of class consciousness amongst the greater majority of the Malayan and Singaporean population. Moreover just as in the Malayan Emergency, the CPM's armed struggle in the Second Malayan Emergency was isolated from the wider 'People's Revolutionary War' in Indochina thereby depriving the Malayan Communists of any substantial external support . The fact that the VMR station had to transmit from China spoke volumes about the difficult conditions under which the CPM operated.

In 1979, ISD Singapore noted a decline in the number of VMR propaganda items against the island-city-state. This decline was attributed to the shift in Post-Mao Chinese foreign policy particularly expectations that the curtailment of the VMR's attacks against Singapore would result in 'Singapore's tough stand against Vietnam within ASEAN and internationally'.[314] In his meeting with China's Paramount Leader, Lee Kuan Yew made it clear to Deng that:

> ASEAN governments regarded radio broadcasts from China appealing directly to their ethnic Chinese as dangerous subversion. It was most unlikely that ASEAN countries would respond positively to his proposal for a united front against the Soviet Union and Vietnam. He realised that he had to face up to this problem if Vietnam was to be isolated.[315]

The ISD's assessment and the impact of Lee's words was confirmed by Chin Peng who was hard-pressed by Deng on the issue of the VMR:

---

[314] Internal Security Department (Singapore) Files, *The Decline of Propaganda Items Broadcast by the Voice of the Malayan Revolution (1979) Against Singapore*, 8 November 1979.
[315] Lee, *From Third World to First*, 665.

I listened carefully to Deng's account of his meeting with the Singapore prime minister. Understandably, I was not happy. But I recognised the pointlessness of arguing. He knew what I felt and how much I disapproved of his request. He also knew that I had no alternative but to adhere to his remarks.[316]

In this case, as with most affairs associated with the changing dynamics of the Cold War, international relations and foreign policies were matters which could do little to influence. To Deng, what mattered most was that Singapore and the ASEAN bloc had votes and a voice in the UN – precious commodities which an overseas-based movement with weak local indigenous support such as the CPM did not have. The CPM was almost totally dependent on Chinese financial and moral patronage with little international support for its cause. Thus, survival of the CPM movement was dependent on adherence to a pro-Beijing line. Indeed, the CPM was becoming a liability to the Chinese in the betterment of Sino-ASEAN relations. In the post-Mao-era, the Chinese could very well do without the CPM, but the same cannot be said for the CPM leadership ensconced in Beijing. The palpable decline of CPC-CPM relations gave the Malaysian government a distinct strategic advantage over the CPM in the battle for hearts and minds. As a corollary, the next chapter shall examine how the Malaysian and Singapore governments responded to the CPM-inspired insurrection and subversion through the stages of the Second Emergency from 1968 to 1981.

---

[316] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng*, 458.

5.

The Response of the Post-colonial state to Maoist Insurgency (1968-1981)

Contextual background

Conceding managed independence to British administered Malaya was always an integral part of Britain's post-war foreign policy. The questions were when, how and most importantly what form the post-colonial Malayan state should take, rather than if such a state should take shape.[317] A key outcome of the Emergency was the formation of an independent Malaysia and subsequently Singapore, each of them controlled by fervently anti-communist leaderships with strong ties to Britain. During the Emergency, the main burden of the COIN effort was shouldered by a British-led effort that drew its manpower resources from various corners of the Commonwealth. It was just as well as more extensive use of the Royal Malay Regiment would have exacerbated the very inter-communal Malay-Chinese tensions that the British sought to limit.[318] Upon the transfer of power, the native Malay elites, impressed by the strategic behaviour of their colonial overlords, adopted virtually identical policies, procedures, and institutions evolved over decades of British imperial administration.[319] Indeed, prior to 1964, the Chief of Staff of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) was British, and only during the mid-1990s, when the 'last of the long line of Sandhurst-trained Malay generals' retired from active service, were some of the residual British military traditions finally relinquished.[320] In short, the Emergency years despite their brevity were fundamental in shaping the strategic culture, doctrine, force structure and institutions of the Malaysian security landscape.

This chapter essentially charts the post-Emergency security landscape of Malaysia – particularly through the lens of an emergent post-colonial state that had to exert its brand of

---

[317] Mark Beeson and Alex J. Bellamy, *Securing Southeast Asia: The Politics of Security Sector Reform* , London & New York: Routledge, 2008, 68.

[318] Nicholas Tarling, *Southeast Asia: A Modern History,* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001, 296.

[319] K. S. Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, 'Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests,' in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia,* Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2001, 260.

[320] Chandran Jeshurun, 'Malaysia: the Delayed Birth of a Strategic Culture,' in Ken Booth and Russell Trood (eds), *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, London: Macmillan, 1999, 232.

nationhood and statecraft in the midst of an insurgency. Sketching the narrative of the Malaysian government's response to the CPM challenge is crucial in explaining how an emergent post-colonial state was able to contain an insurgent threat and consolidate its place as a regional actor. This chapter explains the COIN response of the Malaysian and to a lesser extent the Singapore governments and sets them within an inter-connected quadrant of: utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. Throughout the chapter, attempts will also be made to draw out the departures as well as continuities between the First and Second Emergencies. This chapter emphasises the point that the consolidation of Federal Malaysia and eventual defeat of the CPM insurgency would not have been possible without the firm building blocks bequeathed by the British during the First Emergency. Many aspects of the Malaysian 'Comprehensive' approach to COIN and the narrative of its development were deeply rooted in the First Emergency years. Nevertheless, these will be juxtaposed against the political, geographical, socio-economic and military conditions of the Second Emergency to tease out departures unique to the post-colonial COIN campaign. At this point it would be useful to set the context of Malaysia's post-colonial security environment before delving into the chapter proper.

Tunku Abdul Rahman, independent Malaya's first Prime Minister saw fit to rely on a continuing British and Commonwealth military presence to guarantee the external security of the immediate post-colonial state. This policy of reliance on the British for Malaysia's external security continued under his successor Tun Abdul Razak. The arrangement was enshrined in the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA) of 1957 which was superseded after the British withdrawal in 1971 by the Five-Power-Defence-Agreement (FPDA). These Anglophile leanings reflected the attitudinal formation of the Malay elite plus a pragmatic realisation that the Malaysian security forces were better suited for internal defence. The need to place a higher priority on socio-economic development also imposed strict limits on defence spending.[321] Thus, even after the rundown of Britain's East of Suez role, Malaysia's external defence throughout much of the Second Emergency period came to depend on its Emergency-era British and Antipodes

---

[321] Zakaria Haji Ahmand, 'The Military and Development in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore,' in J. Soedjati Djiwandono & Yong Mun Cheong (eds), *Soldiers and Stability in Southeast Asia* ,Singapore: ISEAS, 1988, 235.

Commonwealth partners. As will be seen in this chapter, much of the colonial inheritance of the Emergency period was consciously or subconsciously absorbed and rationalised into the security and state apparatus of a post-colonial Malaysia.

The conceptual underpinnings of Malaysia's post-colonial COIN strategy, KESBAN were deeply rooted in the Briggs Plan of the First Emergency years. Although much of the KESBAN concept was adopted by the Malaysian government in 1970 to combat the threat posed by the CPM's armed insurgency during the Second Emergency, it was only on 5 February 1980 that KESBAN was formally legislated by the National Security Council (NSC) as 'Directive no. 11 dated Feb. 1980'.[322] The assassination of High Commissioner, Henry Gurney, almost thirty years earlier and the lacklustre results of large-scale military sweeps in the first phase of the original Emergency provided the impetus for the Briggs Plan. Similarly, during the opening stages of the Second Emergency, the heavy reliance of the Malaysian security forces on air power, artillery bombardments and large-scale division-sized operations failed to deliver a military solution. To add to these problems, the revival of the CPM insurgency in 1968 struck at the time when the Malaysian Special Branch (MSB) was being wound down with adverse consequences for the depth of its Chinese expertise. As in most if not all COIN scenarios, the initially heavy-handed military response in both Emergencies signified an instinctive 'reflex action'. In similar vein, as both Emergencies progressed, there was a shift from a military-driven campaign to a more comprehensive and integrated approach. However, it must be noted that in the Second Emergency the Malaysian government was faced with a much reduced threat and was less constrained by time or by the moral considerations that confronted the British colonial authorities. While the First Emergency threatened to derail the decolonisation project in Malaya, the same cannot be said of the later CPM insurgency which did not pose quite the same existential danger to the survival of the Malaysian state. As such, the Malaysian government had the luxury of fine-tuning the KESBAN concept over a ten-year period before it became enshrined in official doctrine.

At the same time, the colonial apron strings were gradually undone, particularly in the realm of regional security. The perceived threat from communist subversion compelled

---

[322] Restricted Report on the KESBAN Doctrine, 4.

128

the non-communist regimes of Southeast Asia to subordinate their conflicts to the mutual requirement for regional security. The creation of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) reflected official cognisance that the survival and stability of each individual nation was intertwined with that of its immediate neighbours. Unlike the FPDA or the short-lived Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), ASEAN, founded upon the core states of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, was a strictly regional pact that did not include any former colonial or extra-regional powers. As Clive Christie observed: 'a post-colonial logic of regional security was now replacing the security structures of the era of colonialism and decolonization…regional resilience, therefore, was being built up along with regime resilience'.[323] Aimed at preventing interference by outside powers, ASEAN established the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971. The ZOPFAN declaration called for ASEAN members to use national and regional resilience as the basis for the 'neutralisation' of Southeast Asia. However, the continued reliance of all ASEAN members except Indonesia on security links with the U.S., the UK and other Western powers meant that ZOPFAN was a long-term aspiration rather than a display of concrete regional consensus.[324] Nevertheless, the creation of a regional collective centred on a local and Southeast Asian identity was a milestone in the politics of regional security. It symbolised the arrival of an independent post-colonial Southeast Asia that was capable of looking after its own affairs unfettered by its colonial past.

Yet the process was far from smooth-sailing. The British-proposed Malayan Union plan of 1946, which guaranteed equal citizenship rights to all peoples of Malaya regardless of ethnicity, provoked the unanimous hostility of the ethnic Malays and the creation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). In the face of this 'comprehensively powerful and unprecedented display of Malay unity', the British were compelled to bequeath a new postcolonial constitutional framework that guaranteed the indigenous rights of the Malays.[325] The project to define the Malaysian nation and create a Malaysian identity

---

[323] Clive J. Christie, *Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century: A Reader* , London: I.B. Tauris, 1998, 282.
[324] Tim Huxley, 'Insecurity in the ASEAN Region', *RUSI Whitehall Paper 23*, 1993, 16.
[325] Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separatism*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1996, 18-9.

was a contested struggle throughout much of the post-war and post-colonial period. In the words of Tim Harper:

> As a political project, nationalism in Malaya sought to create a modern nation-state, on a model thrust upon it by a European colonial power, where the linguistic and cultural basis of that state had yet to be resolved. Post-colonial Malaya had to cope with the contradictions that arose in this period… Yet the relationship between the Rulers and *rakyat* [people] was subject to increasing tensions. They rumbled below the surface in the 1960s and 1970s…When Malay nationalism became subject to a new ethos in the early 1980s open clashes erupted.[326]

Indeed, ideology, ethnicity, language, national identity and national culture were hotly contested spaces in post-colonial Malaysia. In the battle to define the political forms of the new polity, the UMNO-dominated Federal government and the CPM sought to impose their own conflicting visions of a new Malaysian state. However, as the ties to the former colonial overlord became still looser, the imperative to stand on one's own feet and 'catch one's own fish' demanded that some things be approached in different fashion from the First Emergency era. The Second Emergency epitomised the symbiosis and syncretism of the colonial and post-colonial, but it also marked an important departure. On one hand, institutions, doctrines and practices from the previous Emergency were absorbed and indigenised. On the other hand, some of the developments were uniquely Malaysian and post-colonial. The way in which the Malaysian state dealt with the CPM insurgency was thus indicative of how post-colonial Malaysia came to be defined.

In many ways, the environs and spirit of the Haadyai peace talks in 1989 were very different from those of Baling in 1955. The most obvious difference was the absence of a British presence. At Haadyai, the Malaysians sat with the Thais at the conference table - two Southeast Asian neighbours, and more importantly, ASEAN partners that could successfully guarantee their own national and regional security without the interference of

---

[326] Tim Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 371-2.

130

extra-regional powers. Indeed, one fundamental paradigm shift is the cross-border aspect of the insurgency. By 1960, the CPM had completed its 'long march' from the Malayan interior into Southern Thailand. While the first Emergency was largely waged within the confines of colonial Malaya's Peninsula borders, in the Second Emergency, the CPM had become a pseudo-state within a state in Southern Thailand. In short, the counterinsurgent response had to be different. Regardless of political motivations, the Malaysians faced being consigned to fighting a longer war as opposed to a very long one had they opted for a unilateral solution to the problem.

ASEAN's distinctive political, economic and security histories evolved before its members emerged as independent nation states. In ASEAN, it was possible for military leaders to both evoke the precedent of pre-colonial Southeast Asian monarchies and to draw upon the ideology of post-Westphalian Western states. However, distinguishing themselves from the 'professionalism' of conventional Western armies, post-colonial Southeast Asian militaries came to be associated with 'development' and 'nation-building'. This augmented role was rationalised by the concept of 'new professionalism'.[327] Indeed, the need to maintain internal security in the face of challenges to state authority was the primary *raison d'etre* for the armed forces of all ASEAN member states except Singapore.[328] The collapse of the non-communist Indochinese regimes in 1975 reinforced the ASEAN community's commitment to the notion that 'economic and social development was an essential weapon' against communist subversion. In light of such events, even the *Konfrontasi* (1963-1966) between Indonesia and Malaysia served as a timely reminder of the need to institutionalise intra-regional relations under the ASEAN banner. As such, in 1976, ASEAN-TAC formally declared 'a determination to strengthen national resilience in political, economic, socio-cultural as well as security fields [and] to cooperate in all fields for the promotion of regional resilience'.[329] In the case of post-colonial Malaysia, the perceived primary dangers of communism and communalism were seen as being internally generated. As such, in the aftermath of the devastating May 13 riots, the Malaysian government aimed to defeat the CPM's armed struggle and subversion

---

[327] Nicholas Tarling, *Southeast Asia,* 290.
[328] Tim Huxley, 'The ASEAN States' Defence Policies 1975-81: Military Responses to IndoChina', ANU, *Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Working Paper* No. 88, 1984, 11.
[329] Tim Huxley, 'Insecurity in the ASEAN Region', 5.

131

through a strategy of developing national cohesion by political, socio-economic and socio-cultural means.

The emphasis on the socio-economic basis of security and the priority accorded to development as part and parcel of the overall COIN effort was enshrined into a national security concept *Keselamatan dan Pembangunan*, (KESBAN). The first and second syllables were derived from the Malay words *keselamatan* (security) and *pembangunan* (development). The principal underlying assumption of the KESBAN doctrine was that 'security can only be obtained if there is a lack of economic deprivation'.[330] This strategy was a streamlined and indigenised version of proven methods and concepts utilised by Briggs and Templer in the colonial phase the MCP insurgency. The Malayan Emergency (1948-60) was the 'determining strategic experience for the formulation of a national security policy for much of the first two decades of independence', but an 'overhaul of [its] fundamental goals was undertaken' in the wake of the post-election May 13 riots in 1969.[331] The rational that in the event of further communal conflict, a Malay dominated MAF would be needed to back up the government and defend Malay nationalism became deeply embedded in the psyche of the post-Abdul Rahman administrations.

A significant departure from the colonial era was the role, composition and force structure of the security forces. In order to reduce inter-communal Malay-Chinese tensions, the British-led COIN effort of the First Emergency had a multi-national, multi-ethnic make-up. The Malayan Emergency was essentially a Commonwealth campaign that involved British regulars and national servicemen, Australian, New Zealand, Gurkha, Fijian, Dyak, Orang Asli and East African contingents. The Armed Forces of the independent post-colonial Malaysia, however, was predominantly Malay. In 1969, 64.5 per cent of army officers in the MAF were Malay. In response to the May 13 riots, the security forces expanded rapidly, particularly the Malay-only Royal Malay Regiment which grew to twenty-six battalions by the mid-1980s.[332] The Ranger battalions, the multi-ethnic component of the MAF were also heavily dominated by Malays. At the height of CPM's armed insurrection in the mid-1970s, it was the police rather than the military – particularly

---

[330] Zakaria Haji Ahmand, The Military and Development in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore, 236.
[331] Chandran Jeshurun, Malaysia: the Delayed Birth of a Strategic Culture, 237.
[332] Nicholas Tarling, *Southeast Asia*, 296.

MSB that was the primary counterforce to the communist underground. Indeed, there was no real need for the MAF to actively recruit from the Malaysian Chinese community which even in colonial times were disinclined towards military service. The effects of a Malay-dominated MAF were somewhat ameliorated by efforts to rebuilt MSB's Chinese-speaking expertise.

The post-colonial geopolitical picture, and the international system that underpinned it, were also vastly different from those of the Emergency era. Both were characterised by rapid tectonic shifts in ideological alignment that ultimately consigned the CPM to isolation at the local, regional and international levels. Relationships between the non-communist regimes of Southeast Asia and their rising Chinese neighbour were of particular significance. In 1969, official Chinese publications were still openly deriding the governments of the five original ASEAN member states (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and Thailand) as 'Asian lackeys' of America who had received a 'shot in the arm' through a 'so-called "regional economic cooperation organisation"'.[333] However, by the early 1970s, Beijing's relations with Southeast Asia were primarily shaped by the forces of Sino-Soviet rivalry and Chinese attempts to prevent a Soviet 'encirclement' of the region rather than by ideology. In 1971, China supported Malaysian and Indonesian claims to administer the Straits of Malacca against the internationalisation demands of the major maritime powers. Peking also endorsed ASEAN's proposed establishment of Southeast Asia as a 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' in 1973.[334] When it came to establishment of formal diplomatic relations, Malaysia became the first ASEAN member state to break the ice in 1974. In his 1976 visit to China, Lee Kuan Yew agreed to formally recognize the PRC after the Indonesians had done so. By the end of the 1970's, the PRC had established diplomatic relations with all the ASEAN member states but Indonesia, Singapore, and Brunei.

Under the pragmatic leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China's material support for various revolutionary Southeast Asian parties (including the CPM) was gradually reduced to negligible proportions even though propagandist endorsement lent credibility to the

---

[333] Michael Yahuda, *Towards the End of Isolationism: China's Foreign Policy After Mao*, London: Macmillan, 1983, 220.
[334] Ibid, 220-221.

133

CCP's claim of legitimacy as a Marxist-Leninist Party genuinely committed to revolutionary internationalism. In truth, Deng's foreign policy was guided more by pragmatism and *realpolitk* than by ideological commitment. Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia was rooted in its unbending hostility to Vietnam, the key Soviet ally in Southeast Asia. China's 1979 invasion was substantially launched 'to teach Vietnam a lesson' and 'remind its old ideological ally of China's enduring geopolitical interests in Indochina'.[335] In the case of Malaysia, its relations with China were also characterised by pragmatism, particularly the perceived necessity of better relations with the Southeast Asia's closest continental power. The improvement in ASEAN-China relations was evident in ASEAN's opposition to the subsequent Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and the ending of Beijing's claims to authority over the overseas Chinese populations of Southeast Asia. Over time the CPM thus not only lost the material support but also the ideological and moral support of its erstwhile Chinese sponsor.

The remaining sections of this chapter explore the counter-measures adopted by both the Malaysian and, to a lesser extent, the Singaporean governments in response to the CPM's efforts to subvert and revolutionise hearts and minds in the Malay Peninsula. The Malaysian COIN doctrine of the Second Emergency period, KESBAN will be discussed and assessed. Juxtaposed against the strategies adopted in the first Emergency, the evolution of KESBAN and the concept of 'Comprehensive Security' can be better appreciated. Despite the comparative approach, it must be recognised that the political, geographical, socio-economic and military conditions of the First Emergency were different from those of the Second. As such, this chapter will examine each and every of the aforesaid aspects within the relevant context, but also within the framework of the earlier established four key touchstones of the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. The first sub-section will deal with the utility of force by the Malaysian government – particularly the military-centric approach of the early to mid 1970s. The second seeks to explain why the big-guns approach still persisted. The third and final section will cover the palpable shift towards a more population-centric that would eventually allow the Malaysian government to secure the

---

[335] Bronson Percival, *The Dragon Looks South: China & Southeast Asia in the New Century*, Westport Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2007, 6-7.

border areas. Throughout the chapter, attempts will be made to situate the strategy of the Singapore government into the wider picture. The regional and international dimensions will also be addressed albeit the focus on Thai-Malaysian relations and the relationship between Malaysia and its ANZUK security partners.

Marching to the Big Gun Response: The First Emergency Forgotten? (1968-1974)

At the risk of drawing overly-deterministic parallels, it seems clear that many aspects of the Malaysian COIN approach during the first decade of the Second Emergency closely resembled the American 'Big Guns' paradigm of the Vietnam War. Similar to the Americans, the MAF came to rely on heavy artillery and air-power as the initial solution to the CPM's 'Viet-Cong' tactics - albeit on a smaller scale. Prior to the Briggs Plan's inception in 1950, reliance on military force also dominated the opening phase of the First Emergency. Similarly, the Malaysian government's initial reaction to the resurrection of the CPM's revolutionary violence can be interpreted as an instinctive reflex state action – a perceived military threat met with a military response. Indeed, as Richard Stubbs recognised, such a strategy is particularly appealing when the insurgents have little support which presents the opportunity of eliminating the movement before it gains any momentum.[336] Thus, the Malaysian Government could well be forgiven for misreading the signs in the early years of the insurgency. What needs explaining is why did the Malaysian Government take over a decade to abandon the military-centric approach and fashion a coherent population-centric response? The previous chapters hinted at some of the answers – the most obvious was the lack of Chinese-speaking MSB officers that resulted in a 'black-gap' in the intelligence picture. The Malaysian security forces could only adopt a more targeted and responsive approach with reliable intelligence and the cooperation of their Thai counterparts which up to 1977 was largely ineffective. Adequate answers to the above can be found by dissecting the growing pains of the post-colonial Malaysian security forces prior to the development of the KESBAN doctrine. From 1968 to 1974, it seemed as if the Malaysian security forces had to relearn COIN all over again. That journey is the focus of this section.

---

[336] Richard Stubbs, 'From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-60,' in Daniel Marston & Carter Malkasian (eds), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* , Oxford: Osprey Publications, 2008, 127.

Part of the state's response to the May 13 May 1969 Riots which was attributed to CPM instigation by the Malaysian government was the creation of the National Operation Council (later renamed the National Security Council or NSC) in 1969 under the Prime Minister's Office.[337] The NSC would be the overall coordinating body of national security policies and the direction of security matters including development efforts. This structure not unlike that of the Executive Committee structure implemented the First Emergency was to extend across the national, state, district and village levels. In practical terms, the system did not function as planned due to a lack of intelligence during the early years. The renewed CPM insurgency came at a time when MSB had atrophied during the slow run-down at the end of the First Emergency. Another factor in its decline was the influence of the Bumiputra policy that gave preferential treatment to the indigenous Malays in Malaysia. On that subject, J B Johnston, High Commissioner to Malaysia noted that:

> The principal weakness is the deterioration of morale among Chinese officers who are now denied promotion to the senior ranks because of the policy of advancing the Malays. They are consequently frustrated by finding themselves subordinate to less able and less experienced Malays...the loss of Chinese capability by retirement, lack of incentive and the pitifully low level of recruitment is an increasing disability'.[338]

Another contemporary commentator, J K Hickman of the FCO observed that the efficiency of the MSB had 'suffered through loss of morale among its Chinese officers, who have always been its cutting edge'.[339] Indeed, Malay MSB officers were often systematically promoted in preference to their Chinese colleagues at the cost of MSB's effectiveness.[340] During meetings with Lord Carrington, the British Defence Secretary, Lee Kuan Yew indicated that 'Chinese officers were leaving [MSB] to its great detriment because of

---

[337] Mohd Zakaria Yadi, *Malaysian Emergencies-Anthropological Factors in the Success of Malaysia's Counterinsurgency*, Master's thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2004, 17.

[338] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, The Communist Threat to Malaysia, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 16 August 1971.

[339] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1161, The Communist Threat to Malaysia, Southwest Pacific Department, FCO, 3 September1971.

[340] Richard Sim, Malaysia: Containing the Communist Insurgency, *Conflict Studies* (110), August 1979, 1-17, 10.

discrimination in favour of Malays [and] inadequate intelligence was a crucial defect in Malaysian efforts to deal with communist terrorists'.[341] In recognition of Lee's assessment, both the British Defence Secretary and Secretary of State agreed that 'specialist assistance to Malaysia in rebuilding a really effective intelligence organisation, in particular liaison between [MSB] and the Army, would be one of the most valuable contributions we could make'.[342] The deterioration of the Malaysian intelligence apparatus – particularly cooperation between the main intelligence agency (MSB), police and armed forces was evident.

The UK was directly concerned about the situation not only because of its 'interest in seeing a stable Malaysia unthreatened by such a menace but also because of [its] possible involvement through the [FPDA].[343] The UK was particularly worried that any Malaysian request for British or FPDA help in a deteriorating international security situation 'could involve HMG [Her Majesty's Government] in very difficult decisions'.[344] In order to guard against that possibility, the UK was mindful of the various acceptable ways in which it could unobtrusively help the Malaysian COIN effort. These included the training of the Malaysian police in COIN techniques by the SAS, training in psychological warfare, provision of infrared equipment for use in operations in the border area, support for the MSB, and photographic reconnaissance flights.[345] In short, the outbreak of the Second Emergency placed the British government in a Catch-22 situation. The FPDA was designed to guarantee the security of Malaysia and Singapore from any external threat – including externally promoted insurgencies, but the FPDA was essentially meant to be a 'consultative arrangement' and ANZUK forces deployed within the FPDA were 'principally in support of diplomatic rather than military objectives'.[346] In reality, the British were committed to the complete wind-down of their remaining military forces in Singapore by 1971 but at the same time, they could not allow the revived CPM threat to menace the security of Britain's show-case decolonisation project in Southeast Asia.

---

[341] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, Malaysian Intelligence Organisation, FCO Telegram No. 7195 November 1971.
[342] Ibid.
[343] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, Possible Approach to the Thais About Malaysian Border, Southwest Pacific Department, FCO, 4 October 1971.
[344] FCO 24/1161, The Communist Threat to Malaysia.
[345] Ibid.
[346] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Minute by the Chiefs of Staff Committee at a Meeting on Wednesday 12th April 1972, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 12 April 1972.

The security situation was also of concern to Australia, the largest FPDA power in terms of troop contributions. Like the British, the Australians were quite unprepared for the sudden revival of the CPM threat as evinced in a particular letter from the Australian High Commission: 'When we decided in 1969 to leave forces there to help if necessary with the Communist insurgency, we thought they would be merely ornamental, the possibility is now in sight...that we might actually be asked to do something'.[347] Like their British counterparts, the Australians took the view that the Malaysians should 'continue to face the essential responsibility of handling their security situation themselves' but were favourable to the notion of 'unobtrusive help in the early stages' rather than 'stand aside until the situation [was] beyond their capacity to handle'.[348] Indeed, a directive to the Officer Commanding, Royal Australian Airforce, Butterworth, Malaysia stated:

> Notwithstanding Australian Government policy regarding direct participation, it is recognised that continuing Malaysian military and police action against the insurgents is essential to the internal security of that country. However, you may provide indirect support from on-base facilities providing such support is within the capacity of your current established resources.[349]

Much like their British colleagues, the Australians were 'open and flexible' about the ways in which training and technical assistance could be provided and were prepared 'to do more in the way of in-country activity' if necessary.[350] An additional Supplementary Directive was added to Air Directive 565/1/2 of 1964 that allowed the Officer Commanding RAAF Butterworth to 'without specific authority, provide on-base support facilities to the extent that provision does not prejudice the readiness of your forces to perform their primary role'.[351] The directive was very much in line with the stand that 'the deployment of

---

[347] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Letter from J.R. Rowland, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 October 1971.
[348] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram on Malaysia Security Situation and Five Power, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 November 1971.
[349] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Directive to the Officer Commanding RAAF Butterworth, Department of Air, Canberra 2 October 1970.
[350] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram on Malaysia Security Situation and Five Power.
[351] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Directive to the Officer Commanding RAAF Butterworth.

additional units to the ANZUK Force [would] be politically unacceptable during the initial stages of [COIN] operations'.[352]

Any potential shifts in Southeast Asian security would have had a more direct impact on Australian security and strategic interests and those of the UK. The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, 1971, recognised that: 'In Malaysia/Singapore...It is important that we be clearly seen to have the military capability to act, if so decided, under the [FPDA]; this involves a capability to reinforce our deployed forces in a timely fashion'.[353] To that end, the three armed services were therefore directed in 1972 to conduct studies into how ANZUK units presently deployed in Malaysia and Singapore could be used to support Malaysian COIN operations.[354] These plans were made on the assumption that the Malaysian Government would not 'call on foreign forces except in extremis'.[355] One battalion of the ANZUK Brigade based in Butterworth was planned to support Malaysian COIN operations in its own area of operations with the second Butterworth-based battalion as a reserve for forward operations. The remaining ANZUK battalion was to be retained in Singapore.[356] ANZUK air forces were also prepared to provide tactical reconnaissance, close air support, air transport support from Butterworth as well as maritime surveillance in support of COIN operations from Singapore.[357] Prospects of deployment of an ANZUK naval force to prevent infiltration by seas and provide limited naval gunfire support on both coasts of West Malaysia by four ANZUK naval ships and Royal Malaysian forces were considered unsustainable and unable to meet the tasks assigned.[358] The request for combat assistance from its ANZUK security partners was never invoked by the Malaysian Government which monitored Malaysia's internal security situation closely nonetheless.

J. Clementson, a retired RAF Squadron Leader assessed the Malaysian government's COIN strategy to be a combination of coercive legislative and military

---

[352] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore, DCNS, 6 December 1972.
[353] AWM 121/214/J11, Minute by the Chiefs of Staff Committee at a Meeting on Wednesday 12th April 1972.
[354] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore, DCNS, 14 August 1972.
[355] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Reinforcement of the Australian Force in Malaysia and Singapore, Director Joint Staff, 17 February 1972
[356] Ibid.
[357] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Study on Counter-insurgency Aid to Malaysia/Singapore, DCAS, November 1972
[358] AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore.

measures which included the reactivation of Emergency Laws based on the Internal Security Act (ISA) of 1960 that were further reinforced through the mid-1970s by the Essential Security Cases Regulations of October 1976 (ESCAR).[359] These legislative measures allowed for detention without trial and in-camera special courts where evidence was given incognito and suspects were presumed guilty until proven innocent. The Emergency Laws enacted in the aftermath of the May 13 1969 riots and their potential for abuse aroused concern among numerous foreign observers sympathetic to Malaysia's cause such as Clementson. Maureen Sioh, for his part, argued that in the course of the First Emergency, the colonial state, and its independent successor institutionalised much of the 'repressive legislation' such as the ISA that continues to haunt Malaysia today.[360] At this juncture, it is necessary to remind ourselves that this thesis has focused on the degree of continuity and effectiveness in COIN approaches from the colonial to the post-colonial era rather than on changing perceptions of repression. Malaysia's Emergency Laws and the ISA formed part of a broader 'stick and carrot' strategy inherited from the British approach to the First Emergency. In the case of post-colonial Malaysia, the lack of reliable intelligence in the early days of the Second Emergency meant that the stick comprised the dominant knee-jerk response to any perceived CPM threat. The ill-coordinated anti-communist sweeps from 1968 until the mid-1970s that produced little in terms of contacts, intelligence or serious disruption of the CPM's infrastructure and network were a source of anxiety to Clementson and Malaysia's ANZUK security partners.

The period between 1969 and 1974 has been described as 'one of the most challenging to the Security Forces, in particular the army'.[361] Following the withdrawal of British Forces in 1967, the MAF took over full responsibility of the defence of both Peninsular and East Malaysia with two divisions and five brigades. The 1st Infantry Division was responsible for East Malaysia and the 2nd Infantry Division Peninsular Malaysia.[362] Thus, the army had to deal with the resurgence of the CPM threat and soon

---

[359] J. Clementson, 'Malaysia in the Seventies: Communist Resurgence and Government Response', *RUSI Journal* 124(4), December 1979, 50-57, 54.

[360] Maureen Sioh, 'An Ecology of Postcoloniality: Disciplining Nature and Society in Malaya, 1948-1957', *Journal of Historical Geography* (30), 2004, 729-746,742.

[361] Sharon Bin Hashim (ed), Mohamed Ghazemy Mahmud (Trans), *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, Kuala Lumpur: Army Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, 2001, 156

[362] Ibid, 63.

after, restore public order in the aftermath of the May 13 1969 riots with the strength of a single infantry division. In the Thai-Malaysian border region, the operational area was divided into nine sectors, but not all were permanently occupied by Malaysian security forces.[363] Plans were put in place to expand the quantity and quality of the security forces but implementation and results took time.

It was, however, more than just a case of too few men for too big a task. Lacklustre progress was also a reflection of the lack of effective Malaysian-Thai cooperation at all levels. The virtual absence of coordinated and effective Malaysian-Thai liaison was a significant barrier to any sort of successful COIN action. In 1970, it was apparent that the Thai authorities had 'far too little precise knowledge' of the CPM presence within their borders and there was no clear definition of responsibilities within the Thai chain of command.[364] In February 1970, responsibility for COIN in the Malaysian-Thai border areas was transferred from National Security Command to Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) under a Thai General, but the National Security Command, not CSOC was still responsible for Thai-Malaysian cooperation.[365] At the operational level, the Border Patrol Police (BPP) Commander in Songkhla had multiple direct responsibilities to Central BPP Command in Bangkok, the local police commander and CSOC.[366]

An unprovoked ambush attack by the CPM in Sadao on 12 November 1969 which left seven Thai policemen dead provided a clear signal to the Thais that the CPM's presence was 'a definite danger not only to the Malaysians but also to the Thais themselves'.[367] In a display of their new found willingness to cooperate, the Thais mounted a series of joint operations with the Malaysians. On 1 May 1970, a joint Thai-Malaysian force of about eight platoons captured a large deserted CPM camp in Sadao which was believed to have been used by HQ 12 Regt to accommodate up to 150 insurgents.[368] The

---

[363] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/694, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September 1970, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 22 October 1970.
[364] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/819, Note by the Ambassador, Bangkok: Situation in South of Thailand, British Embassy, Bangkok, 31 March 1970.
[365] Ibid, NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Thai Action Against CTs in the Far South, British Embassy, Bangkok, 5 June 1970.
[366] FCO 24/819, Note by the Ambassador, Bangkok.
[367] FCO 24/827, Thai Action Against CTs in the Far South.
[368] Ibid, NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Comments by Defence Attache Bangkok on Situation Near Thai-Malaysian Border, British Embassy, Bangkok, 13 May 1970.

previous day witnessed the capture of a large CPM camp in Amphoe Betong by a Thai-Malaysian force of fourteen platoons.[369] From the end of February to early June, a total of five CPM camps had been captured by security forces on the Thai side of the border.[370] The Thai practice of giving notice of their operations often forty-eight hours in advance frequently resulted in the capture of empty enemy sanctuaries – and after the CPM had vacated in good time.[371] Although the capture of empty bivouacs was less than what the Malaysians wished for, it was nonetheless a demonstration of the readiness on the part of the Thais for greater cooperation in joint operations.

CPM infiltration of the Southern border villages and concerns over political indoctrination of the rural youth led the Thai authorities to take a more serious view of the CPM threat.[372] The establishment of contact between the CPM and the CPT and the realisation that the 'presence of the CTOs cannot simply be winked at on the comforting assumption that they only intend to be nasty to Malaysia' could also not be ignored.[373] In recognition of the severity of the CPM threat to their own security, a New Border Cooperation Agreement was concluded by Malaysia and Thailand on 7 March 1970. For the first time, security forces from each country would be permitted across the border for joint operations in 'hot pursuit' of up to five miles and a period of seventy-two hours.[374] The 1970 agreement was the third between Malaysia and Thailand since the CPM completed its 'long march' toward the end of the First Emergency.

The Malaysians were never satisfied with the preceding two agreements. The first accord of December 1959 created a joint Senior Staff Committee which met bi-monthly to set policy as well as a Border Operations Committee that met monthly to plan the conduct of ground operations. The agreement also permitted police forces of each state the right of 'hot pursuit' within twenty-five miles of the border. The Second agreement of 1965 was even more restrictive. The aforementioned upper limit for hot pursuit was reduced from

---

[369] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Capture of Communist Camp,Telegram No.222, British Embassy, Bangkok, 1 May 1970.
[370] FCO 24/827, Thai Action Against CTs in the Far South.
[371] Ibid.
[372] FCO 24/827, Comments by Defence Attache Bangkok on Situation Near Thai-Malaysian Border.
[373] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Insurgency and Subversion in Thailand, Diplomatic Report No.255/70, 13 April 1970.
[374] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Malaysia-Thailand: New Border Agreement for Cooperation Against Communist Terrorists, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 16 March 1970.

twenty-five miles to five. The number of meetings at the Senior Staff Committee level was curtailed to only two per year and those of the Border Committee to once every quarter. The only positive outcome of the 1965 agreement was the establishment of the Combined Intelligence Centre at Songhkla. For the Malaysians, the 1970 agreement was a significant improvement in that for the very first time, joint military-police forces and command centres were now incorporated into the agreement – including the use of combat aircraft.[375] In itself, the inclusion of military forces in the 1970 agreement partially explained why the Malaysians were so eager to use conventional military means as the primary resort. The 1970 agreement offered the prospect of blasting the CPM out of the border areas with heavy artillery and airpower. That assumption was proven false as the Second Emergency wore on into the late 1970s.

Compared with the 1959 and 1965 agreements, the 1970 agreement elicited more systematic cooperation from the Thais. HQ Fifth Combined Communist Suppression Force was officially opened in Songkhla in May 1970. As joint commanders of the new local CSOC HQ, the Colonel of the Fifth Combined Army Regiment and the Superintendent of Zone Nine BPP had the authority to order operations without the approval of CSOC HQ in Bangkok.[376] After his brief March 1970 visit to the Malaysian-Thai border provinces of Nakorn Sithammarat, Songkhla, Hat Yai, Betong, Yala and Pattani, Pritchard, the British Ambassador in Bangkok noted with extreme cautious optimism that: 'Nobody gave the impression that the recent Thai-Malaysian border agreement, publicised as a major change in effective cooperation, had really altered anything. But the Thais do seem to have hoisted in the point that this is not solely a problem for Malaysia'.[377] Pritchard's Australian colleagues drew similar, but more scathing conclusions. At a confidential Department of Defence briefing, the consensus was that the Thais gave 'only lip service to cooperation' which was reflected by the fact that at least fifty percent of the Betong Salient remained under the control of the CPM.[378] The main point for Malaysian frustration is the peculiar imbalance in the relationship between their respective security forces. The Malaysians were obliged to pass all their intelligence to the Thais but not vice versa. The decision to carry

---

[375] Ibid.

[376] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Combined CSOC Headquarters in Songkhla Province, British Embassy, Bangkok, 20 May 1970.

[377] FCO 24/819, Note by the Ambassador, Bangkok.

[378] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Confidential Brief, Department of Defence, Canberra, 15th October 1971.

143

out operations and the nature of the operations rested entirely with the Thais. Any unauthorised crossing of the border by Malaysian security forces and aircraft were treated with extreme sensitivity by the Thais and permission to cross generally arrived so late that the benefit of hot pursuit 'has been either nullified or negated'.[379]

In 1970, the Malaysian government's COIN strategy rested, in theory at least, on a two-pronged approach – 'the disruption and arrest of the infiltration process by the conventional military and police machine and by a combination of economic development and hearts and minds activity to neutralise the breeding grounds from which the communists hope to harvest support'.[380] The concept was later codified by the NSC within the KESBAN doctrine of 1980.[381] In theory, all operations against the CPM were coordinated by a series of joint committees under the direction of the National Security Council (NSC).[382] In practice, Malaysian military-police cooperation was plagued by the lack of coordination, inter-force jealousies and the lack of respect by the police for the army's operational abilities.[383] A PFF battalion (3 PFF) was under the operational command of HQ 6 Malaysian Infantry Brigade at Sungei Patani but remained under the command of PFF North Brigade at Ipoh – thus permission must be received from the latter before any redeployment could be carried out.[384] The PFF Ulu Kinta Training Depot erected at a cost of RM30 million was the only training facility with an electric target range in Malaysia at that time but the army was forbidden by the police to use it.[385]

Moreover, the thrust of the MAF's COIN strategy was based the military-centric concepts of 'Framework Operation' and 'Search and Destroy Operations' of CPM insurgents. The Framework Operation involved monitoring Orang Asli settlements; safe-guarding vital targets such as hydropower stations, highway and transmitting stations; denial of supplies to CPM assault units; and checking the smuggling of controlled items

---

[379] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/71/2042, Communist Terrorist Organisation, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 4 November 1971.
[380] FCO 24/827, The Communist Threat to Malaysia.
[381] Restricted Report on the KESBAN Doctrine, 4.
[382] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assement No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973, ANZUK Joint Intelligence Committee, 6 October 1971.
[383] Ibid.
[384] DEFE 11/694, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September 1970.
[385] Ibid.

and infiltration along the border.[386] Such a strategy harassed the CPM but did little to strike at the CPM's havens across the border or addressed the issues that the CPM exploited to garner support and boost their ranks. Moreover, the introduction of the NEP intended to reduce the economic disparities between the Chinese and Malay communities led to the practice of Malay advancement at the expense of the Chinese in employment and educational opportunities as well as government patronage.[387] Such affirmative action grudgingly accepted by the Chinese business elite to preserve their continued interests might be resented by the poor Chinese whose grievances the CPM sought to exploit. Indeed, the Malaysian Director of Military Intelligence (DMI), Colonel Hassan admitted that the CPM had been able to exploit the race issue as a successful recruitment tool.[388] By 1971, the government realised that the New Villages into which the Chinese squatters were settled during the First Emergency had been thus far neglected.[389] Steps were therefore taken to bring the New Villages under closer government administration – which in theory was not very different from the British population-centric approach of the colonial COIN effort.

Countermeasures were taken to put the theory of the joint civil-military and population-centric approach into practice – particularly in the state of Perak. On 25 September 1971, a large joint military-police operation codenamed Operation Loyalty *(Gerakan Setia)* was launched to assess the size of the Communist threat in the Sungei Siput and Ulu Kinta areas of Perak – traditional strongholds where the CPM influence remained deeply rooted.[390] The main aim, however, was to 'take a strong government presence into areas where the government's influence was sufficiently weak as to enable the [CPM] to intimidate the local population with impunity'.[391] In order to cut the CPM off from its sympathisers and potential recruits, a blend of carrot and stick population control measures were imposed by the Perak State government as part of Operation Loyalty. They

---

[386] Sharon Bin Hashim, *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency*, 110.

[387] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assement No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973.

[388] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Intelligence Briefing Given by Chief of Staff and DMI for Air Commodore Cornish, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 December 1971.

[389] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 1972.

[390] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia – Internal Security – Operation Gerakan Setia, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 28 September 1971.

[391] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Monthly Savingram on Internal Security Summary in West Malaysia – September 1971, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 October 1971.

included the fencing of villages, demolition and relocation of squatter houses, household and tenant registration, and tighter control over local food supplies. The authorities also pursued increased contacts with community leaders and appointed civil affairs officers who spoke the local village dialect to ascertain villagers' complaints. Temporary occupation licences to legalise squatting on unalienated land were also issued and smallholders were encouraged to switch to production of new cash crops in depressed areas.[392]

In recognition that squatters cultivating tapioca in old tin tailings along the jungle fringes provided an ideal situation for the CPM to meet and recruit supporters, the Perak State government announced that it would release 4,000 acres of land in the Kuala Kangsar/Sungei Siput area. The State Development Corporation and private firms were also invited in to set up factories to process the tapioca.[393] A hearts and minds campaign focusing on nine New Villages and their surrounding areas lent weight to these measures. A joint civil-security team of senior officers were tasked to 'find out the needs and aspirations of the people' and 'have a dialogue with community leaders'.[394] In addition additional forts will be established to protect the Orang Asli aborigines and cut off the CPM's escape routes.[395] The Malaysian mass media was harnessed to impress upon the public that the Perak State Government was in charge rather than the military. In sum, the aim of Operation Loyalty was not so much to engage the CPM's armed units, but to disrupt the links between the CPM and its sympathisers, thus bringing the writ of the government back into a 'black' area.

Australian observers noted that these Malaysian government 'carrot and stick' population control measures were 'increasingly reminiscent of the last Emergency'.[396] As an example of what uncooperative 'black' villages could come to expect, the village of Tanah Hitam was fenced off and put under curfew. In an address reminiscent of Templer during the First Emergency, Razak made it known to the inhabitants of Tanah Hitam that there were

---

[392] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram, Internal Security, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 December 1971.
[393] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Monthly Internal Security Summary for West Malaysia, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 November 1971.
[394] Ibid.
[395] NAA 696/6/7, Malaysia: Savingram, Internal Security.
[396] NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram, Malaysia: Weekly Political Savingram, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 November 1971.

146

communists and sympathisers amongst them and warned that unless they cooperated, the government would take action.[397] The First Emergency-era practice of anonymous questionnaires and special post boxes was also readopted. Operation Loyalty began under a blanket 24 hour curfew during which questionnaires were handed out to the villagers with the option of either speaking securely to officers on operation or sending them to a special post box.[398] To that end, 20,000 copies of the questionnaires in Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English were distributed amongst the 50,000 people of the area asking for information on: who and how supplies food and medicine to the CPM; location of CPM camps, supply dumps and courier posts; identity of couriers and propagandists; youths missing from their homes and jobs; and CPM movements and activities.[399] The information received led to the arrest of several CPM cadres and sympathisers, arms and food dumps in the Chemor area, an abandoned camp and rest areas near Sungei Siput and more importantly – security forces were able to ascertain the methods used by the CPM to recruit the rural youth and Malays.[400]

Drawing lessons from the First Emergency, the Malaysian government recognised that development and security should proceed hand in hand rather than in separate domains. The new philosophy advanced since 1970 was the objective of achieving national security (*keselamatan*) while pursuing development (*pembangunan*) or KESBAN.[401] There was a realistic realisation by Razak that the 'long-term answer to Malaysia's communal and communist problems lay in prosperity rather than in the police'.[402] Central to KESBAN was Razak's conviction that 'only in circumstances of steadily-increasing prosperity can communism be defeated and the difficult task of bringing a sense of unity to the disparate communities of Malaysia be attempted.[403] Even though KESBAN became only formalised as a directive in 1980, the 'development as security' concept was adopted as the model and fleshed out both strategically and in operational terms from the early 1970s. At the operational level, there was now a common operations room at each centre from which both

[397]NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Monthly Internal Security Summary for West Malaysia.

[398] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Monthly Savingram on Internal Security Summary in West Malaysia – September 1971.

[399] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia – Internal Security – Operation Gerakan Setia.

[400] Ibid.

[401] K. S. Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, 'Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests', 270.

[402] FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971.

[403] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1921, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1973 and Sir J. Johnston's Valedictory, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 11 January 1974.

development plans and security initiatives were controlled.[404] Federal development schemes such as FELDA (for smallholder farms growing cash crops), RISDA (for rubber and oil plantations) and FELCRA (building of roads and highways) were actively implemented to improve the quality of life in the rural border areas.

The concept was not much different from that instituted by Briggs and improved upon by Templer. FELDA was established under the pre-independence Land Development Act of 1956 to alleviate rural poverty through resettlement and its development role has remained relatively unscathed through the decades.[405] Even with the introduction of KESBAN, FELDA's role remained as the rehabilitation of state land schemes development of land schemes with the approval of state government, and the rehabilitation, consolidation or development of alienated lands.[406] Another lesson revisited was that it should be the responsibility of local officials to make contact with the people in their locality rather than the other way around. As for security, the security forces' new operational concept aimed to protect government officials by maintaining a wedge between CPM and the people.[407] Henceforth, the MAF took on a substantial role in providing aid and security to the various civil government agencies in instituting socioeconomic development projects in rural areas – particularly in the border areas.[408]

In reality, putting concept into practice was extremely difficult. Military manpower was acutely overstretched from the strategic to the tactical level. In 1971, out of a total of 28 infantry battalions, the MAF had to maintain eight infantry battalions on the Thai-Malaysian border and another eight in East Malaysia to deal with two separate Communist insurgencies – one against the CPM in West Malaysia and another against the North Kalimantan Communist Party in East Malaysia.[409] By 1972, the entire MAF was fully committed to two different COIN actions within Malaysian territory separated by a distance of 600 kilometres at the nearest point. Forty percent of the MAF's operational air and ground units were involved in COIN operations in East Malaysia with the remaining operational committed

---

[404] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Confidential Brief, Department of Defence, Canberra.
[405] http://www.felda.net.my/feldav2/en/profile/faq
[406] Restricted Report on the KESBAN doctrine, 15.
[407] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Confidential Brief, Department of Defence, Canberra.
[408] Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests, 271.
[409] NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Confidential Brief, Department of Defence, Canberra.

148

against CPM or undergoing retraining in COIN techniques.[410] Faced with this multiplicity of demands, it was practically impossible to spare the men and time for the retraining required to improve the MAF units' specialist capability. Moreover, the programme of rapid expansion for both the army and the PFF (the main COIN paramilitary force) without adequate training resulted in a dilution of efficiency that could only be remedied by allowing more time for the new units to acquire the expertise needed.[411] As such the federal government countermeasures were concentrated on rallying popular support against the communists and police actions 'designed to improve intelligence and disrupt the activities of the Communist [insurgents] and isolate them from their supporters'.[412]

In sum, the main reasons behind the Malaysian forces' lack of progress from 1969 to 1972 might be summarised as follows. First, a lack of information and support from the Chinese that itself reflected an undercurrent of communal tension. Second, a lack of an overall strategy that became particularly evident in joint operations. Third, indifferent Thai cooperation, which, although variable in extent, remained a serious issue. Fourth, the dilution of army efficiency by inadequate training and over-rapid expansion since 1969. And fifth and finally, core differences between army and police practice that resulted in the failure to implement standard COIN procedures for resettlement and food control.[413]

Despite their expansion in both operational and organisational terms, in 1972 the Malaysian security forces stood little chance in gaining control of the border areas. That said, the CPM still lacked the capability to 'expand their forces to the extent which would be necessary to change the present situation significantly'.[414] The Malaysian security forces were thus able to prevent the further expansion of the CPM threat within the Malaysian side of the border areas but unable to obtain the strategic initiative. The development strategy adopted at the national or grand strategic level promised better returns than kinetic military

---

[410] AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore - Army Study Scenario 1 and Requirement 1, DOP, 18 July 1972.

[411] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assessment No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973.

[412] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1745, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 4 January 1973.

[413] AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assessment No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973.

[414] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 27 July 1972 .

force. Plans to turn the larger New Villages of Jelapang, Kamunting, Tanjong Malim, Lumut and Telok Anson in Perak into townships announced by Lim Keng Yaik, the Minister with Special Functions responsible for the New Villages in October 1972 offered the prospects of not only job opportunities to the rural masses but also better government administration of those areas.[415] Since 1970, the Malaysian central government had adopted the 'development as national security' model as the grand strategic template. Nonetheless, its implementation across states, districts, security services and government agencies required much resources and time to be implemented – a process that would continue well into the 1980s.

The Singapore government faced different dilemmas from those of its Malaysian counterpart. In 1972, the CPM still lacking the capabilities to bring its armed struggle into the urban heartlands of Singapore had to contend with a strategic subversion campaign amplified by an occasional show of force in the form of booby trap bombs. By late 1960s the CPM underground in Singapore was decimated and crippled by security action. With the CPM's leading cadres in Singapore either behind bars or withdrawn overseas, ISD disbanded its CPM section.[416] S. Falle, British High Commissioner to Singapore in 1972 observed that the 'Chinese-Communist inclined Barisan Sosialis which [was] weak and ill-organsied...[was] allowed to exist only in order to keep the supporters of the extreme left from having to go underground'.[417] By that time, SEATO's Intelligence Assessment Committee considered the Singapore Police Force and ISD to be 'well-trained, well equipped and capable of dealing effectively and efficiently with any Communist-inspired activity'.[418] The approach by the Singapore government was in principle similar to the 'stick and carrot' strategy of its Malaysian counterpart which differed only in certain operational aspects.

The insignificant threat of urban insurgency reinforced by the confined physical limits of the island city state meant that any potential subversive threat within the metropolis would be much easier to spot and contain. In the absence of an urban insurgency,

---

[415] NAA, NAA 3024/2/9 Part 12, Review of Current Intelligence No. 21/72 for the Fortnight Ended 19 October 1972, ANZUK Intelligence Group, Singapore, 26 October 1972.
[416] Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit
[417] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1462, Singapore: Annual Review 1971, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1972.
[418] AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 28 June 1972.

the CPM threat was strictly dealt with by the internal security agencies thereby removing the pitfall of problems associated with the use of military force. Moreover, the close tabs kept by the authorities on potential subversive and student groups allowed swift action against any attempted civil disorder. More importantly, measures were taken to remove the conditions in which subversion could flourish.[419] Major industrial projects to reduce joblessness, under-employment and to absorb future school-leavers and university graduates into the labour market were implemented.[420] SEATO Intelligence concluded that 'provided that there is no serious decline in the economy, there is unlikely to be any increased popular inclination to support communist activities, which are likely to continue at a low level'.[421] In the assessment of George Wong, a British diplomat based in Singapore, Post-1965 Singapore offered:

> The man in the street the possibility of upward social mobility. The averaged Singaporean however poor, believes that with luck and hard work, he can improve his material well-being, or at least, the material well-being of his children. As long as such a belief persists, the attraction to the Marxist way of life can only be superficial.[422]

In short, the most potent weapon of the Singaporean Government against communist subversion and ideology was sustained economic growth that provided the population with tangible prospects of social advancement and material well-being. As noted in the previous chapter, the CPM's propaganda struck an unexpected chord with a small section of the middle-class which ostensibly had much to lose under a Marxist state. The revival of the CPM subversive threat led to the reestablishment of the ISD CPM section in June 1974.[423] Nonetheless, the upsurge of the CPM's activities in Singapore must be viewed in the context of the CPM split that drove all three CPM factions to prove their revolutionary credentials and in the case of the main CPM – its leadership.

---

[419] Ibid.

[420] AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, 27 July 1972.

[421] AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 28 June 1972.

[422] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office FCO 24/1779, Minute by George Wong, South West Pacific Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 10 October 1973.

[423] Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit.

151

In Malaysia, the strategic stalemate in 1974 was broken by the high-profiled assassination of the IGP and the increase in revolutionary violence as all three CPM factions tried to outdo each other. In late October 1973, the fifty-six member 6 AU was detected moving south into Pahang from Perak. The CPM unit was tracked by PFF 69 (the Malaysian police SAS equivalent) through Cameron Highlands into the Raub area which it reached in late November.[424] By then the security forces had considerable success in the discovery and removal of food dumps. During November/December 1973, the security forces uncovered 42 food dumps mainly in the Jerantut and Kuala Lipis area.[425] The seizure of their food dumps and pressure from the security forces forced 6 AU to split up with elements withdrawing to the Slim River. Most of the Slim River group were later found to have died either from starvation or as a result of eating poisonous wild fruit.[426] The scattered remnants of 6 AU went into hiding in Central Pahang and remained a limited local threat.[427] Nonetheless, the CPM thrust into Central Pahang shook the Malaysian government into a vigorous response. The Malaysian Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers toured the country to instil a sense of urgency in the state administrations and breathe new life into the state security committees.[428]

In early 1974, GOC 2nd Division, Major General Ghazali bin Datuk Mohd Seth in conjunction with the Perak Special Branch, made an assessment of the principle CPM strongholds in Perak and identified an area of about 30,000 square metres adjacent to the notorious townships of Sungei Siput, Chemor and Tanjong Rambutan as the epicentre of CPM sittings. An operation was planned to surround the area and search it systematically square by square.[429] This large-scale cordon and search operation that involved the Malaysian Army's 2nd Division and two PFF battalions was launched on 8 April 1974 as Operation Gonzales.[430] The sheer size of the operation made the element of surprise

---

[424] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, CT Activities in Peninsula Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 28 May 1974.
[425] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 July 1974.
[426] FCO 15/1919, CT Activities in Peninsula Malaysia.
[427] FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974
[428] Ibid.
[429] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, Exercise/Operation Gonzales, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 31 May 1974.
[430] Ibid.

impossible. As a deception measure, Operation Gonzales was concealed under the guise of a 'divisional exercise' as the three brigades of 2nd Division converged on their assembly areas near Taiping and Ipoh by road and rail.[431] During the month-long operation, the security forces accounted for about a dozen insurgent kills, located two CPM camps and discovered documents containing details of CPM supply dumps as well as CPM and MNLF structures throughout Malaysia and Singapore at the cost of thirteen wounded men and a killed tracker dog.[432] The main achievement of Operation Gonzales was however the improvement of military leadership at battalion, company and platoon levels that came with the required operational experience.

The large-scale search and cordon Operation Gonzales and breaking up of 6 AU were operational successes in military terms but any real change in the strategic picture required more than just aggressive military action. The British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur advised that:

> Without minimising the careful preparation and skilful execution of Operation Gonzales...it is clear that the Malaysians have had an unusual run of good fortune in the past few months which must not be allowed to obscure their weaknesses, the most significant of which is the diminishing capacity of the MSB to acquire intelligence.[433]

Indeed, the policy of according preferential treatment to ethnic Malays in government service continued to take its toll on the effectiveness of MSB. The Director of MSB was assessed by the British High Commissioner to Malaysia to be a 'well connected Malay officer who is clearly not up to the exacting demands of this post'.[434] As the Second Emergency wore on into its sixth year, the failure to bring MSB back to the level of efficiency that it was renowned for during the First Emergency was a impediment to any real progress. Hence, the authorities could only rely on a military-centric approach that

---

[431] Ibid.
[432] Ibid.
[433] FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974.
[434] Ibid.

harassed and applied pressure on the CPM but not quite enough to tilt the strategic initiative in favour of the government side.

The Persistence of Conventional Force and Incremental Reform of the Security Services (1975-1977)

The heightened violence of the CPM and its dissident factions needed containment. This came in the form of increased curfew and search operations in the New Villages and CPM hotspots – particularly between late 1975 and early 1976. In an operation personally directed by the Deputy IGP, Serdang Baru, a New Village just ten miles south of the Malaysian capital was put under an eight-and-a-half hour curfew as 1,270 police officers searched 2,550 houses and vehicles, screened 5,110 people and detained forty-three suspects.[435] As part of Operation Nisbah, an operation to flush out communist sympathisers, subversive elements and criminals, a 180-strong police party led by the CPO Senior Assistant Commissioner detained 109 people in a pre-dawn curfew and search swoop on Penjom New Village.[436] Since the police would be at the forefront of such operations, considerable effort was undertaken to boost morale and recruitment of the Malaysian police force – particularly the RELA armed auxiliary. Plans were announced to expand RELA from a force of 200,000 in March 1976 to 500,000 by the end of the same year as well as the provision of modern weapons, insurance and death gratuity schemes for its members.[437] As for the PFF, two key changes were made. One was an extensive re-equipment programme intended to equip the PFF units with modern weapons, vehicles and radios. The other was a change in service terms whose goal was to dispel the 'feeling of being the poor relations of the [MAF]' thereby improving morale and efficiency among frontline men.[438] As of mid-1976, in addition to the MAF, PFF, MSB and regular police, the Malaysian security apparatus included a substantial auxiliary element of 500,000 RELA village militia, Area Security Units (ASU) of platoon-sized auxiliary police which supported regular

---

[435] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up December 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 12 January 1976.

[436] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up January 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 January 1976.

[437] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up March 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 April 1976.

[438] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia.

security forces within the confines of their own states, and, finally, the Rukun Tetangga vigilante corps for which all adult males were required to register and respond when called up for duty.[439]

The discovery of a large CPM camp with a system of underground tunnels that could hold up to 500 insurgents in the Gubir border area led to the launch of Operation Gubir II on 14 April 1976 to capture the location.[440] A large cordon was put around the CPM camp prior to air strikes by Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Tebuan COIN jet aircraft and F5E fighter jets on 21 April. The airstrikes formed part of a 'locate, cordon, bomb and hope to catch the survivors on their way' out tactic that replaced the previous 'locate, cordon and assault on foot' tactic that had caused too many booby-trap casualties and high levels of stress among patrols.[441] During the course of Operation Gubir II, 3,000 bobby traps were found to be planted around camp which accounted for most of the twelve deaths and nineteen injuries sustained by the security forces in the operation.[442] Three of the booby-trap casualties were sustained by a commando team airlifted in by helicopter to confirm the location of the camp - which had been evacuated by the time of the commandos' arrival.[443] Fearing the adverse impact on morale, the Malaysian authorities censored press coverage of the constant flow of reports about booby-trap casualties. Publicity was instead diverted to police activities such as curfews and police operations in the Negri Sembilan/Pahang border areas.[444] To be sure, the CPM's 'Vietcong' booby-trap tactics exacted a huge psychological toll on the security forces. The fear of being killed or incapacitated by the unseen booby-trap led to a more cautious approach by the security forces in a negative way. The 'locate, cordon and assault on foot' approach gave way to an even more conservative and firepower-heavy 'locate, cordon, bomb and hope to catch the survivors on their way' mindset.

---

[439] Ibid.

[440] Sharon Bin Hashim , *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, 154

[441] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up April 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 May 1976.

[442] Sharon Bin Hashim , *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, 154

[443] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up April 1976.

[444] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 14 June 1976.

155

Operation Gubir II achieved few tangible results to justify all the MAF's resources and efforts put into the operation. The increase in the tempo of helicopter operations in the border area had alerted the insurgents who were able to react effectively. During the course of operations, an RMAF S61 helicopter was shot down by small arms fire in the Ulu Muda forest reserve that resulted in the death of eleven security forces members.[445] During the one and a half month operation that ended on June 2 1976, a total of four CPM insurgents were killed at a significant cost in both human casualties and treasure.[446] Moreover, the termination of the operation was determined by the operational requirements of the Malaysian security forces but a reflection of the unhappy state of affairs in Thai-Malaysian relations. Alleged violations of Thai territory by Malaysian security forces led to the termination of the 1971 Thai-Malaysian Border Agreement and withdrawal of 378 PFF and 21 MSB personnel from the Betong Salient on 7 June 1976.[447] The major significance was not the withdrawal of the PFF 'who really achieved nothing operationally significant', but the loss of MSB intelligence cover in the Betong Salient and the 'possible granting to the CPM of the Liberated Areas' - a secure base to from which to spread and retire at will.[448] Since the revival of the CPM's armed struggle in 1968, one of the impediments to any effective response by the Malaysian Government was the inability to crack the CPM strongholds in Southern Thailand. A concerted joint Thai-Malaysian response was even more elusive in 1976 than it was in 1968.

A slew of unilateral security measures were implemented by the Malaysians to compensate for the lack of joint operations in the border areas. As part of Operation Kota they included the flooding of the Temenggor Dam and the establishment of a defensive line along the constructed East/West Highway as physical barriers to deny the CPM its favoured infiltration routes.[449] The East-West Highway linear defence line was conceptualised as a series of dug-in platoon locations at one kilometre intervals backed by fixed fire-support bases. Together with the flooded Temenggor Dam and the mining of certain border areas,

---

[445] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up April 1976.

[446] Sharon Bin Hashim , *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, 154.

[447] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up June 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 July 1976.

[448] Ibid.

[449] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 August 1976.

156

these defensive positions blocked the CPM's main infiltration routes, thereby potentially channelling the CPM infiltrators into designated kill zones.[450] In addition to this corralling effect, the MAF believed that as the CPM probed for gaps, the necessary built-up of supply dumps in support of such missions would enhance the likelihood of contacts and planned ambushes.[451] Instead of intensive jungle patrolling, the preferred security force tactic became the saturation area ambush with battalions operating in platoon to four-men section groups in likely areas of infiltration or known mass contact areas. In theory, these groups could detect and intercept infiltrators while also obviating the 'possibility of reinforcements being ambushed'.[452] The increased reliance of field commanders on a 'Maginot Line' strategy to contain the border infiltration threat in place of aggressive foot-patrols stemmed primarily from the requirement to reduce the incidence of booby-trap casualties.[453] It also reflected the limited options available in the absence of Thai cooperation. The linear static defences did force CPM infiltrators to seek more difficult routes across the border but could not in themselves significantly change the direction of the conflict. Not a single tactical success was reported for the month of September 1976 which in many ways represented the static progress of the MAF for the July to October 1976 period.[454]

Since June 1976, the 'we are a country at war' theme became the norm in public speeches and media appearances by political and military leaders. As a corollary, the nation was warned not to expect too much in the form of material benefit from the recently promulgated Third Five Year Plan as all government resources needed to be 'diverted to the fight against the communists in order to ensure a quick victory'.[455] 1976 was the year in which Malaysian Prime Minister Hussein Onn gave the security situation the highest priority. Ample provision was made in the Third Five Year Plan for the expansion of the police by 20,000, the increase in numbers being facilitated by a substantial across-the-board

[450] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up August 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 August 1976.
[451] Ibid.
[452] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur.
[453] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up August 1976.
[454] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up September 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 October 1976.
[455] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up July 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 August 1976.

pay increase.[456] Efforts were made to improve the efficiency of MSB by a change of directors including the appointment of an experienced Chinese deputy. The establishment of a new Border Brigade Headquarters to coordinate police aspects of border and trans-border operations together with PFF actitivities in Kedah-Perlis-Penang was also planned.[457]

In contrast to the military, the police enjoyed considerable success in its operations against the communist underground. In Kuala Lumpur, 28,463 people were questioned over a two month period in which forty CPM underground cadres were arrested and weapons and subversive literature seized.[458] In Perak, police operations were stepped up in an attempt to forestall further attempted assassinations of prominent security personnel by known agents of the MNLF.[459] In Sungei Patani, a successful operation resulted in the arrest of eight out of nine members of an underground cell that was responsible for the blowing up of a railway line, rocket attacks and planting of communist flags in the area for the past year.[460] Large scale police cordon and search operations were carried out in Ipoh, Grik and various areas of Southern Pahang and Negri Sembilan with considerable success – particularly in Negri Sembilan where up to some 150 suspected members of the MPLL and MNLF were detained in a widely dispersed area covering Jelebu, Kuala Pilah and Port Dickson.[461]

These operational successes were clearly the result of the priority accorded to the reform of the police and MSB. Nevertheless, the strategy of the Malaysian Government was at this point largely focused on the containment of the CPM threat through a system of urban vigilante patrols, tenant registration and sweep and search operations.[462] Taken together these measures checked the movements of the communist underground forcing the cells to break up and remain constantly on the move. According to the British High Commissioner, it also compelled the underground 'for the moment to withdraw its

---

[456] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.
[457] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up May 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 June 1977.
[458] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.
[459] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up August 1976.
[460] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up September 1976.
[461] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up November 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 3 December 1976.
[462] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976.

aggressive horns and concentrate on subversion'.[463] A major strategic breakthrough, however, required more than the defensive 'sweep, search' strategy that typified the Malaysian COIN approach for 1976. Even so, by December 1976, the Malaysian police had consolidated its operational successes, further penetrating the communist underground and disrupting the Communists' intelligence network through the constant pressure of police action.[464]

From 1975-1977, Operation Planet resulted in the rounding up of eighty-six alleged members of the MNLL including the 'Plen' group - the elite of the CPM underground structure responsible for the specific task of infiltrating the upper echelons of the Malaysian community.[465] The degree of MSB penetration and the arrest of 466 alleged MNLF members and the substantial disruption to the MNLF infrastructure including vital courier routes was a serious cause of concern for the CPM.[466] Arguably the greatest boost to public confidence was the arrest of two MPLL members who confessed to the November 1975 assassination of the Chief Police Officer of Perak and that of the IGP in Kuala Lumpur in June 1974.[467] In towns where police action had been successful and police competence demonstrated, it became increasingly commonplace for members of the public to proffer information of high security value.[468] The recent growth in the number of Chinese MSB officers undoubtedly contributed to the organisation's success in disrupting the CPM's underground structure.[469] Yet these recent successes concealed a structural problem, namely, the need to replace the senior Chinese MSB officers – many of whom were veterans of the First Emergency and approaching retirement age by 1977. Many of the Chinese MSB officers were overstretched or replaced by Malay officers who lacked both the language skills and 'inherent understanding to effectively among the Chinese

---

[463] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up October 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 1976.

[464] Ibid.

[465] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Malaysia: Quarterly Security Report, 1 April – 2 July, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, August 1977.

[466] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up May 1977. FCO 15/2161, Malaysia: Quarterly Security Report, 1 April – 2 July.

[467] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 September 1977.

[468] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up November 1976.

[469] FCO 15/2161, Malaysia: Quarterly Security Report, 1 April – 2 July.

Community'.[470] The IGP's solution to the problem was to concentrate his Chinese expertise in units directly concerned with the communist threat.[471]

In addition to police operations targeting the CPM underground, the security forces were committed to three continuing operations: Operation Ukor (the protection of a Thai Border Survey team, usually by the PFF), Operation Kota (a linear defence operation to detect and deter CPM incursions into Peninsular Malaysia) and Operation Hentam (the harassing of all resident CPM groups in Peninsular Malaysia).[472] Despite the lack of progress in penetrating the CPM strongholds, the MAF's linear defence strategy ameliorated the deleterious 'booby-trap effect' and boosted the morale of the security forces. The sealing of the Temenggor Dam and the failure of the CPM to disrupt construction of the Dam and East-West Highway increased the confidence of the security forces in their ability to protect federal development projects throughout Peninsular Malaysia. In time, the new ports planned for Johor Bahru and Kuantan and the Federal Highway and Karak Highway projects proceeded without any significant degree of CPM interference.[473] The completion of these federal projects, particularly in the Northern states, were crucial to the economic development of those areas and would, in turn, undermine the capability of the resident CPM groups in those areas.

The change of Thai Prime Minister in the aftermath of the 6 October 1976 military coup was another positive change – at least for the Malaysian state. The problem of the CPM bases in Southern Thailand was appreciated by Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien's anti-communist right-wing government. As a result, hopes were rekindled of the restoration of hot pursuit rights into Thai territory and more effective joint COIN operations in Southern Thailand.[474] Soon after the formation of the Tanin administration, an agreement was reached to mount a series of joint operations against CPM sanctuaries in the border area – although the revised Border Agreement was not formally signed until 4 March 1977.[475] A major event in January 1977 was the launch, execution and conclusion of

[470] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.
[471] Ibid.
[472] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977.
[473] FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up November 1976.
[474] Ibid.
[475] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.

Operation Daoyai Musnah (Big Star) against the CPM (RF) in east Sadao.[476] The joint Thai-Malaysian operation involving some 3,500 troops began on 14 January in an area fifteen miles northwest of Padang Besar, a border town on the Perlis-Thai border in the Sadao district of Songkhla province.[477] Lasting a full month, it was a conventional 'blocking' operation that relied on airstrikes and artillery fire to flush out the insurgents from known bases before the follow-up search and destroy mission.

During the operation two large camps and ten smaller ones were located and destroyed. Large quantities of ammunition, explosives and both CPM and CPT literature were also recovered.[478] As with previous similar operations, most of the insurgents flushed out simply moved on to another area. Only one insurgent body was recovered by the Thai-Malaysian security forces in the course of the operation. On the other hand, the Malaysian security forces suffered one killed in action (KIA) and another eight wounded in action (WIA) casualties – all by booby traps.[479] Until the threat of booby-traps could be sufficiently countered, if not neutralised, air and artillery strikes followed by search and destroy sweeps (well after the insurgents had fled) were still the preferred means of coming to grips with the enemy. The underlying significance of Operation Big Star lay not in the operational realm but in the signature of a new Thai-Malaysian Border Agreement that allowed the operation. This opened the way for future joint operations in Thai territory. In fact, Operation Big Star was carried out at the request of the Thais rather than on the initiative of the Malaysians.[480] The Thais, however, faced a chronic shortage of available troops with the requisite operational capacity to deploy in the border area.[481] Nonetheless, even though few joint ventures were likely in the short-term, Operation Big Star heralded a new era of improved Thai-Malaysian security cooperation.

---

[476] Sharon Bin Hashim , *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, 162.
[477] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 February1977.
[478] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977. FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977.
[479] Ibid.
[480] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 May1977.
[481] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up February 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 March1977.

A further operation involving 3,000 Malaysian and 2,000 Thai security forces codenamed Operation Daoyai Musnah (Big Star) II was launched on 14 March 1977, again in the Sadao district against the CPM (RF).[482] The conventional search, cordon and clear operation led to the discovery of eighteen major CPM (RF) camps and a single insurgent killed.[483] Again, the significance of Operation Big Star II did not derive from a spectacular success in the field but, rather, from the visible improvement in Thai-Malaysian cooperation. Operation Big Star II witnessed the first combined coordinated airstrikes by the RMAF and RTAF in Thai territory.[484] The operation further demonstrated the determination of the MAF to refine techniques and establish operating procedures for further joint operations against the more formidable CPM forces in the Betong Salient.[485] Operation Big Star II also uncovered rubber estates, a tin mine and a heroin laboratory that the CPM RF were using to finance their activities.[486] Having been left largely unmolested by the Bangkok government since the completion of its long march into Southern Thailand in 1960, the CPM had set up parallel socio-economic infrastructures that confirmed its existence as a state within a state in the Southern Thai provinces. The presence of such a large Thai presence in Operation Big Star II was an official signal that the Thai government would no longer tolerate the existence of the CPM micro-states within its borders.

On the surface, both Big Star operations appeared to have disrupted the training and base areas of the CPM (RF). MSB, however, was bitterly disappointed by the failure of the operation to destroy a substantial part of the CPM (RF), which it blamed on inadequate intelligence and lack of operational security.[487] In both Big Star operations, the objectives of the security forces were known to the insurgents. In fact, during Operation Big Star II, a copy of the Malaysian Operational Order in Thai was discovered in a CPM (RF) camp, suggesting a leak from Thai sources.[488] Both operations were so reliant on the 'American sledge-hammer approach of using artillery, air strikes and gun-ships [that] one might

---

[482] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up March 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 April 1977.
[483] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977.
[484] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up March 1977.
[485] Ibid.
[486] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977.
[487] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.
[488] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977.

question whether the aim was to move the [insurgents] rather than to confront them'.[489] Within weeks of the conclusion of the Big Star operations in mid-April, the Headquarters Group of the CPM (RF) was reported to have returned to its former operational area.[490] By mid-June, CPM (RF) was assessed by MSB to have 'returned at full strength to their old areas.[491] Any chances of building upon the apparent operational success very much depended on the Thai government's ability to control the border areas - which seemed unlikely with the withdrawal of troops at the end of both operations.

For all that, as we have seen, the true import of the Big Star operations was difficult to measure in strictly military terms. It was better gauged in the political gains that allowed both operations to take place as well as the opportunities it presented to iron out Thai-Malaysian differences in tactics, command and control and liaison procedures. Of significant political note was that both operations were the first Thai-Malaysian joint operations that involved the MAF as opposed to the PFF across the border.[492] In short, the Big Star operations were the precursor to future joint operations of increasing scale, intensity and effectiveness. The Revised Agreement on Border Cooperation signed in March 1977 led to the revival of the Malaysian-Thai Regional Border Committee which reconvened in Penang in June 1977. Major points agreed during the meeting were the definition of the common enemy as well as the development of command and control and standard operating procedures for future joint operations. The regional border committee reiterated that it was only mandated to act against the common enemy defined as the 'Communist Terrorist, be he Muslim, Buddhist or Christian' (which specifically excluded the Muslim irredentists). [493] HQ 2nd Malaysian Division and HQ 5th Royal Thai Army Division were designated as Combined Task Force Headquarters (CTFHQ). In order to ensure effective communications, both Headquarters were to be linked by a system of military communication and liaison staff.[494] A review of both Big Star operations by the committee led to a cognisance of the need for standard operating procedures and a

---

[489] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia.

[490] FCO 15/2161, Malaysia: Quarterly Security Report, 1 April – 2 July.

[491] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.

[492] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977.

[493] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up June 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 1 July 1977.

[494] Ibid.

163

combined standing operating procedure for border operations was to be formulated for further joint operations.[495]

July 1977 witnessed two simultaneous joint trans-border operations – Operation Cahaya Bena (Sacred Ray) I and Operation Sacred Ray II. Sacred Ray I was launched in the Betong Salient with the Malaysians (targeting the 1st District of the CPM in South Eastern Betong as well as elements of the CPM (ML) in the west and south western part of the salient. For their part, the Thais were to operate against the CPM 3rd District in the north and CPM supporters and sympathisers in the urban areas.[496] Operation Sacred Ray II was directed against the 10th Regiment of the CPM in Weng district with the Thais operating in the north and the towns whilst the Malaysians pushed north from the border.[497] As in the case of the earlier Big Star joint operations, the fear of booby-trap casualties led to the reliance on airstrikes and artillery fire to flush out the insurgents from known bases before the follow-up search and destroy operation characterised by a slow ground advance. General Ibrahim, Chief of Armed Forces (CAFS), privately admitted his 'reluctance to order his troops into the attack against prepared dug, booby trapped positions for fear of the morale problem which this would engender'.[498]

The substantial delay between the Big Star and Sacred Ray operations provided the CPM and CPM (ML) an opportunity to prepare their positions against the initial aerial and artillery bombardment and refine their break-up plans that would see them disperse into the deep jungle with sufficient supplies to outlast any government operation.[499] In an assessment of the four major joint operations, Major Oakden, the British Defence Advisor in Kuala Lumpur drew the conclusion: 'we fear, however, that as far as the will to strike exists the CT booby-trap has won, and will continue to win, the day'.[500] In a statement reminiscent of similar failures by American ground forces to make contact with the Vietcong guerrillas at the end of a massive aerial/artillery bombardment, the Malaysian

---

[495] Ibid.
[496] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up July 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 1 August 1977.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid.
[499] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.
[500] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up August 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 August 1977.

force commander of Operation Sacred Ray remarked: 'the CTs appeared to have melted into the countryside'.[501]

The task of dislodging over 2,000 well-trained insurgents protected by layers of booby-traps from sanctuaries which had been occupied since 1955 was a daunting challenge for a Thai-Malaysian joint force hampered by its need to make allowances for certain political sensitivities. The improvement in Thai-Malaysian relations permitted Malaysian troops to be stationed in Southern Thailand, but only on short operational tours 'as and when requested by the Thais'.[502] A Malaysian proposal to leave a single battalion in Betong to guard the civilian population at the end of operations was rejected as 'politically unacceptable' by the Thai government.[503] The Thais recognised that the villagers must be protected but had neither the manpower nor money in the Southern provinces to implement such a policy.[504] Stretched with operations against the CPT in other parts of Thailand, in the circumstances, the Thai Armed Forces could do little other than allow the Malaysians to undertake operations in Southern Thailand 'on an unprecedented scale'.[505] The inability of the Thais to leave behind enough troops or police at the end of operations to ensure the protection of the villagers and the politically unacceptable long-term presence of Malaysian security forces meant that the locals frequently felt unable to come out in support of the government for fear of reprisals when the CPM returned.

Despite MSB's impressive successes against the communist underground, the pro-Malay policies of the Malaysian government played into the CPM's propaganda line of upholding Chinese rights – particularly among the young Malaysian Chinese.[506] Similar to the experience of the First Emergency, the challenge of winning over the young Chinese was a battle that the government could not afford to lose. The pre-KESBAN 1975-1977 period was in many ways similar to that of 1950 in the First Emergency. Both witnessed the climax of communist violence and the seeding of concepts that would later turn the strategic tide in the government's favour. During the First Emergency, the Brigg's Plan laid

---

[501] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.
[502] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up August 1977.
[503] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.
[504] FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up July 1977.
[505] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 21 October 1977.
[506] FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977.

the foundations for a comprehensive strategy that integrated the relevant civil-military agencies across all levels and essentially secured the population from the reach of the MCP. Equally, the efforts of the Malaysian government to bring development into the northern border states, thus addressing the grievances of the rural population were not much different from those of the Emergency years. The main difference lies in the available resources. Whereas Briggs and later Templer drew on the resources of the British Empire and its Commonwealth (up to 300,000 in security personal alone), for much of the Second Emergency, the Malaysian government had only the full strength of a division with the rotation of various brigades. Additionally, the Malaysians had a much trickier problem of a cross-border insurgency.

In Singapore, rapid economic growth was the most effective tool against CPM subversion. Encouraged by its sweeping victory in the December 1976 elections, the PAP government seized the opportunity to detain those who have had contact with communists, including those who might not necessarily be supporters of violent revolution.[507] The group of pro-communist intellectuals arrested in February 1977 were all subsequently released after recantations of their pro-communist activities.[508] The British High Commission in Singapore was 'persuaded that by its tough measures the government will have done much to deter others of leftist leanings from becoming involved in communist subversion'.[509] In March 1977, Goh Keng Swee, Singapore's Defence Minister described the three lines of defence against communism as economic development, police intelligence and the Armed Forces.[510] The 166 Community Centres (CCs) run by the People's Association (PA) provided recreational facilities, disseminated information on policies, and acted as an advance warning system for the monitoring of local grievances.[511] At the constituency level, Citizen Consultative Committees (CCCs) were created to address the grievances of residents living in the public housing estates that housed seventy-seven percent of

---

[507] FCO 15/2232, Singapore: Arrests and Security (December 1976-March 1977).

[508] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2232, Briefing Notes, British High Commission Singapore, 25 April 1978.

[509] FCO 15/2232, Singapore: Arrests and Security (December 1976-March 1977).

[510] Jon S T Quah, 'Meeting the Twin Threats of Communism and Communalism: The Singapore Response'in Chandran Jeshurun (ed), *Governments and Rebellions in Southeast Asia*, Singapore : Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985,190.

[511] FCO 15/2232, Briefing Notes, British High Commission Singapore.

166

Singapore's population.[512] In short, the CCs and the CCCs acted as the eyes and ears of the government and a channel of communication at the grassroots level that was effectively used to consolidate support for the PAP government at the expense of the BS and the CPM.

By the late 1970s, the blistering pace of Singapore's economic growth had all but nullified the effects of CPM propaganda on the urban masses. The Singaporean government authorities' use of the mass media to remind the public of the serious extent of the CPM threat and what they stood to lose – including the use of public confessions over television became an effective tool in the containment of communist subversion. The contrast between the highly politicised communist subversives and the politically apathetic Singaporean masses upon which the future of the non-communist system depended could not have been more glaring.[513] By 1977, the CPM threat in Singapore was reduced to limited incidents of clandestine subversion. Of the sixty-one prisoners detained without trial in 1977, ten were held briefly and released after televised confessions to having had 'sympathies for Euro-Communists'.[514] Complete elimination of such a threat, however, depended on events in Peninsular Malaysia, Southern Thailand and Beijing – geographical areas beyond Singapore's limited jurisdiction.

Turning the Tide (1978 – 1981)

Ironically, the operational successes of the MSB and police against the communist underground had turned it into a force to be reckoned with as its remaining hard-core members grew increasingly desperate.[515] By 1978, the police had been sufficiently expanded to secure much of Peninsular Malaysia, even in the deep mountain-jungle of Northern Perak where the Orang Asli aborigines live. During the First Emergency, jungle forts from which medical supplies, food, paid work, and tools could be offered to win over the Orang Asli who were subject to MCP pressure provided the colonial security forces

---

[512] Jon S T Quah, 'Meeting the Twin Threats of Communism and Communalism', 205.
[513] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Arrest of Communists in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 19 October 1977.
[514] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Singapore: An Over-view of Recent Months, British High Commission Singapore, 4 October 1977.
[515] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up January 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 31 January 1978.

with vital support and information.[516] The first Orang Asli Senoi Praaq unit was created in 1956 under the colonial administration to counter the MCP's influence over the Orang Asli settlements. Not only was the Senoi Praaq force retained by the Malaysian government, both its size and role were further expanded to include operations against the MRLA beyond the borders of Malaysia proper.[517] In fact, one of the biggest ongoing operational contribution was the PFF's unilateral Operation Bamboo – operating from a series of jungle forts in Perak and Kelantan, the PFF aimed to counter the subversion efforts of the CPM on the Orang Asli and disrupt the CPM's infiltration routes from Southern Thailand.[518] The establishment of the Kroh HQ as the training centre and the HQ for all three Senoi Praaq PFF battalions was a positive sign that government efforts in winning over the loyalty of the Orang Asli as well as the conversion of former CPM Orang Asli recruits and trackers to the government's cause were bearing fruit.[519]

When the formal press announcement was made in February 1978 that the Senoi Praaq PFF was to be expanded to three battalions, 19 PFF and 20 PFF had become operational with the formation of 21 PFF well underway.[520] In the Fort Kemar area (founded by 22 SAS in 1952), the state government of Perak had built a school and clinic administered by the Orang Asli hospital sited at Gombak which allowed for them to 'wander off into the jungle if the spirit so moves them'.[521] In the neutral mountain-jungle home of the Orang Asli, the security forces rather than the CPM were beginning to emerge as the dominant force that translated into the expansion of the Senoi Praaq force and separation of the CPM from the Orang Asli population.[522] When out on patrol, the Senoi Praaq troopers, who rarely failed to make contact, would often return with a bagful of

---

[516] Roy Fellows with Hugh Popham, *The Jungle Beat: Fighting Terrorists in Malaya 1952-1961*, London: Cassell, 1990, 86.

[517] Roy Davis Linville Jumper, *Death Waits in the Dark: The Senoi Praaq, Malaysia's Killer Elite*, Connecticut, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001, 169.

[518] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2505, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.

[519] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Visit to Operational Areas in Malaysia: 3 and 4 May 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 May 1978.

[520] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up February 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 February 1978.

[521] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2357, Visit to Operational Areas in Malaysia: 3 and 4 May 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 May 1978.

[522] Ibid.

hands, heads or ears 'as proof of a kill'.[523] The feats of the Senoi Praaq force as trackers and jungle warriors were an essential contribution to the Malaysian government's security and intelligence apparatus and a tactical determining factor – particularly when army units were employed in a static defensive role with the Senoi Praaq positioned behind them in a sweep mode.[524] At the squadron level, Senoi Praaq patrols probed deep into Southern Thailand in search of insurgents who had eluded security further south penetrating anywhere between five and twenty-five miles depending upon the Border Agreement at that particular time.[525]

However successful the Senoi Praaq might have been at tactical cross-border actions, any significant change in the strategic picture depended on more lasting improvements in Thai-Malaysian cooperation. By 1978 the tempo and quality of Thai-Malaysian cooperation began to improve considerably. April 1978 was to mark a new phase in joint Thai-Malaysian operations.[526] Under the auspices of the Selamat-Samadee series of joint operations, continuous operations were conducted from April 24, 1978 to July 5 1980 in the Betong salient, Kroh and Banding in Northern Perak.[527] To begin with, a joint command post exercise under the joint directorship of Major General Datuk Jamil, GOC 2nd Division Malaysia and Lieutenant General Jen Pin, GOC Thai Fourth Army Region at Ban Kok Liang, South of Haadyai was carried out to test the feasibility of the revised standing operational procedures for future joint operations through the practice of staff work at all levels and the highlighting of differences.[528] On the eve of the 23rd General Border Committee which took place in Kuala Lumpur from 26-28 April, a small joint operation was announced involving a battalion from each side supported by a Malaysian artillery battery in the Betong Salient.[529] The operation was publicised as the first of several

[523] Roy Davis Linville Jumper, *Death Waits in the Dark*, 169.

[524] Ibid, 19-170.

[525] Ibid, 169.

[526] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up April 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 May 1978.

[527] Sharon Bin Hashim , *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, 166.

[528] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up March 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 April 1978.

[529] FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up April 1978.

short, sharp military thrusts to prevent the CPM from regaining its strongholds and a shift from the '1977 sledgehammer technique'.[530]

The first phase was launched on 24 April 1978 against the CPMML in the west of the Betong Salient particularly against the 25th Company.[531] In June 1978, Operation Selamat-Samadee moved into the crucial second phase to be conducted in the South and Southeast of the Betong Salient.[532] During this period, a small scale joint operation targeted the 3rd Combat Company of 12 Regiment – widely considered to be the toughest nut in the CPM.[533] Two companies of Malaysian Rangers and one company from the Thai army entered from the north and swept south towards a squadron of MSSR and a battalion of PFF. Company positions designed to dominate the sector while inhibiting insurgent movement and disrupting food collection were also established.[534] The fact that the security forces suffered between forty to seventy booby-trap casualties as a result of the operation demonstrated their willingness to close with the enemy despite the booby-trap threat.[535] Nonetheless, such was the prevalence and proliferation of the 'CT booby-trap' fear that more often, operations continued to be preceded by artillery and air strikes to 'soften up' both the insurgents and their booby traps.[536] By the end of 1978, the original Operation Selamat-Sawadee had ground to a stalemate situation. On 4 February 1979, a new initiative, Operation Selamat-Sawadee 792 which was essentially three joint Thai-Malaysian operations against the CPMRF in Sadao District (subsequently expanded to include Special District E of the CPM; against the 4th Company of the CPMML and 7th Platoon of the 12th Regiment (CPM) in the north-east of Betong; and against the CPMML's 25th Company was launched in Southern Thailand.[537]

When the 34th Regional Border Committee Meeting took place in Penang on 16 October to assess the results of the original Operation Selamat-Samadee, the notable figure

---

[530] Ibid.

[531] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.

[532] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up June 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 July 1978.

[533] Ibid.

[534] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up October 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 November 1978.

[535] FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up June 1978.

[536] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.

[537] Ibid.

was not the eleven killed and six surrendered insurgents or even the twenty-four camps, five resting places and ten food dumps that were uncovered, but the considerable size of the Thai delegation that included twenty-one representatives led by Lieutenant General Pin Dhamsri, Commander, 4th Royal Thai Army.[538] The marked improvement in Thai-Malaysian cooperation however resulted in the unintended consequence of closer cooperation between the CPM and the CPT - including the exchange of CPM booby-trap expertise for Thai-supplied weapons.[539] The development clearly pointed toward the increasing effectiveness of joint Thai-Malaysian cooperation which was making a significant strategic impact on the cross-border situation. Despite the limited civilian and military resources of the Thai government in its Southern States, Thai-Malaysian border cooperation against the CPM was now run on smaller, more efficient, and realistic lines.[540] By October 1978, the PFF could boast a detachment of seventy parachutists – all trained in Thailand under the direction of the Royal Thai Police.[541]

Any genuine strategic shift depended on much more than the containment of the CPM's armed units. The real achievement of the Malaysian government was the creation of the so-called 'KESBAN Belt' that ultimately turned the once 'black areas' dominated by the CPM into a thriving development zone. The KESBAN Belt covered 358 square miles in an area fifteen miles south of the Malaysia-Thailand border from the state of Perlis to Kelantan in which all socio-economic development projects fell under the responsibility of the National KESBAN Committee which in turn was directly responsible to the NSC.[542] Between 1981 and 1990, a total of about 786 projects were implemented within the KESBAN belt that included infrastructural development, upgrading of agricultural productivity, educational development, housing for the rural poor and construction of dams /hydroelectric plants.[543] Many of these were 'quick impact projects' designed to uplift the socio-economic standards and welfare of the rural communities through the provision of immediate tangible benefits.[544] Within the KESBAN Belt, the Malaysian government

---

[538] FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up September 1978.
[539] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up August 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 August 1978.
[540] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.
[541] FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up September 1978.
[542] Restricted Report on the KESBAN Doctrine, 5.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid, 10-12.

started an 'agricultural revolution' that promoted rubber, oil, palm, and paddy cultivation among the rural population as well as the construction of the Temenggor and Pedu hydroelectric dams which to power the light industries that would process the cash crops and create employment in the rural areas.[545] The development projects represented the Internal Development or IDEV aspect of KESBAN designed to remove the causes or potential causes of popular discontent by visible measures of political, economic and social progress.[546]

The IDEV arm of KESBAN was complemented by the Internal Security or IS arm of the security forces. As part of the KESBAN strategy, both the MAF and the police worked to create a secure environment in which the KESBAN development projects could be carried out without any CPM interference.[547] The presence of security forces along the East-West Highway and enclose proximity to the construction sites had enabled the civil agencies to complete the various socio-economic projects under the KESBAN scheme.[548] The security forces also carried out strike operations on specific targets based on accurate intelligence. Additional roles included provision of medical and dental services by the medical corps, troop participation in community self-help programmes and construction of minor engineering projects.[549] By the time of KESBAN's formal implementation in 1980, the development focused and population-centric strategy had worked in winning over the confidence of many Orang Asli and rural communities living in the border areas. This concept of operations represents the final apotheosis of Malaysian's post-colonial COIN approach that would eventually endure until the end of the Second Emergency in 1989.

The refinement of KESBAN into a population-centric approach designed to win the confidence of the rural communities was not much different from Briggs Plan or the development schemes of Templer. There were certainly shifts in the local, regional and international contexts but both the colonial and post-colonial governments had to grapple with their respective insurgencies within the inter-connected quadrant of: utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. Despite

---

[545] Nathan and Govindasamy, Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests, 271.
[546] Restricted Report on the KESBAN doctrine, 8.
[547] Ibid, 6.
[548] Ibid,15.
[549] Ibid, 10-12.

172

teething problems, both COIN campaigns and approaches eventually came to the conclusion that population security and winning over the population was the sine qua non. As we have seen, in the development of the Malaysian approach, the Malaysians persisted in the use of large-scale military action more frequently than the British and the Malaysian propaganda effort was less extensive than that of the First Emergency but, other than these two issues, continuity was their most obvious feature. Why and how the Malaysian approach worked, despite the less measured use of military force and lack of an effective propaganda campaign, at least when compared to that of its British forebear, is the subject of the next chapter.

6.

The Making of a Winning State: Lessons in Post-colonial COIN and Nation-building

Why did the CPM fail in its second armed struggle? Why were the CPM's early tactical successes against the security forces never translated into strategic victory? To answer these questions, this chapter will critically examine both the interior and exterior terrain of the 'battlespace', meaning that it situates events and the actions of both the insurgent and the state within those spaces in which conflict occurred at the local, regional and international level. At this point, it must be pointed out that one of the core objectives of this thesis is to highlight the indelible imprint of the CPM insurgency on state formation in Malaysia rather than debate the moral dilemma of the Emergency-era regulations. In order to explain how the post-colonial Malaysian state ultimately triumphed over its CPM opponents, it is useful to revisit Charles Tilly's famous 'war make states' dictum and set it as a backdrop for the discussion of the final substantive chapter. Drawing from the classic European state-building experience, Tilly posits that war-making, state-building, extraction and protection were interdependent and inextricably intertwined:

> Power holders' pursuit of war involved them willy-nilly in the extraction of
> resources for war making from the populations over which they had control and
> in the promotion of capital accumulation by those who could help them borrow
> and buy. War making, extraction, and capital accumulation interacted to shape
> European state making.[550]

In the post-colonial age, Tilly's hypothesis is perhaps more relevant to Southeast Asia than Western Europe. The processes and outcomes of these prolonged low-intensity conflicts (LIC) often defined the balance of power within many a Southeast Asian state. These COIN campaigns have had a profound impact on the evolution of the institutional state in all ASEAN member countries including Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, Singapore.

---

[550] Charles Tilly, 'War Making and State Making as Organised Crime' in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, 172.

174

In the case of Malaysia, both the Malayan Emergency and the subsequent Second Emergency were foundational historical experiences that shaped the emergence, institutionalisation and consolidation of the post-colonial state. At the start of the first Emergency, the state structure was relatively weak and was in no position to contain the initial phase of the insurgency. The subsequent commodities boom during the Korean War was a windfall that funded the expansion of the Malayan state apparatus including the extensive resettlement of rural Chinese under the Briggs Plan. At the same time, the COIN campaign aided the development of a tax structure which paid for the expansion of the governmental administration. As the bureaucracy grew, more resources were mobilised and services to secure the support of the Malayan population put into place. The united front party system that ultimately came to represent the legitimate independent Malay and 'underpinned the state centralising process' (centred on the UMNO and MCA partnership) also emerged during the Emergency years.[551] With the end of the Emergency, most of the British and Commonwealth forces and administrators went home bequeathing a heavily centralised state with a highly-developed civil administration and a highly profitable economic system based on the export of commodities.

In many ways the expansion of the centralised colonial administration in the Emergency years was a promethean flame that shone the writ of the state into hitherto unlit areas of the Malayan interior. State efforts to securitise and territorialise the rainforest at the outbreak of the Emergency years gradually expanded to encompass the entire physical space of the Malay Peninsula. Many of the Emergency-era laws promulgated between 1948 and 1957 were revisited to contend with the insurrection of the CPM in 1968. Indeed, the architecture of state control in post-colonial Malaysia was deeply rooted in the colonial government's attempt to dominate the jungle space and deny it to the insurgents. According to Maureen Sioh, the struggle for power between the colonial government and the Communists in the jungles of Malaya was 'a synecdoche for [the] territorialisation of Malaya' which eventually grew to encompass 'new urban configurations in the form of the New Villages as part of the state's strategy to control populations expelled from the

---

[551] Paul B Rich & Richard Stubbs (eds), *The Counter-Insurgent State: Guerrilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan Press, 1997, 10-5.

forest'.[552] Indeed, the need to territorialise and securitise the jungle space enabled an unprecedented consolidation of centralised state power, authority and reach within the Malayan Peninsula. The creation and development of New Villages allowed the state to secure the rural Chinese from the CPM and brought the presence of the state into areas where its presence was hitherto minimal or absent.

One of the most far-reaching of the Emergency-era initiatives was population registration. From the urban centres to the Malayan-Thai frontier, all citizens were assigned an individual identity. For many Malayans this marked their first direct contact with state authority. As Tim Harper puts it, the Emergency regulations such as detention without trial, reinstatement of the capital punishment for the possession of firearms, restrictions on freedom of the press and media marked the final end of the 'Malayan Spring' – a period of unprecedented political freedom in Malaya and Singapore which began in the first weeks of 1946.[553] Both Harper and Maureen Sioh maintain that fifty years on, many of these 'repressive measures' remain on the statute book having become interwoven within the nation-building narrative and thereby justified as more permanent juridical practices. For better or worse, post-colonial and in many ways, contemporary Malaysia and its national psyche are very much shaped by the political, military and socio-economic actions of the state in the fight against communist insurgency.

At this juncture, it is worthwhile to consider John Ikenberry's 'After Victory' thesis. Although Ikenberry's thesis addresses changes to post-war international order, his discussion on 'how victors treat losers' bears some relevance. More often than not, the stakes in wars are total – win or be destroyed. Factions therefore have every incentive to battle to the death. Ikenberry's suggests that:

> Winning is always limited and temporary, gains by one group cannot be used to
> engage in the permanent domination of other groups. Where the returns to
> power are low, the stakes in political battles are low. The implications of
> winning and losing are less significant: to win is not to gain a permanent

---

[552] Maureen Sioh, 'An Ecology of Postcoloniality: Disciplining Nature and Society in Malaya, 1948-1957', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30, 2004, 729-746, 730.
[553] Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper*, Forgotten Wars: The End of Britain's Asian Empire*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, 197-441.

position of superiority and to lose is not to risk everything. Political orders with low returns to power are more stable than high return systems because the risks of domination and coercion are reduced. Because of this, losers are more likely to agree to their losses and prepare for the next round.[554]

To posit Ikenberry's thesis within the context of the communist insurgency in Malaysia, the failure of the Baling Peace Talks of 1955 demonstrated to the MCP that it had more to gain from the continued armed struggle and would lose everything if it had agreed to the surrender terms. It must be remembered that the end of the Emergency was declared unilaterally by the Kuala Lumpur government rather than bilaterally at the peace conference table. The vast majority of the central committee and the hardened core that survived the long march from the Malayan interior to the Thai-Malaysian border could never accept the creation of the 'neo-imperialist' Malaysian federation and were keen to continue the fight. There was no opportunity for closure or room for negotiation in 1960 as both sides sought to impose their distinct vision of Malaya. Simply put, a political order with low returns to power was not possible. Battered but not cowed, in a sanctuary far from the writ of the Malaysian and Thai governments, the CPM reorganised, reviewed its strategy and bided its time. In 1968, inspired by the Cultural Revolution in Mao's China and events in Indochina, the CPM sought for a second time to establish a 'People's Republic'. The acrimonious split within the CPM movement further reinforced the high stakes in a perceived 'winner takes all' environment.

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, state institutions, legal frameworks, security apparatuses and government policies developed during the Emergency all played a critical role in shaping the response of the Malaysian state at the outbreak of Second Emergency. The contested physical space differed somewhat, however. As before, much of the shooting war was waged in the jungles, but no longer in the interior of Malaya. The jungles, New Villages, squatter settlements and border towns of the porous Malaysian-Thai border were the main contested physical and psychological battlefields of the Second Emergency. By 1966, the back of the urban communist underground movement was largely

---

[554] John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 266.

broken in Singapore and thereafter subversive propaganda became the CPM's main strategy in Singapore's urban space. Despite its spectacular acts of revolutionary violence and tactical successes in jungle engagements against the Malaysian security forces, the CPM never did seriously challenge the authority of the Malaysian state. In fact, the Second Emergency provided the impetus for the central state to reassert and stamp its authority on the hitherto much ignored 'Black areas' of the northern border states. Furthermore, the revolutionary ideology carried on the clandestine airwaves of the VMR also failed to strike a cord with the masses in Malaysia and Singapore. With hindsight, it is easy to conclude that the CPM were doomed to failure, but the drawn-out nature of the conflict suggests that the outcome was more nebulous than predictable in the years of 1968 to 1975. Only in 1977 did the strategic tide visibly turned in the Malaysian government's favour. Why and how it did will be explained in the following subchapters.

The first subchapter will deal with the interior terrain - local socio-economic-demographic conditions that the CPM could not and ultimately failed to exploit for any long-term gains. The second will deal with the exterior terrain - developments in the international and regional arena that irrevocably set back the CPM's cause - particularly the fundamental shift in Chinese foreign policy which led to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the PRC and the non-communist states of ASEAN. The twin concepts of KESBAN and 'Comprehensive Security' will be revisited in the final subchapter and set into the context of Malaysian state and nation building. We shall see how 'Comprehensive Security' which had its roots in the Malayan Emergency days became appropriated and institutionalised by the centralised state in its nation-building efforts. This strategy became a successful counterforce to the CPM's revolutionary ideology and allowed for the consolidation of the Malaysian state. More importantly, the 'Comprehensive Development as Security' strategy allowed the Malaysian state to secure the population that mattered most – the rural Malays in the northern Border States. In short, this chapter will detail the development of Malaysia as a 'counterinsurgent state' and the demise of the CPM as a revolutionary force and the ideology that sustained the movement. To a lesser extent, parallel developments in the PAP-dominated city-state of Singapore will also be included when appropriate. In both cases, the ability of post-colonial Malaysia and

Singapore to win over the population groups that mattered was the key factor in the CPM's demise.

Contest for the Interior Terrain and Local Spaces

ISD's capacity to undertake sophisticated operations against local threats in Singapore would have counted for little without any real progress up north. Despite the low threat posed by communist subversion, Singapore could not escape the effects of a serious deterioration in Malaysia's Security situation.[555] If Malaysia had been wrenched apart by communist insurgency, Singapore would not have survived.[556] Indeed, Singapore's security cannot be viewed in isolation from Malaysia.[557] Cognisant of the fact that its survival was bound to the stability of the other non-communist states in Southeast Asia, Lee Kuan Yew recognised the need to assist Malaysia against the communist insurgents – to the extent of conducting holding operations in Malaysia if the threat became acute.[558] Malaysian-Singaporean internal security cooperation at the working level was characterised by the close relationship between MSB and ISD. Information from the MSB set in motion an operation that resulted in the arrest of thirty-nine MNLF members and in Singapore over a three month period – twelve of whom were Malaysians.[559] The operation also broke up the four MNLF units responsible for the recruitment of members, financial, logistical and manpower support in Singapore.[560] Differences at the political level did not impede the close working relationship between MSB and ISD that had its roots in the Emergency days. Moreover, the resurgence of communist subversion and revolutionary violence in 1974 further strengthened cooperation between the security forces of both countries.

---

[555] NA, Ministry of Defence Files UK, DEFE 24/1822, Singapore's Defence: The End of an Era, British High Commission Singapore, 2 April 1976.

[556] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1779, Minute by George Wong, South West Pacific Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 10 October 1973.

[557] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Singapore Internal Situation, Foreign Policy, and Anglo-Singapore Relations, South East Asia Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 30 September 1974.

[558] DEFE 24/1822, Singapore's Defence: The End of an Era.

[559] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Arrest of Communists in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 19 October 1977.

[560] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Ministry of Home Affairs Press Release, Ministry of Home Affairs Singapore, 15 October 1977.

In the long run, the CPM's inability to convert the Malaysian heartland to its cause meant that Singapore, too, was safe. On the other hand, the events of 1974 reinforced the Singapore government's belief that for its own national survival it must do all that was necessary to prevent a CPM takeover of Peninsular Malaysia. This stance had some repercussions on the PAP government's relationship with Singapore's professional community (some of whom were compelled to emigrate in search of greater freedom), but the majority of Singaporeans accepted and credited Lee Kuan Yew's authoritarian style of leadership for Singapore's and their personal growing prosperity.[561] By the late 1970s, the widespread benefits of Singapore's rapid economic development convinced the majority of Singaporeans that communism meant a much reduced standard of living. In Singapore, communism no longer had the appeal of 'an irresistible revolutionary force' that it once held in the 1950s and 60s.[562]

Indeed, by the early 1970s, the VMR's revolutionary message was increasingly out of phase with the material aspirations of the average Singaporean. In 1971, when legal action was taken against the owners and editors of a leading Singapore Chinese newspaper, Nanyang Siang Pau for 'excessive glorification of the People's Republic of China, with the result that Chinese chauvinism was being encouraged', the majority of Singaporeans 'did not appear to have been unduly upset'.[563] In his analysis of the event, the British High Commissioner explained that Singaporeans were 'more interested in making money in a stable environment than in liberal trends of thought or serious criticism of their government of whose overall performance they generally approve'.[564] In an environment whereby the 1972 GNP growth was predicted to match the 1969-1971 average of fourteen percent per annum, 'very few Singaporeans [saw] any credible alternative to PAP rule'.[565] Even during the 1974 economic crises, Singapore fared better than many countries and was expected to

---

[561] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, Singapore: The Next Phase, Diplomatic Report No.302/76, British High Commission Singapore, 15 July 1976.
[562] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, A Southeast Asian Looking to 1980, Address by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the National Press Club Luncheon, Canberra, 21 October 1976.
[563] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1462, Singapore: Annual Review 1971, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1972.
[564] Ibid.
[565] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1778, Singapore: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1973.

post a balance of payments surplus of S$500 million and a GNP growth of five percent.[566] The Singapore government's persistence in diversifying the economy and establishing Singapore as a high technology base for technical and financial services created a national economy that had already achieved a balance of payments surplus in the region of $1000 million and was well-poised to take advantage of any global economic upturn in 1976.[567] The 1976 General Election in which the PAP secured all sixty-nine parliamentary seats further vindicated the perception that the vast majority of Singaporeans were willing to accept certain restraints in personal freedoms in exchange for greater stability and economic growth.[568] In short, the PAP government had effectively kept the CPM out of Singapore by guaranteeing a continued reasonable standard of living to its citizens.

The PAP government was able to secure the urban population of Singapore by a carrot and stick approach which was heavy on the sweet carrot of continued improvement in the peoples' standards of living. The prospects of socio-economic advancement and stability were so appealing that the majority of the electorate were prepared to allow a diminution of personal freedoms for the greater sake of national security and cohesion. It was a strategy to which the CPM and the VMR had no effective counter-response. An ISD report on the subversive effect of the VMR broadcasts on Singapore in 1979 concluded that the VMR's messages had:

> ...little appeal to the average Singaporean. Successful economic development and an able government have provided him a comfortable and secure life. [It is] unreasonable for him to sacrifice what he has acquired for an ideal which can never materialise but bring dire consequences, as was starkly revealed in the tragedy of the Indochina 'revolution'. The VMR understood the implications that Singapore's growing affluence had on the effectiveness and credibility of

---

[566] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2069, Singapore: Annual Review for 1974, British High Commission, Singapore, 6 January 1975.
[567] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2157, Singapore: Annual Review for 1975, British High Commission, Singapore, 19 January 1976.
[568] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2230, Singapore: Annual Review for 1976, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1977.

its propaganda...It could only exploit real grievances. But grievances were scarce in a well managed and prospering Singapore.[569]

On this point, Chin Peng's views converged with those of the administrations that he once sought to subvert and overthrow. In his autobiography, Chin Peng conceded the following:

A revolution based on violence has no application in modern Malaysia or Singapore. None of the conditions favourable to armed struggle exist today in relation to these territories. You need complementary international and internal situations to set hearts burning for armed revolt. If the people lead reasonable lives and feel accepted in society, how can you ask them to put their lives on the line?[570]

Even though Chin Peng's comments were made with hindsight and in the post-1989 context, they were reflective of ground sentiments in post-1975 and even post-1971 Singapore. In the 1980 general election, the PAP swept all 75 seats in parliament with 77.7% of the votes – the second highest score since its 1968 general election win with 86.7% of the votes.[571] By then, the political climate was tame enough to lift the requirement of 'political suitability certificates' for entry into Singaporean universities. Considering the fact that the Singapore government had always maintained a close watch of all activities inimical to the security of the state, the dissolution of the political suitability certificates' requirement could only mean that the flame of student leftism in Singapore was well and truly extinguished. In an environment whereby the majority of the Singaporean electorate were willing accomplices to their securitisation, the revolutionary message of the VMR fell very much on deaf ears.

After 1979, there was a perceptible focus of the VMR on Malaysia rather than Singapore particularly on the exploitative nature of the Federal government's development

---

[569] Internal Security Department (Singapore), *The Decline of Propaganda Items Broadcast by the Voice of the Malayan Revolution (1979) Against Singapore*, 8 November 1979.
[570] Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History*, 515.
[571] http://www.elections.gov.sg/elections_past_parliamentary.html

schemes. These major development projects were the main weapons of the Malaysian government's arsenal in securing the rural population from the subversive influence of the CPM and thus targets for both CPM attacks in armed attacks and propaganda. As the rural Northern Malaysian states became increasingly developed so too did the reach of the government at the expense of the CPM. These large-scale development schemes were however long-term plans that were slow to bear fruit and as we have seen, the CPM were quick to exploit their teething problems through the VMR broadcasts. Of particular concern was whether the government's general policies in the aftermath of May 13 Riots would alienate large sections of the Chinese population which was in itself 'an important deterrent and counter to communist policies'.[572]

In the aftermath of the May 13 1969 riots, Razak had managed to overcome the challenge from the 'Ultra' component of UMNO, but the overriding need for Malay support and the continued pressure from politicians, civil servants and certain sections of the Malay electorate 'to become more chauvinistic' ensured the 'moderately pro-Malay' policies of the Malaysian federal government in the decades to come.[573] Steps had to be taken to ensure the confidence of the Malay majority electorate without losing the support of important sections of the Malaysian Chinese community. As such, the Second Malaysian Plan drawn up against the communal violence of the May 13 1969 riots and the revived CPM insurgency was designed as part of the solution to the twin problems of communism and communalism.[574] The plan was explicitly aimed at bringing the mainly rural and agricultural Malays into commercial and industrial life as well as agricultural and rural development thus securing the government's Malay base.[575] The successful implementation of the Second Malaysian Plan was 'essential for stability and in particular for improving the economic lot of the Malays, which [was] crucial if the dormant threat of a recurrence of racial violence [was] to be removed'.[576]

---

[572] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/812, Report from Sir Michael Walker to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 October 1970.
[573] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/806, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1969, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 14 January 1970.
[574] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(2), Kuala Lumpur Despatch of 16 August 1971: The Second Malaysian Plan, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 16 August 1971.
[575] Ibid.
[576] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1745, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 4 January 1973.

183

As a result of population resettlement measures implemented during the First Emergency, a distinct division had been created between the populated and unpopulated areas of Peninsula Malaysia.[577] Unlike the mainly rural Malays, the majority of the Chinese population were concentrated in the cities rather than the jungle fringes where the CPM presence was the most pronounced. The Second Malaysian plan was meant to close the gap between the hitherto mainly rural and agricultural Malays and their predominately urban, commercial and industrial Chinese counterparts.[578] The twin prongs of the Second Malaysian Plan was 'the eradication of poverty among all Malaysians, irrespective of race' through the correction of the 'racial economic imbalance through the modernisation of rural life, a rapid and balanced growth of urban activities and the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community' and the other being the 'restructuring of Malaysian society'.[579] In short, the plan proposed to solve the twin problems of communism and communalism by a population-centric approach that involved the dual-pronged tools of social engineering and social policy that eventually secured the people that mattered. The development and ultimately the securing of the Malay population nonetheless involved a major reconfiguration of Malaysian society not unlike that of the First Emergency years. In the case of post-colonial Malaysia, the 'political need to ensure that the Malays were seen to be given much greater opportunities for advancement' outweighed the risk that 'undue preference [might] prejudice economic progress and seriously disturb the other races'.[580]

The proposed social restructuring always risked alienating the Malaysian Chinese community. At the state level, the Chinese were predominant in Perak (Chinese 44%, Malays 40%), Selangor (Chinese 48%, Malay 29%) and Penang (Chinese 57%, Malay 28%) while the four northern largely rural states of Kelantan (Malays 92%), Trenggannu (Malays 92%), Kedah (Malays 68%) and Perlis (78%) were overwhelmingly Malay.[581] At the group level, there was a significant divide between the English-educated Chinese businessmen who were part of the establishment and the poorer Chinese-educated community between

---

[577] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1154, Letter from George Wong to A.A Duff, British High Commission Singapore, 4 November 1971.
[578] FCO 24/1172(2), Kuala Lumpur Despatch of 16 August 1971: The Second Malaysian Plan.
[579] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(2), Statement by the Prime Minister at the Press Conference on the Second Malaysian Plan 1971, 27 May 1971.
[580] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1745, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 4 January 1973.
[581] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1154, Malaysia: Communalism and Politics, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 17 August 1971.

whom there was virtually no contact, communication and understanding. During both the First and the Second Emergency, the CPM posed a direct threat to the interests of the Chinese business elite who had more in common with the Malay government officials on the green of the Royal Selangor Golf Club than Chinese CPM insurgents in the jungle. Similarly, the MCA which represented Chinese interests in the Alliance government during both Emergencies was largely drawn from the Chinese elite. The impression of the MCA as a party of the English-educated rich rather than the Chinese-educated majority was reflected by its abysmal showing in the 1969 elections and the subsequent after election riots.[582] With the exception of Perak, the efforts of the younger elements within the MCA to make grass roots contact had little effect.[583]

Thus, despite fears of 'racially biased bureaucratic abuses', the middle-class urban Chinese tended to prefer Razak's moderate brand of Malay leadership to the internally divided Chinese political leadership of the MCA - or the revolutionary upheaval of the CPM.[584] The implementation of Second Five-year Plan was pragmatic in the sense that while employers were urged to advance Malays, the Malaysian government did not hesitate to use Chinese expertise to improve the efficiency of its para-statal economic authorities – the Council of Trust for the Indigenous Peoples (MARA) and the National Corporation (PERNAS).[585] Compared to the political unity of the Malays, the Chinese were a fragmented community.[586] The Malaysian Chinese community were unable to develop a form of political cohesion through which its interests could be assured and considered in the central formulation of policy in a Malay dominated government.[587] Even though the CPM was blamed for much of the riot violence by the Malaysian government, the party could not quite capitalise on the grievances of the divided Chinese community. As such, CPM recruits in urban centres were largely drawn from the lower rungs of urban Chinese

---

[582] Ibid.
[583] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 1972.
[584] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/812, The Malaysian Chinese Association Reform Movement, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 18 September 1973. FCO 24/1154, Letter from George Wong to A.A Duff.
[585] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(1), The Second Malaysia Plan, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 26 June 1972.
[586] FCO 24/812, The Malaysian Chinese Association Reform Movement.
[587] FCO 24/1154, Communalism and Politics.

society including criminal elements.[588] In short, the divided nature of the Malaysian Chinese community meant that only the Chinese-educated working and criminal class in the urban centres and rural Chinese were realistic targets for CPM recruitment and subversion.

In November 1974, student demonstrations involving all the institutions of higher education: the University of Malaya, the National University, the Science University of Penang, the National Institute of Technology and the Ungku Omar Polytechnic (Ipoh) and their respective student unions in Malaysia affected the main urban centres, particularly Kuala Lumpur.[589] The predominantly Malay student demonstrators were protesting against the plight of poor Malay smallholders in Baling whose income had been severely reduced by inflation in the price of basic essentials and fall in the price of rubber.[590] The VMR was quick to respond to the issue and condemned the Second Five-year Plan as one that was 'meant to serve the interests of a handful of bureaucratic capitalists and imperialists'.[591] The local CPM front organisations however played no active role in the organisation of the Baling protests.[592] Part of the government's response came in the form of an emergency programme to increase the market price of rubber which included restricting the production of plantation companies and direct governmental purchase from small-holders.[593] Overall, the Malaysian government was seen to have reacted with 'a mixture of firm (but not brutal) repression of the demonstrators and a series of measures to alleviate the condition of the small holders'.[594] More importantly, the emergency programme's success in raising rubber prices to the benefit of the Malay small-holders amplified the need for Malay affirmative action and strengthened the authorities' position at the expense of the CPM's call to revolutionary violence.

---

[588] FCO 24/1154, Letter from George Wong to A.A Duff.

[589] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/918, Student Disturbances, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 December 1974.

[590] Ibid.

[591] A Report: The People in Kedah Rise in Anti-hunger Struggle (3 December 1974) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 296.

[592] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Kedah: State Development, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 December 1974.

[593] FCO 15/918, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Student Disturbances.

[594] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2072, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1974, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 13 January 1975.

Despite lending its moral support to the student demonstrations via the VMR, the CPM's call to revolutionary violence was unappealing to the Malay student Left. Rather, the Baling issue united the socialist and Malay nationalist elements as well as provided an occasion for the student left to confront the government –for the first and very last time.[595] Once again, akin to the May 13 riots, the CPM did not possess the capacity and resources to exploit a significant event that could severely damage the Malaysian government's credibility. As argued in chapter four, the CPM's influence over the student population was largely restricted to the Chinese-language schools and did not extend to the Malay or English-educated (mainly in Singapore). In short, the CPM could do little to harness the potential of a united student Left in Malaysia. By the time of the 1974 Malaysian elections, the failure of the predominately Malay PSRM to win a single parliamentary or state seat demonstrated that the majority of the Malay electorate had rejected ideology in favour of communalism.[596] From 1969 to 1974 – prior to the severe plunge in the price of rubber in mid-1974, the federal government could rely on exports of the country's main primary products (rubber, tin, oil palm and rubber) to fund its extensive national development programme the revenues from which helped garner the support of the Malay electorate. In 1973, thanks to soaring prices for its four main export commodities, an impressive annual economic growth rate of over eight percent was achieved.[597]

In the 1974 general election, Razak's National Front Coalition government was returned to all the state assemblies of Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak with one hundred percent success achieved by the two Malay parties within the coalition (UMNO and PAS).[598] It had, by then, become official orthodoxy that racial unrest could be prevented 'only if the alleged economic and social injustices suffered by the Malays [were] removed'.[599] The Second Five-year Plan was designed to assuage anti-Chinese 'have-nots against the haves' resentment of the Malay community.[600] More than in any other previous election, Malays demonstrated in the 1974 Election their conviction that 'only a united,

[595] FCO 15/918, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Student Disturbances.
[596] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/918, The Malaysian Elections of 1974 and the New Government, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 24 September 1974.
[597] FCO 15/1921, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1973 and Sir J. Johnston's Valedictory.
[598] FCO 15/918, The Malaysian Elections of 1974 and the New Government.
[599] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Malaysia: The Underlying Tensions, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 9 July 1975.
[600] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Letter from A J M Craig, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 October 1975.

Malay-dominated government can look after their interests'.[601] The July 1978 General Elections witnessed the National Front winning 132 of 154 seats of which UMNO took 71 – the highest total achieved by the dominant Malay-based party.[602] Simply put, in an environment where the Malay majority had come to reject ideology and embrace a more communal brand of politics, the prospects of success for the Chinese-dominated CPM were more unrealistic than the First Emergency years.

The CPM could, in theory, exploit the grievances of the Chinese community – especially those of the one million plus Chinese living in First Emergency-era New Villages. Unlike their counterparts among the Malay rural poor, these Chinese did not benefit from the government's economic uplift policy.[603] A 'special watch' was kept on the Chinese New Villagers who, unlike the rural Malays, preferred to keep clear of 'disturbances'.[604] By the end of 1971, when the Malaysian security forces were at their furthest point of overstretch, police action, particularly the identification and arrest of CPM supporters, achieved its intended effect of containing the CPM's underground activities.[605] Rather than take to the jungle with the CPM, the increase in non-political urban violence and gangsterism among the poorer Chinese, plus a higher emigration rate among the qualified middle class, became the preferred means to register dissatisfaction with government policies.[606] Furthermore, because much of the Chinese population had been resettled in the main urban areas and New Villages as part of the colonial-era COIN strategy, the Chinese population could be more effectively monitored and policed by the MSB than their Malay counterparts. In January, a MSB Officer in Perak ascertained that the CPM had not recruited front organisation or party members from the Grik area over the last year. But he added that 'if conditions did not improve it was a toss-up between whether the New Villagers joined the dissatisfied rural Malays or the communists'.[607]

---

[601] FCO 15/918, The Malaysian Elections of 1974 and the New Government.
[602] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.
[603] FCO 15/2071, Malaysia: The Underlying Tensions.
[604] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Perak, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 January 1974.
[605] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 1972.
[606] FCO 15/2071, Malaysia: The Underlying Tensions.
[607] FCO 15/2071, Perak.

The Malaysian government had hoped that economic growth would generate opportunities so rapidly that there would be 'enough progress to keep the majority immune to the attractions of revolution'.[608] In the meantime, effective MSB surveillance and direct police action were used to stifle pro-CPM elements, thereby preventing any possible outbreaks of communal violence. Even in 1970, a period when Thai-Malaysian cooperation, Malaysian military-police cooperation and MSB efficiency were at one of their lowest points, the CPM still failed to 'penetrate large sectors of the Chinese population as extensively as they did in 1948'.[609] Unlike the First Emergency in which winning over the rural Chinese was paramount, the key population battleground during the Second Emergency was the rural Malays in the northern Border States. The CPM realised that its credibility as a Malayan revolutionary movement depended upon its ability to gain support within the rural Malay communities in Kelantan, Trenggannu, Kedah and Perlis. Thus the Malaysian government's development strategy to bring the rural Malays out of the poverty trap at the initial expense of the Chinese community could be justified. As the insurgency wore on, the CPM proved unable to make inroads on the allegiance of the population that mattered the most- the rural Malays. Even at the peak of CPM violence in 1975, the party failed to win over rural Malays along their infiltration routes in Kelantan.[610]

While there was a degree of local recruitment in Perak and Pahang, this was largely due to the influx of the urban underground members forced into refuge by police action.[611] In 1978, well into the tenth year of the CPM's revived armed struggle, most of the 3,000 or so remaining insurgents were of Malaysian or Thai Chinese origin.[612] In order to maintain its hold over the population in Southern Thailand, the CPM generally avoided spectacular acts of banditry that might alienate the local population and relied on tax income levied on the people in the CPM-controlled areas.[613] As the insurgency dragged on, the CPM became even more reliant on its strongholds in Southern Thailand for the bulk of its recruits. It could only do so as long as the Thai government continued to ignore the development of its

[608] FCO 15/2071, Malaysia: The Underlying Tensions.
[609] NA, Ministry of Defence Files UK, DEFE 11/694, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September 1970, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 22 October 1970.
[610] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Security Situation, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 6 January 1975.
[611] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977.
[612] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2363, Parliamentary Response of Secretary of State, Goronwy-Roberts, 17 August 1978.
[613] FCO 15/2071, Security Situation.

Southern provinces. By contrast, the CPM's ability to recruit from the rural Malay communities in Malaysia proper was severely constrained.

In sum, while the Malaysian state might be accused of mismanaging the grievances of the Malaysian Chinese community, the CPM did little to benefit from the situation. As observed by R.A. Hibbert, the Political Adviser (POLAD) to Commander-in-Chief (Far East)

> There is no insurgency movement in Southeast Asia which could not rapidly be crushed by efficient administration and an efficient police force backed by an efficient army...even in Malaysia, the country which has the best claim to having an insurgency movement which comes from outside because the CTO spent the 1960s in safe-havens across the Thai frontier, the real trouble is not the external force but the existence within Malaysia of people ready or even eager to help it, and the persistence of the Malaysian Government's inability to win any real loyalty from the Chinese masses.[614]

Even though the CPM continued to 'offer the Chinese a violent alternative to continued acquiescence in the status quo', a successful overthrow of the incumbent government was unachievable through the exploitation of Chinese grievances alone.[615] A much stronger bedrock of popular support would surely have been required to precipitate such dramatic change. So the CPM conundrum remained: how to enlist the support of the rural Malays? Whereas the Malays had become increasingly united and communalised in the aftermath of the May 13 riots, the Malaysian Chinese community was still much divided in 1978. Just as in the 1969 General Elections – the precursor to the May 13 riots, the Chinese vote during the 1978 General Elections became ever more divided with the MCA once again losing much ground to the opposition DAP.[616]

---

[614] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 24/1019, Thoughts on the Southeast Asian Scene on the Closure of Far East Command, Diplomatic Report No.491/71 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 October 1971.

[615] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2361, The Malaysian Internal Scene: Autumn 1978, 11 December 1978.

[616] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.

By 1978, however, any propensity for violence within the divided Malaysian Chinese community could be kept in check by decisive police action. The expanded recruitment of Chinese MSB officers since 1974 under a new IGP who commanded the loyalty and respect of the Chinese officers for his more balanced racial approach (notably when compared to the army) contributed to the crippling of the CPM underground in the mainly Chinese urban areas. In 1976, 933 CPM underground members were arrested - an increase of over 100 percent on the previous year's figure.[617] These Chinese officers recognised that 'promotion on the whole [was] on merit, that only certain top jobs [were] reserved for Malays, and that this [was] politically desirable'.[618] Given a strong mandate in the 1974 and 1978 Malaysian General Elections from the Malay-Muslim electorate, it was vital for the Malay-dominated United Front to be seen as the upholders of Malay civil rights, nationalist sentiment and Islamic observance. Any direct threat to Malay power and privilege in post-colonial Malaysia could 'trigger the political consciousness' of a predominantly Malay-Muslim MAF that viewed 'their corporate interests, security, and future' as closely intertwined with those of the Malay-dominated civilian government.[619] That in itself would translate into the further marginalisation of the Chinese community as was the case in the aftermath of the May 13 Riots.

As demonstrated in chapters three and four, in order to convince the rural Malays of the compatibility of Islam and communism, the CPM utilised front organisations such as PAPERI. Yet, this approach made little headway in light of the communalisation of local politics catalysed by the Second Malaysian Plan. It was further reinforced by the efforts of Malay rulers and ministers to present 'Islam as a bulwark against communism'.[620] To summarise, the Malaysian state was able to contain the CPM's advance into the rural Malay and urban Chinese communities largely through effective MSB action in the urban areas where the Chinese were dominant and development of areas in which the rural Malays predominate. Simply put, the communalisation of politics set the preconditions for the

---

[617] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur.

[618] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur.

[619] K. S. Nathan and Geetha Govindasamy, 'Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests,' in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001, 275.

[620] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977

Malaysian state to implement an effective population control strategy that involved 'development' for the rural Malays and 'securitisation' for the Chinese. The effective 'securitisation' or policing of the Chinese population using minimal force was made possible as the Malaysian Chinese community itself became more divided in the aftermath of the May 13 riots.

In sum, just as in the First Emergency, the CPM proved unable to win over the rural Malays or the urban Chinese in Malaysia in their Second armed revolution. Unlike the communist insurgencies in Indochina, the CPM's slavish implementation of Maoist revolutionary violence and mass persuasion took no account of the local socio-economic changes in post-colonial Malaysia and Singapore. The VMR's quick responses to local events demonstrated a high level of local knowledge, but the responses themselves suggested a Peking-based CPM Central that was rapidly out of touch with local ground realities. That in itself was one of the reasons responsible for the three-way split within the party. Only in Southern Thailand did the CPM create a local parallel underground infrastructure. Even in 1971, at the point when the Malaysian security forces were severely stretched across two separate COIN efforts, the CPM did not succeed in creating a state within a state in any of the Northern Malaysian States (including those with a majority Chinese population such as Penang).

Despite the deep divisions within the Malaysian Chinese community, the CPM failed to convince both the urban and rural Chinese that the CPM's revolutionary path was the more credible alternative. The Malay dominated National Front coalition might not be perfect, but in the eyes of most Chinese it was a preferable alternative to the CPM's vision of a People's Republic. Clearly, the Malaysian Chinese business community stood to lose far more a PRM than an economy under the NEP. Meanwhile, MSB and police intervention did enough to impress upon the Chinese urban communities that the Malaysian state rather than the CPM was to be the likely winner in the long term. At no point in the Second Emergency did the CPM succeed in ruling any major Chinese urban settlement in Malaysian territory by night. The failure of the CPM to penetrate deeper into Peninsula Malaysia could also be partially attributed to the three-way split that irretrievably upset the CPM plans for a concerted Southward advance. The surge in open demonstrations of each

factions' capabilities led to a severe bleeding of strength that decimated the all important urban underground infrastructure – a setback from which CPM Central never recovered. In light of the internal split and the dissipation of its strength, CPM Central more than ever needed external assistance and international legitimacy to succeed, but at the international level, China's need for rapprochement with non-communist Southeast Asia would irretrievably set back the CPM's cause – in material, financial and moral terms.

Contest for Regional and International Legitimacy

Mao's landmark 1971 invitation to US President Richard Nixon to conduct a state visit to Beijing reawakened doubts about whether the Chinese commitment to revolutionary movements remained 'firm and all-embracing'.[621] The event encouraged some China-watchers within the British diplomatic community to conclude that 'when state relations are considered of overriding importance revolutionary movements of demonstrable legitimacy can be written off'.[622] The theory that the Chinese might try to 'have it both ways' by normalising diplomatic relations with the non-communist countries of Southeast Asia whilst supporting revolutionary movements in those very same states was a well articulated one within the diplomatic circles.[623] But the long-term implications of this policy shift were that movements such as the CPM might be sacrificed in exchange for Malaysian and Singaporean support for recognition of the PRC rather than the Taiwan-exiled KMT in the UN. The attendance of the Chinese Ambassador at the Singapore High Commissioner's National Day reception in London was interpreted as a strong indication of the PRC's recognition of Singapore as a sovereign state rather than a part of Malaya as per the CPM's vision of a contiguous PRM.[624] Since the communist take-over of Indochina in 1975, Singapore sought to develop closer relations with its non-communist ASEAN neighbours as well as a rapprochement with the Communist regimes of China and Indochina.[625] Lee Kuan Yew's visit to China in May 1976 was widely viewed as 'an important initiative in

---

[621] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1203, Chinese Foreign Policy: Ping Pong and After, Diplomatic Report No. 411/71, British High Commission Singapore, 27 July 1971.
[622] Ibid.
[623] Ibid.
[624] FCO 24/1203, Singapore's Relations With China, British High Charge d' Affaires Peking.
[625] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, Singapore: The Next Phase, Diplomatic Report No.302/76, British High Commission Singapore, 15 July 1976.

193

the context of Singapore's international relations.[626] Nonetheless, in order to forestall any lingering suspicions of Singapore as the 'Chinese Trojan Horse' of Southeast Asia, the city-state consistently maintained that it would be the last ASEAN country to establish diplomatic relations with China.[627]

In the case of Sino-Malaysian relations, Prime Minister Razak regarded the Red Cross of China's offer of M$ 625,000 worth of blankets and canned food for victims of the 1971 Kuala Lumpur floods as 'an indication of a change in Peking's attitude towards Malaysia'.[628] The British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur observed that 'a mild flurry' had been caused by the announcement of the Red Cross of China's aid offer.[629] Since then, regional and international events particularly those that reflected the shifting dynamics of the Cold War drove both China and Malaysia towards a closer relationship. Razak realised that the cornerstone of Malaysia's foreign policy, the 'Neutralisation' of Southeast Asia or the creation of a neutral non-aligned Southeast Asia could only be achieved with the support from its immediate Southeast Asian neighbours and external powers including China.[630] Malaysia also needed Chinese cooperation in resolving the issue of Overseas Chinese living in Malaysia and reining in the CPM.

By October 1970, Malaysia made it clear that in view of the imperative requirement for Chinese support for its policy of neutralisation in Southeast Asia, it would support the PRC's admission to the United Nations.[631] On September 1971, Razak described Malaysia's China's policy in the following terms: 'one China and one seat for China at the United Nations. It was beyond doubt that the Government of the People's Republic of China was *de jure* and *de facto* the Government of China and that the China seat should go

---

[626] Ibid.

[627] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2232, Briefing Notes, British High Commission Singapore, 25 April 1978.

[628] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1164, Gordon Barrass: Letter From Peking dated 9 February 1971, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Research Department, Far East Section, 16 February1971.

[629] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1164, Malaysia/Chinese Relations, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 15 February1971.

[630] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office FCO 24/1746, Malaysian Foreign Policy, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 15 January1973.

[631] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2074, Sino-Malaysian Relations January 1973-December 1974, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 24 March 1974.

to that Government'.[632] Malaysia maintained that 'there was no contradiction between Malaysian policy regarding relations with Communist China and her determination to continue the battle against internal communist terrorism'.[633] In return, the Chinese reduced their propaganda support for the CPM. Conspicuous references to Malaysia instead of "Malaysia" or Malaya in Chinese press and radio broadcasts amounted to a clear recognition of Malaysia's existence and sovereignty.[634]

China's attitude towards the Overseas Chinese population in Southeast Asia also took a more conciliatory approach. The abolition of the Commission for Overseas Chinese Affairs (COCA) which was responsible for the dissemination of Mao Tse-Tung Thought and the encouragement of overseas Chinese towards the revolutionary path was explained by Chinese Premier Chou Enlai as an 'indication of Peking's present policy'.[635] As early as 1954, the Chinese realised that claims to the loyalty of all Overseas Chinese could be an impediment to the development of relations with Southeast Asia. In his September 1954 address to the National People's Congress, Chou announced China's willingness to resolve nationality issues affecting Southeast Asian Overseas Chinese and expressed China's readiness to 'urge Overseas Chinese to respect the laws of the governments and the social customs of all the countries in which they live'.[636] In 1955, at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, a Treaty Concerning the Question of Dual Nationality had been signed with Indonesia.[637] But, since then, no further progress had been made in settling the dual-nationality issue with other Southeast Asian states. Hence the importance attached to Chou's August 1971 statement to General Ne Win, Prime Minister of Burma that 'Overseas Chinese must obey the laws of the countries in which they reside'.[638] Similar assurances were given to Thai, Filipino and Malaysian officials visiting China.

---

[632] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, Sino-Malaysian Relations: September 1971-December 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, January 1973.
[633] FCO 15/2074, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sino-Malaysian Relations January 1973-December 1974.
[634] FCO 24/1747, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sino-Malaysian Relations: September 1971-December 1972.
[635] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, China's Attitude Towards the Overseas Chinese Population, April 1973.
[636] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, China's Attitude Towards the Nationality of Overseas Chinese, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Research Department, Far East Section, 2 August 1972
[637] Ibid.
[638] FCO 24/1747, China's Attitude Towards the Overseas Chinese Population.

1972 and 1973 also witnessed increased trade, cultural and technical links between China and Malaysia. By June 1973, formal talks in New York on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries had begun.[639] The outcome of these talks was an official state visit by Razak to China to formalise Sino-Chinese relations. On 21 May 1974, the NCNA Bulletin announced the following:

> The Government of the [PRC] and the Government of Malaysia have mutually agreed in principle upon the establishment of diplomatic relations. At the invitation of Chou Enlai, Premier of the State Council of the [PRC], his Excellency Tun Abdul Razak Bin Datuk Hussein, Prime Minister of Malaysia, will pay an official visit to the [PRC] from 28 May to 2 June 1974 to formalise this agreement of the two governments to establish diplomatic relations.[640]

In a joint communiqué issued in Beijing on 1 June 1974, China and Malaysia made formal pledges of mutual recognition that effectively established diplomatic relations between the two states.[641] The communiqué also declared Malaysia's decision to close down its Taipei consulate and recognised 'the Government of the [PRC] as the sole government of China, and acknowledge[d] the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the [PRC].[642]

In return, Razak received the 'most satisfying single feature of the discussions' – the assurance from Chou that 'we regard the people of Chinese origin who are your citizens as Malaysians.[643] Paragraph five of the joint communiqué declared that:

> Both the Government of the PRC and the Government of Malaysia...do not recognise dual nationality. Proceeding from this principle, the Chinese

[639] Ibid.

[640] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Sino-Malaysian Relations, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 25 May 1974.

[641] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Malaysia and China: The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, British Embassy, Beijing, 2 July 1974.

[642] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Joint Communique of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia, Beijing, 31 May 1974.

[643] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Razak's Visit to Peking, Southeast Asian Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 June 1974.

Government considers anyone of Chinese origin who has taken up of his own will or acquired Malaysian nationality as automatically forfeiting Chinese nationality. As for those residents who retain Chinese nationality of their own will, the Chinese Government...will enjoin them to abide by the law of the Government of Malaysia, respect the customs and habits of the people there and live in amity with them.[644]

What this meant in real terms was that since the PRC had now unequivocally rejected them, ethnic Chinese Malaysians could no longer divide their loyalties. For his part, Razak was given the welcome of a conquering hero. The Malaysian Press carried headlines such as 'The Tun's Hour'; 'Peking's Historic Visitor'; 'Tun Returns in Triumph; and 'One Step by Malaysia's Prime Minister, One Stride Toward's Malaysia's Goal of a Zone of Peace'.[645] This joint communiqué which was a formal recognition of Malaysia's sovereignty by the PRC was a landmark event which strategically aided the Malaysian government's efforts to contain the CPM insurgency.

Razak failed to obtain any concessions from the Chinese on the VMR station in Hunan, China, but the Chinese did confirm that the CPM insurgency was an 'internal matter'. 'It was up to the Malaysians to deal with it.'[646] The willingness of the Chinese to sacrifice the CPM for closer relations with Malaysia was reflected in paragraph two of the joint communiqué which stated that 'the two Governments consider all foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion to the impressible. They hold that the social system of a country should only be chosen and decided by its own people'.[647] On his return from China, Razak pronounced that 'the establishment of relations with China, and the mutual recognition by the Malaysian and Chinese governments, removed the basis for the terrorists' activities'.[648] Razak's establishment of relations with China ushered in a new era of Sino-ASEAN relations. In an appreciation of the magnitude of change, Sir Eric Norris,

---

[644] FCO 15/1924, Joint Communique of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia.
[645] FCO 15/1924, Razak's Visit to Peking.
[646] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Malaysia and China: The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 2 July 1974.
[647] FCO 15/1924, Joint Communique of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia.
[648] FCO 15/1924, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Malaysia and China: The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations.

British High Commissioner to Malaysia, remarked: 'Times change; I doubt if any of my predecessors would have predicted that a Malaysian Prime Minister would use a film of himself in deep conversation with Chairman Mao in Peking to help win a general election.'[649] In conceding that the CPM insurgency was a Malaysian domestic problem while, at the same time, establishing diplomatic relations with the Malaysian Federation, Mao's regime delegitimized the CPM's central objective: the establishment of a People's Republic in Peninsula Malaysia.

In a display of defiance, the CPM factions responded to Razak's developing entente with China and his calls for surrender by sabotaging the construction of the East-West Highway and assassinating the IGP.[650] Moroever, in spite of the marked decline in the quotation of CPM and VMR statements in official Chinese media, China's moral support for the CPM subsisted through the VMR.[651] The Chinese evidently saw no contradiction between the normalisation of relations with Malaysia's government and fraternal inter-party relations with the CPM. In fact, China claimed the right to party level ties with foreign revolutionary movements conducted through the CCP's International Liaison Department while at the same time, maintaining diplomatic relations with the non-communist Southeast Asian states.[652] It was nonetheless a significant shift from the nadir of the Cultural Revolution some years earlier when the radical turn in Chinese policy that led to open support for pro-Beijing, anti-imperialist, and anti-hegemonist revolutionary movements had so antagonised governments throughout the region.[653] The new orientation in Chinese policy would become clearer still under Mao's successors. In his efforts to combat the Soviet threat, Deng needed the support of the non-communist ASEAN member states more than that of the CPM – which was, by 1975, a divided revolutionary movement with little domestic and international support.

---

[649] FCO 15/2072, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1974.
[650] FCO 15/2074, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Sino-Malaysian Relations January 1973-December 1974.
[651] Ibid.
[652] John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993, 169.
[653] Martin Stuart-Fox, 'Communism and the Cold War' in *China and Southeast Asia Vol VI: The People's Republic of China and Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge, 2009, 24.

As noted earlier, the death of Mao and the new Deng era ushered in an age of pragmatism in Chinese foreign policy towards non-communist states of Southeast Asia. In reality, China's post-Cultural Revolution foreign policy had begun before the deaths of Mao and Chou. When ASEAN was formed in 1967, Beijing denounced it as 'a new anti-China, anti-communist alliance', but on 18 January 1976, Peking Radio praised ASEAN's 'successive victories in their common struggle against hegemonism' – a Chinese term for Soviet expansionism.[654] As early as 1971, POLAD Hibbert observed that:

> Large changes have occurred in Asia during the four years of Far East Command's rundown...Perhaps the most important change has been the hardening of Sino-Soviet rivalry into bitter and probably in the long run irreconcilable hostility. Gradually this hostility is affecting every situation in Asia...we must look forward to a new alignment of forces in Asia and the longer-term fate of Malaysia and Singapore...will largely depend on the way in which this new alignment emerges and the agility with which Malaysia and Singapore and their allies, including Britain, adjust themselves to it.[655]

Certainly, both Malaysia and Singapore benefited at the CPM's expense from the shift in Chinese foreign policy necessitated by the Sino-Soviet split. By 1979 the moderate leadership under Deng Xiaoping had consolidated power.[656] Rather than exporting revolution as a means of legitimising their rule, this new generation of CCP leaders' focus was on economic development and reform as well as countering the Soviet bloc on the international stage – a task which required the engagement of the non-communist ASEAN bloc.

The alignment of a unified Vietnam towards the Soviet camp further pushed China toward disengagement from Pro-Beijing insurgent movements that included the CPM. As the Sino-Vietnamese confrontation deteriorated to the brink of war in November 1978,

---

[654] Golam W. Choudhury, *China in World Affairs: The Foreign Policy of the PRC Since 1970*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982, 241.
[655] FCO 24/1019, Thoughts on the Southeast Asian Scene on the Closure of Far East Command, Diplomatic Report No.491/71.
[656] Bronson Percival, *The Dragon Looks South: China & Southeast Asia in the New Century*, Westport Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2007, 7.

Deng embarked on personal visit to non-communist Southeast Asian to rally support for China.[657] When China invaded Vietnam in February 1979 as a response to Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia, the VMR declared that:

> The action taken by the Chinese army and people in countering the armed incursion of the Vietnamese is in line with the fundamental interests of the people of China and Vietnam as well as those of the people of Southeast Asia and the world. It is a just action. The Malayan people firmly support the Chinese people's just war to defend their frontier region and counter attack the Vietnamese aggressors.[658]

The CPM's unequivocal support for China was not enough to prevent a further downgrading in ties between the CCP and the CPM. In February 1981, Chou's successor, Premier Zhao Ziyang announced in Bangkok that 'CCP relations with Southeast Asian Communist parties were only political and moral, and that China would make efforts to ensure that relations with these parties would not affect our friendship and cooperation with ASEAN countries'.[659] By then, even the moral support was slowly eroded to the point whereby the VMR station was eventually closed at the 'request' of Deng. The VMR station had always presented a very visible thorny issue in Sino-Malaysian and Sino-Singaporean relations. Its closure in 1981 could not be a clearer signal that in Deng's China, revolutionary movements with little promise of success (such as the CPT and CPM) were dispensable politically and morally. The CPM was deadweight that had to be jettisoned in return for ASEAN's support in the UN over the Cambodian issue. In short, as a revolutionary movement making little headway in the jungles of the Thai-Malaysian border, the CPM were ill-placed to bear the full impact that the Sino-Soviet split and great power relations had on Southeast Asia nor had they the necessary bargaining counters that would allow them to negotiate with Beijing from a position of strength.

---

[657] John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, 170.

[658] The Just War in Self-defence (24 February 1979) in Wang and Ong, *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, 209.

[659] John W. Garver, *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, 170.

While the CPM was left to survive on its own devices, Malaysia could depend on its new found entente with China, the commitment of its ANZUK partners to guarantee its security and the improvement in Thai-Malaysian Trans-border cooperation. Despite the commitment to wind-down its military presence in Singapore by 1971, the UK could never have allowed the CPM to menace the existence of its show-case decolonisation project in Southeast Asia. As late as 1978, Malaysia was the third largest recipient of financial assistance under the FCO's military aid schemes.[660] The establishment of the Royal Malaysian Police Special Action Unit in 1975 'brought up to operational readiness with SAS assistance' was another way in which the British government could unobtrusively aid in the COIN effort.[661] Cognisance of the 'over-zealous pursuance of the NEP' did not prevent the British government from taking the position that 'the NEP is the political expression of the economic dissatisfaction of the Malays and as such 'its implementation [was] doubtlessly justified'.[662] In response to occasional concerns of British members of Parliament on detention without trial in Malaysia under the Internal Security (Essential Regulations) Act, the FCO made it clear that such cases were 'entirely a matter for the Malaysian authorities in which the British government had 'no locus standi'.[663] Likewise, the Australians were of the view that notwithstanding the 'tinder lying around' with regards to the communal situation, the consolidation of the moderate Malay government under Hussein Onn in the last months of 1977 served as a 'restraining influence' on Malaysians who wished to disrupt communal relations.[664] By late 1977, the marked improvement in Thai-Malaysian Trans-border cooperation had severely disrupted the CPM's chain of command and inflicted a loss of cohesion within the organisation.[665] It cannot be emphasised enough that the task taking on the CPM core strength in Southern Thailand would have been impossible without close Thai support.

---

[660] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2363, Parliamentary Response of Secretary of State, Goronwy-Roberts, 17 August 1978.

[661] NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, SAS Training Assistance to Malaysia, DS6 Ministry of Defence UK, 21 April 1978.

[662] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2360, Malaysian Chinese Discontent, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 3 May 1978.

[663] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2363, Parliamentary Question by Mr Robert McCrindle MP for Oral Answer on 28 June: Whether the Secretary of State will Visit Malaysia, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , Southeast Asia Department, 20 June 1978.

[664] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2359, Malaysia: Internal Political Developments, Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 1977.

[665] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2359, Monthly Security Round-up – December 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia, 13 January 1978.

The Comprehensive Security Response to Revolutionary Violence

Since independence, central Malaysian governments of various administrations operated on the rule that security cannot be defined without development. The various five-year Plans sought to promote internal political and social stability by introducing measures that increase and sustain economic growth thereby reducing poverty and income disparities. From the Malaysian perspective, development was even more important than military defence. To the Malaysian leadership, the most likely security threats were from within rather than without. Therefore in order to guarantee political stability and counter internal and communal instability, socio-economic development was to take precedence over all else including external defence. In operational terms, KESBAN was designed to remove the perceived root causes of insurgency and thereby isolate the insurgents. One key factor in KESBAN's ultimate success was the military's ability to work within a framework of governmental operations alongside the Police and other civilian institutions. Operational decisions were made at an inter-agency level based on holistic approaches rather than a singularly military solution to the insurgency problem. Indeed, the MAF's acceptance of KESBAN aptly illustrates the military's development as a national institution within Malaysian society. The conceptual framework of KESBAN however rests on the experience and lessons from a colonial COIN campaign that gave the post-colonial state much of its meaning and character. This conceptual framework enabled post-colonial Malaysia to both defeat the CPM insurgency and create a nation-state connected by institutions, infrastructure, national projects and communities borne out off the Second Emergency.

Unfortunately, these vast development projects encouraged corruption, which soon became clear at the state level - particularly in Perak. Nonetheless, by 1977, despite the corruption on the part of the Perak State government and its Mentri Besar which included large graft payments in return of logging concessions that 'would normally be opposed by the military for security reasons', the security forces had largely succeeded in separating the CPM 5th AU from the masses in Perak.[666] Moreover, this success had been achieved in an operational environment whereby the booby trap remained the 'queen of the battlefield'.

---

[666] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977.

Indeed as late as 1979, the prevalent fear of the booby trap and the reluctance of the security forces to aggressively engage the CPM insurgents meant that more often than not, operations were still preceded by artillery and air strikes to 'soften up' the insurgents and booby traps.[667] Why and how then did the Malaysian COIN effort succeed in face of evident corruption at the state level and in an operational environment in which the security forces seemed to be reverting back to the Americanised big guns approach?

A partial explanation for the apparent success of the security forces was the improvement in the PFF-MAF relationship which enabled a sharing of operational and training expertise and in the field assistance.[668] As explained in chapters three and five, the construction of the East-West Highway and Temenggor Dam were regarded as a direct threat to not only the CPM's presence in Malaysia but also its secure base areas in Southern Thailand.[669] The projects were designed bring development to the Northern Peninsula Malaysia as well as physically cut off the CPM's infiltration routes. Nonetheless, it soon became apparent to most expatriate experts working on the East-West Highway that 'the main purpose of the road was strategic' rather than of economic importance.[670] Indeed, by December 1977, the physical barriers posed by the rapidly filling Temenggor Dam and the East-West Highway coupled with the disruption of the party's chain of command had led the CPM to look to survival and resurrecting its severed links with the masses.[671]

The combination of these new infrastructure projects and sustained security force pressure compelled the various groups to change locations which in turn 'provoked territorial disputes as the old de-facto boundaries between the various factions [were] violated'.[672] By 1979, the strategic balance on the Thai-Malaysian border region was best explained in the following terms:

The war [remained] under control but the [insurgents'] inability to extend their operations further south than West Pahang and North Selangor or to convert an

[667] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.
[668] DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977.
[669] FCO 15/2071, Security Situation.
[670] FCO 15/2071, Perak.
[671] FCO 15/2359, Monthly Security Round-up – December 1977.
[672] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.

appreciable number of Malays to their cause (a pre-requisite to ultimate success) [was] matched by the inability of the Security Forces to finish the job.[673]

In short, the primary cause of both the CPM's failure and the successful Malaysian COIN effort lay in the CPM's inability to win over the rural Malays in the border area. In tandem with this, the federal development projects intended to improve the living standards of the rural Malays had communalised the rural Malay community to such an extent that it had become largely immune to the CPM's efforts at revolutionising the thoughts and actions of the rural Malays.

By early 1979, on both sides of the Thai-Malaysian border border, the CPM insurgents were driven into the deep jungle where their 'present tactics [were] to conserve strength and discourage the security forces, particularly by use of booby-traps to which an effective answer [had] yet to be found'.[674] By then, all six CPM assault units active in Peninsula Malaysia were reduced to the existential task of ensuring their presence and survival. Even in a situation whereby the hard-core CPM insurgents held the upper hand in tactical engagements, it was the state that held the strategic initiative. Indeed, such was the confidence of the security forces in securing victory through the long-term attrition of the CPM that the MAF's planned expansion programme in 1979 called for the doubling in size of supporting services such as artillery and engineers, the establishment of schools of armour and artillery and a Conventional Warfare Centre and the creation of a tank regiment by July 1983 – a clear shift in emphasis towards building conventional rather than COIN capabilities.[675] By the twentieth year of the CPM's revived insurgency, the MAF had yet to come up with an effective tactical solution to the CPM booby-trap problem. Yet, the large scale federal and state development projects under the KESBAN scheme in Northern Peninsula Malaysia turned the strategic initiative firmly in the Malaysian government's favour.

---

[673] Ibid.
[674] NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence in Malaysia, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 March 1979.
[675] FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979.

In the long run, the role of the security forces in protecting the KESBAN projects proved to be more effective than the locate, cordon, bomb and hope to catch the survivors on their way out' operations or any sort of limited military action that did little to influence the strategic picture. Indeed, by the time of KESBAN's formal introduction in 1980, the role of the Malaysian security forces was largely to create a secure environment through which the development projects in the country could be carried out without any interference.[676] Similar to the resettlement of the rural Chinese in the first Emergency, the extensive relocation of Malay rural communities as part of the KESBAN development was designed to create a hurdle for communications between the CPM and any potential supporters.[677] Despite their inability to press home militarily into the CPM jungle strongholds, the security umbrella provided by the security forces allowed the Malaysian Federal government to build up sufficient socio-economic progress in the northern Border States to win over the rural Malays.

The security forces ensured the safe and successful implementation of the KESBAN development projects and protected its economic, social and political returns. Indeed, KESBAN development in those areas was a significant contributory factor in the loyalty of the rural Malays to the ruling National Front coalition.[678] Moreover, the encirclement of the New Villages with various development programmes and the extensive relocation of the rural population under the protection of the security services effectively cut off the CPM from its supporters and the masses. In short, the economic revitalisation of the border areas made possible under the protection of the security services brought employment, an improved standard of living and more importantly support for the government's cause into a hitherto 'black' region. In the eyes of the rural Malays, the KESBAN scheme demonstrated the ability of the Federal government to ensure their physical and socio-economic security. Under the protection of the Malaysian security forces, the implementation of the KESBAN projects led to a near complete eradication of the CPM threat by the early 1980s. In short, it mattered little that the security forces failed to clear the remnants of the jungle-hardened hard-core cadres that remained. It also

---

[676] Restricted Report on the KESBAN Doctrine, 5.

[677] Mohd Zakaria Yadi, *Malaysian Emergencies-Anthropological Factors in the Success of Malaysia's Counterinsurgency*, Master's thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2004, 18.

[678] Ibid.

mattered little that priority was given to the socio-economic development of the Malays over that of the other ethnic communities. So long as the rural Malays viewed the National Front as the more credible alternative, there was little that the CPM could do to turn the strategic tide.

Building a Winning State

This chapter has suggested that the rural Malay population was the centre of gravity in the Second Emergency. With the rural Malays won over and safely secured, tactical engagement with the CPM in the jungle became a sideshow that the MAF had to contain but need not win. We might reprise here the interconnected COIN quadrant discussed in Chapter two: the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda. The state's performance within this interconnected quadrant ultimately dictates the success or failure in countering revolutionary war, simply because it is through them that the power of the word and deed is most keenly felt by the population and the revolutionary. The *sine qua non* to any such strategy is the ability of the state to secure the key population group. In the Second Chapter, it was established that the American preference for overwhelming force devoid of any real understanding of local conditions was a poor substitute for a less destructive approach that sought to win over or secure the rural Vietnamese population. Conversely, the ability of the British colonial authorities to control and convince the rural Chinese in colonial Malaya consigned the then MCP to an exiled existence in Southern Thailand and China. Similarly, the post-colonial Malaysian government understood that the winning the confidence of the rural Malays in the northern Border states was the principal strategic task before it.

In the utility of military force, the Malaysian security forces (particularly the MAF) largely preferred the Americanised 'locate, cordon, bomb' approach in response to the tactical problem of booby traps. That was a significant departure from the small-unit approach adopted by the British security forces in the later part of the Emergency. Reliance on its military sledgehammer approach was fatal to the prospects of American success in Vietnam but did not strategically set back the Malaysian COIN effort in the

same way. The fact that most of the large-scale 'locate, cordon, bomb' operations were conducted in Thai rather than Malaysian territory meant that little collateral damage was inflicted on the rural communities in Peninsula Malaysia. The need to engage large numbers of communist armed elements within Peninsula Malaysia was a concern for the British authorities during the First Emergency that did not exist in the Second Emergency. As such, the role of military force during the Second Emergency was best suited to contain CPM violence and secure the population within Malaysian territory. A military solution at the strategic level was only plausible with the cooperation of the Thais whose lack of resources in the Southern provinces made any hopes of sustain military operations an unrealistic option.

In theory, the committee system that extended from national to district level pioneered in the First Emergency was the template of civil-military cooperation in the Second Emergency. In practice however, service rivalries between the MAF and the police exacerbated by the running down of MSB led to a scenario whereby each security agency was very much doing its own thing. The situation was somewhat remedied from 1974 onwards with an improvement in service conditions and equipment of the police units and MSB. As such, police units at the forefront of the COIN effort particularly the PFF were accorded better recognition rather than treated as poorer cousins of the MAF. Even though the MAF's Royal Malay Regiments were still treated as the premier units of the security forces regardless of their COIN abilities, the expansion and improvement in the quality of the PFF units did result in a more efficient PFF that was able to secure the rural areas and communities in the rural North of Peninsula Malaysia. The Federal government was cognisant of the importance of police or paramilitary capabilities in COIN operations and concrete steps were taken to foster greater civil-military cooperation. Even an incremental improvement in civil-military cooperation from 1977 was sufficiently rendered into better protection of the KESBAN development projects that were key to winning the confidence of the rural Malays.

On the oft-emphasised issue of population security, the ability of both the British administration to secure the rural Chinese and of the Malaysian federal government to secure the rural Malays decisively turned the tide of the COIN

207

campaign in the authorities' favour. In contrast, the failure of the American-led COIN effort to secure the rural population in the Vietnamese countryside precipitated the denouement of the American presence in Indochina. In all three COIN campaigns, the centre of gravity was embedded in their respective key rural communities: the rural Chinese for the British, the rural Vietnamese for the Americans and the rural Malays for the Malaysians. In the case of Singapore, the astronomic economic growth achieved under the PAP government which translated into socio-economic mobility for the population at large enabled the state to secure the urban working-class. In both Malaysia and Singapore, there were instances whereby colonial legacies such as the ISA continued to be used as instruments of population control. The Malaysian development as security model was essentially derived from the colonial template albeit with a different emphasis on priorities. The precedence on uplifting the rural Malays was a necessity in the Second Emergency as both the state and the insurgent recognised that winning the hearts and minds of the rural Malays was the key battle in securing Peninsula Malaysia.

The CPM relied on the Maoist 'thought determines action' approach to revolutionise the actions of its target audience. Nonetheless as the insurgency wore on, the CPM increasingly failed to galvanise the thoughts and actions of the population that mattered most – the rural Malays. Strategic propaganda broadcasts on the compatibility of communism with Islam and alleged cases of corruption by the Malay elite via the VMR were insufficient on their own to win over the majority of the rural Malays. According to the tenets of Maoist mass persuasion, face to face communication and maximum possible interaction with the masses was the main tool of revolutionary psywar. The crippling of the CPM underground in Peninsula Malaysia from 1975 onwards however prevented the CPM from carrying out mass work and cultivating the sustained contact required to win over the rural and urban masses. In view of the CPM's inability to sufficiently interact with the masses, even the lacklustre counter-propaganda efforts of the Malaysian government which were inclined to blame just about every major communal and social problem including the May 13 1969 Riots and 1974 student unrest on the CPM had little adverse impact on the overall COIN effort.

Both the Malaysian and Singapore governments were concerned about the subversive effects of the VMR broadcasts emanating from Chinese soil. In the longer term, however, the VMR failed to persuade the Malaysian and Singaporean masses on the credibility of the CPM's cause. In both word and deed, the CPM did not convince the rural Malays in Malaysians and urban working class in Singapore that the revolutionary alternative was better than the models of development offered by both respective states. Moreover, the CPM was also unable to win over its traditional audience, the rural and working-class Chinese in Peninsula Malaysia. As noted earlier, increase in non-political urban violence and gangsterism among the poorer Chinese and a higher emigration rate among the qualified middle class were the preferred displays of dissatisfaction with the pro-Malay policies of the Malaysian government. Further credibility on the local and international stage was lost when the PRC officially recognised Malaysia and no longer referred to the Malay Peninsula as Malaya. The CPM doggedly maintained and preached Maoist revolution at a time when the PRC was already shedding its revolutionary zeal. Simply put, the CPM's revolutionary agenda dictated by a leadership exiled in Beijing was rapidly out of touch with political and socio-economic conditions at the local, regional and international level.

Conclusion

The signing of the Haadyai Peace Accords in 1989 marked a tacit recognition by the remnants of the CPM's party faithful that rural insurgency no longer held any realistic prospects of success in Peninsula Malaysia. While this may be said with some confidence, these concluding remarks acknowledge that the dearth of primary source material for the 1981 to 89 period of the Second Emergency still presents a significant knowledge gap that can only be filled when further archival releases take place. It is difficult to be sure when this will occur. The Second Emergency remains a 'live' episode of contemporary history in Malaysia and Singapore that tends to be cherry-picked for local political lessons rather than comprehensively examined as a case study in post-colonial COIN practice. As was stated at the very start of this thesis, the asymmetry in the availability of open-access primary sources poses a significant barrier to an extensive study of the Second Emergency as a COIN campaign. So the preceding chapters have set about the task with an explicit acknowledgement of the asymmetric condition in sources – particular those that present the perspective of the CPM and its CCP sponsors.

Nonetheless, as I hope has been proven, there is sufficient empirical evidence to establish the meta-argument that, with the political wind – regional and international - taken out of its sails by 1974, the CPM stood little chance of establishing a People's Republic. For all that, the Malaysian government could never have resolved the prickly cross-border insurgency by unilateral or military means alone. An independent post-colonial Malaysia won the final argument by convincing all actors concerned that it made no sense to continue any investment in the CPM, an insurgent movement whose local, regional and international support had dwindled to insignificance. It was the force of this political argument that explains why and how the Malaysian state was able to secure a long-term strategic victory despite its lack of tactical and operational success in the jungles of Southern Thailand. Victory rested, not on battlefield success, but on winning the confidence of the key local population (the rural Malays), the main regional player (Thailand), and the CPM's erstwhile pivotal external backer (Communist China). And this achievement was set within the interconnected COIN quadrant identified at the beginning

of the thesis as follows: the utility of military force, civil-military relations, population security, and propaganda.

For much of the Second Emergency, both the CPM and the Malaysian government viewed military coercion as the primary tool of engagement with the other. Yet this emphasis on armed confrontation highlights a central irony of the Second Emergency, namely, the complete absence of a decisive military action or of any instance in which kinetic military force had a significant impact on events. Nonetheless, both sides persisted in the use of military force as the key option to victory. The lack of direct high-level contacts between the Malaysian government and the CPM until the 1980s certainly did little to change perceptions of both sides of the conflict. The CPM's lack of dialogue with the Malaysian political establishment meant that constitutional channels of conflict resolution were closed to the Party. Under the initiative of Kitti Ratanachaya, Deputy Commander of the Thai Fifth Infantry Division (later Commander of Fourth Army Region), surreptitious initial contacts and subsequent, more formal talks between the operational, military and political leaders were gradually pursued.[679] Meanwhile, by the early 1980s, the CPM leadership tacitly acknowledged that the armed struggle had failed. Taking advantage of this new window of opportunity, the Thais were instrumental in facilitating the resultant dialogue between the CPM and the Malaysian government that culminated in the signing of the Haadyai Peace Accords. With the assistance of their Thai military counterparts, a joint approach allowed the Malaysian security forces to maintain attritional pressure on the CPM and, at the same time, open a channel of negotiation for the CPM. Locally, Thai assistance at the political level and the comprehensive approach were the key enablers in winning over the local population which in turn guaranteed strategic success for the Malaysian government.

Throughout much of the Second Emergency, the Malaysian security forces, the army above all, were compelled to adopt the American-style 'locate, cordon, bomb' strategy in recognition of the CPM's superiority in jungle fighting techniques and the other seemingly insurmountable tactical problem of booby traps. Yet this more heavy-

---

[679] Interview with General Kitti Ratanachaya, Deputy Commander of the Thai Fifth Infantry Division (later Commander of Fourth Army Region).

handed military approach failed to decisively defeat the CPM militarily. The chill in Thai-Malaysian relations from 1972 to 76 further prevented the Malaysian security forces from effectively pursuing the CPM in its jungle safe havens in Southern Thailand. The warming of Thai-Malaysian relations in 1976 facilitated an improvement in joint cross-border cooperation both quantitatively and qualitatively. Admission by Bangkok Prime Minister Tanin Kraivixien's administration in 1976 that the CPM constituted a Thai, as well as a Malaysian, security problem ushered in an era of closer bilateral cooperation between the two neighbouring states that included the hitherto unheard of practice of allowing MAF rather than PFF units into Thai territory. Joint Thai-Malaysian operations against the CPM became more sustained and exerted an attritional effect on the CPM forces. MAF troops made up for the lack of military resources from the Thai side, but the lack of staying power of the Thai-Malaysian troops meant that no realistic military solution was possible under such conditions. The message was clear, however: the Thai government had turned away decisively from its predecessors' previous 'live and let live' *modus operandi* when it came to its relationship with the CPM in Southern Thailand.

The resource shortfalls that prohibited the Thais from maintaining a sustained and dense military presence in Southern Thailand meant that the CPM could always return to its jungle havens in the absence of Thai security forces. What added to the already tenuous situation was that, despite the improvement in bilateral relations, any permanent or extended basing of MAF units in Thai territory remained politically unfeasible for the Thai government. As a result of these restrictions, what joint Thai-Malaysian military ventures there were remained too tightly constrained to engage the CPM forces decisively. Hence, the strategic options left open to the Malaysian security forces were more limited. As we have seen, they might be summarised thus: effective containment of CPM violence; the prevention of further infiltration of CPM armed units; and the delivery of real security to outlying populations in Malaysian territory. In the long term, the assistance that really mattered was not Thai boots on the ground, but the channel of communication facilitated by the Thais that allowed for a negotiated end to the shooting war. If, by the early 1980s, the CPM stood little realistic chance of military victory, similarly, the Malaysian security forces lacked both the capacity and the political leverage

to cross the border and destroy the CPM's safe havens in Southern Thailand. In short, the Malaysian security forces could not defeat the CPM militarily. The point should not be taken too far, for, arguably, the lack of decisive battlefield success did not matter because securing the population was the only absolute requirement.

Seen in this light, the principal achievement of the Malaysian security forces during the Second Emergency lay in ensuring the safe and successful implementation of the KESBAN development projects and safeguarding their economic, social and political returns thereafter. KESBAN development in the Northern Malaysian states that brought employment, increased incomes and improved standards of living into the rural Malay communities was pivotal in guaranteeing the loyalty of the rural Malays to the ruling National Front coalition government. Lined to this, a further security force achievement, largely attributable to the MSB, was to secure the allegiance of the Malaysian Chinese population. Resettlement of the rural Chinese squatters into New Villages during the First Emergency and the concentration of much of the Chinese Community in the major urban areas of Malaysia made the task of securing, controlling and monitoring the Malaysian Chinese population during the Second Emergency a much easier task. Despite the running down of the MSB's Chinese expertise in the 1960s, the CPM failed to exploit the intelligence gaps to penetrate deeper into the urban areas. To make matters worse, the internal party slit led to an upsurge of urban violence from 1974 that severely depleted the ranks of the CPM underground and devastated its clandestine network. It proved a costly strategic mistake, one that severely weakened whatever hold the CPM had on the urban population.

At a time when CPM was weakened by internal strife, efforts to improve cooperation and coordination between the MAF, MSB, police and other civil federal agencies were bearing fruit. Even though the MAF's Royal Malay Regiments were still treated as the premier units of the security forces, the expansion and improvement in the quality of the PFF units did result in a more efficient PFF that was able to secure the rural interior of Northern Peninsula Malaysia. Even an incremental improvement in civil-military cooperation from 1977 yielded tangible results in better protection of the KESBAN development projects that, as mentioned above, were key to winning the

213

confidence of the rural Malays. The Chinese population on the other hand could be effectively policed based on effective MSB intelligence and internal policing action without the substantial involvement of military forces.

At this point, it is useful to reprise Karl Hack's notion of 'screwing down the people'. Hack's argument that the British essentially won the First Emergency by a coercive method of population control targeting the rural Chinese is perhaps more appropriate to the Second Emergency. The imperative of a hearts and minds approach in the First Emergency was more pressing than that in the Second Emergency as the British colonial authorities had to convince the highly dispersed rural Chinese of the viability of the New Villages and of 'managed decolonisation' more generally. On the other hand, in the aftermath of the May 13 1969 Riots, the rural Malays, and not the rural Chinese, were the key population to be won over in the building of a Malay-led Malaysia. There was no pressing need to win the hearts and minds of the Malaysian Chinese in the New Villages and urban areas when potential CPM supporters could be effectively kept in check by police action. In the slightly different socio-demographic conditions of the Second Emergency, it was enough to convince any potential Malaysian Chinese CPM supporter of the futility of the CPM cause without the need for an extensive hearts and minds campaign reminiscent of the First Emergency.

That is not to say that the Malaysian government deliberately ignored the needs of the Malaysian Chinese population. In recognition of the potential threat posed by the CPM to the inhabitants of the New Villages, schemes were implemented to advance the socio-economic development of particular New Villages that were prone to CPM influence. The priority in socio-economic development, however, was still accorded to the rural Malays for reasons of national unity and national security. As the Second Emergency wore on, the CPM increasingly failed to revolutionise this key section of the Malaysian population. CPM propaganda which stressed the compatibility of communism with Islam while highlighting alleged cases of corruption among the Malay elite at the expense of their rural brethren via were insufficient on their own to win over the majority of the rural Malays. In view of the CPM's inability to interact with the masses due to its crippled underground capabilities, even the lacklustre counter-propaganda

214

efforts of the Malaysian government, which were inclined to blame just about every major communal and social problem, including the May 13 1969 Riots and 1974 student unrest, on the CPM, had little adverse impact on the overall COIN effort. Unlike the British-led COIN effort in the First Emergency, there was little need to coax CPM cadres out of the jungle since the overwhelming majority of them were in the jungle havens across the border. Moreover, the population both urban and rural were effectively secured by police action. Hence, the absence of an effective propaganda apparatus did little damage to the state's prospects of success.

In stark contrast, the CPM had to win the confidence the rural Malays in the border areas if it was to succeed in its revolution. The CPM also made little headway in winning over the Malaysian Chinese. As noted in chapter six, rather than take to the jungle with the CPM, dissatisfaction with government policies registered in non-political urban violence and gangsterism among the poorer Chinese and a higher emigration rate among the qualified middle class. In the case of Singapore, the CPM's revolutionary message was largely drowned in the heady euphoria of double digit economic growth. To be sure, there were sympathisers, but these were largely leftist intellectuals rather than the hardened revolutionaries that the CPM was hoping to recruit. In sum, the CPM had little success in winning over any particular demographic group in the Malay Peninsula. Malaysian Chinese disenchanted by the pro-Malay policies of the federal government theoretically presented the CPM with the best hopes, but even in their eyes, the CPM was seen as an unlikely winner or a credible alternative.

The Second Emergency tilted in favour of the Malaysian state not so much as a result the security forces' prowess but because the CPM could not win over key sections of the Malaysian population. Similarly in the island city state of Singapore, the CPM never devised an effective riposte to the PAP's programme of rapid economic growth and fast-rising living standards. In a political climate where the majority of the Singaporean electorate were prepared to allow a diminution of personal freedoms for the greater sake of national security and cohesion, the CPM's revolutionary message had limited appeal. With the exception of its jungle havens in Southern Thailand, the CPM failed to sink its roots in any significant population centre or group. Any tentative footholds

built by the CPM underground were destroyed by its predilection for ill-conceived revolutionary violence which was heavily influenced by the internal party split. Despite its internecine struggles, the CPM often carried the day in tactical engagements with the Malaysian security forces, but these sideshows did little to win the big battle that mattered – winning over the confidence of the rural Malays. CPM inability to secure the popular allegiance of any significant social or ethnic group was exacerbated by its loss of confidence at the international level.

The available empirical evidence suggests that, as early as 1972, the PRC was taking tentative steps towards the establishment of diplomatic ties with non-communist Southeast Asia. In 1974, the international legitimacy of the CPM's cause was dealt a severe blow when the Zhou Enlai conceded the point that the CPM was an internal problem for Malaysia. China under Deng was pragmatic in its readiness to forsake a failing revolutionary movement with scant local or international legitimacy in return for ASEAN votes at the United Nations. Despite its unwavering pro-Beijing stance, as exemplified in the CPM's VMR propaganda, Deng realised that China would benefit more from closing down of the VMR station at Lee Kuan Yew's request than standing by a protégé without realistic prospect of success. In the long term, the CCP's fraternal relationship with the CPM was more of an embarrassment rather than an aid to Chinese foreign policy. Deng's vision of China was far more effectively advanced by harnessing the international influence and potential foreign investment represented in Lee Kuan Yew. Chin Peng's promised revolution offered nothing comparable. Unlike its immediate counterpart in Vietnam, the CPM failed to elicit any substantial Sino-Soviet material support or lobbying assistance on the international stage. Moreover, unlike the Vietnamese insurgents, the CPM failed to win control of the villages in the countryside. Furthermore, the CPM's underground infrastructure in the cities was too weakly rooted to form the basis for a protracted urban insurrection. With little local and international support, the CPM's revolution failed to make any significant progress beyond its safe havens in Southern Thailand.

In the final analysis, while the CPM bettered the Malaysian security forces militarily at the tactical level, at the strategic level, the security forces managed to string a defensive cordon around the northern border states. This, in turn, allowed KESBAN

development to succeed. The Malaysian security forces did not have to defeat the CPM in battle as long as the rural population in the North was sufficiently shielded from CPM violence. Conversely, for all its jungle-fighting prowess, the CPM never possessed the critical mass of popular support to bleed the security forces into capitulation. Moreover, its attempts to sabotage KESBAN development proved counter-productive, retarding its efforts to win over the rural Malays – the main local centre of gravity in the Second Emergency. CPM failure to penetrate and control the four northern largely rural and mainly Malay states of Kelantan, Trenggannu, Kedah and Perlis rendered the CPM's plans for a southward advance by 1975 unachievable. Despite allegations of widespread corruption, the immense socio-economic improvements brought by KESBAN development and the moderately pro-Malay policies of the UMNO-led coalition won the minds if not hearts of the rural Malays. Securing the rural Malay population and winning their confidence was the key battle that the CPM had to win. It failed to do so.

The Second Emergency was a contemporary of the Vietnam War in its international, regional and operational context. Both conflicts were a reflection of the Cold War dynamics in Southeast Asia – particularly Sino-American foreign policies in the region. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the empirical evidence suggested a cross-fertilisation of operational and tactical methods between the insurgents and counterinsurgents. Why then has the Second Emergency remained a footnote whilst the Vietnam War became so entrenched in the COIN metanarrative – even in Southeast Asia? As hinted in the preceding paragraphs, the lack of access to indigenous primary source material including government archives posses an impediment to further research on the conflict. Another possible explanation can be found in the scale of the conflict. The scarcity of resources available to the Malaysian government meant that even at the peak of the CPM insurgency, only a single division of the Malaysian Army could be deployed in the COIN role in Peninsula Malaysia. Conversely, a single U.S. Army infantry battalion in Vietnam had at its disposal more indirect fire support and air support than the entire Malaysian Army. The 'smallness' of the Second Emergency (when compared to the magnitude of the Vietnam War) however does not hide the potential lessons that can be drawn from the Second Emergency for future consideration – particularly the evolution of a population-centric comprehensive approach.

217

On the other hand, 'big' as exemplified by the U.S. Army in Vietnam is not always beautiful – especially when the key objective is winning over the population.

In Vietnam, heavy collateral damage from the 'big guns' approach resulted in the loss of American credibility as protectors of the Vietnamese villagers. With a rural population resentful and disgruntled at the wanton destruction of their lives, livelihoods and property, the Vietcong had no lack of recruits to fill its ranks while American efforts at pacification were critically hampered. The overwhelming display of force by the U.S. Armed Forces also had a negative impact on domestic opinion. According to Ivan Arreguin-Toft's 'strategic interaction' theory, when actors employ opposite strategic approaches (direct-indirect or indirect-direct), the weaker actor is more likely to win 'even when everything we think we know about power says they shouldn't'.[680] Andrew Mack describes the Vietnam War as a conflict fought on two fronts, 'one bloody and indecisive in the forests and mountains of Indochina, the other essentially non-violent but ultimately more decisive within the polity and social institutions of the United States'. Mack further argues that the obvious asymmetry in American conventional military power often meant that the morality of the war is more easily questioned.[681] Highlighting the 'distance between the position of the state and that of the liberal forces (that give meaning to the term society) concerning the legitimacy of the demand for sacrifice and for brutal conduct', or 'normative difference', Gil Merom concluded that:

> Events in Vietnam … destroyed the credibility of the Vietnam
> policy … while Nixon's combined policies bought him time and some
> freedom of maneuver, they could not eliminate the anti-war sentiment
> and the protest potential, or change the ultimate outcome of the
> war … In the end, in spite of significant battlefield successes, all the Americans

---

[680] Ivan Arreguin-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 18.
[681] Andrew Mack, 'Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict', *World Politics*, 27 (January 1975), 181–82, pp. 177–186.

achieved was to buy their South Vietnamese allies a few more years of political independence.[682]

America's strictly military approach to counter a People's War in Vietnam saw many a tactical victory in numerous engagements with the NVA and Vietcong on the battlefield. However, the sheer brutality associated with American military action alienated much of domestic polity and public opinion. Drawing on the lessons of Vietnam, David Petraeus drills home the point that public support is the 'Essential Domino', and the Vietnam War showed the military that there are finite limits to how long the American public will support a protracted conflict.[683] On the futility of the big war paradigm, Edward Luttwak mused that '450 American soldiers could have been carrying flutes instead of manning howitzers, and if they had just played their flutes, it would have had exactly the same effect on the outcome of the war'.[684] By ignoring the public opinion factor and the crucial importance of an integrated civil-military approach to what was essentially a political rather than a conventional military task, what the American military establishment obtained in the end, were pyrrhic tactical victories that led to no strategic solution.

In contrast to the integrated civil-military infrastructure that the British instituted in the First Emergency and later by Malaysia in the Second Emergency, Westmoreland and many of the senior commanders in the U.S. Army saw no need for such an equivalent and conducted the Vietnam War as a 'purely military-army-business'. According to Robert Komer, the over-militarisation of the war 'led to the tail wagging the dog, with everything else required to conform'.[685] Nonetheless, an aberration from the 'search and destroy' strategy of the army was to be found in the 'Balkanised' environment of the Vietnam War. Marine Generals such as Krulak and Greene charged that rather than addressing the fundamental needs of the Vietnamese people—security and political stability—MACV strategy was 'needlessly bleeding

[682] Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars, State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 232–235.
[683] David Petraeus, *The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era*, Ph.D. thesis, Princeton, 1987, p. 104.
[684] Edward N. Luttwak, 'The Impact of Vietnam on Strategic Thinking' in Patrick J. Hearden (ed.), *Vietnam: Four American Perspectives*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1990, p. 64.
[685] Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980, p. 82.

American forces by engaging the enemy in big-unit encounters while the VC infrastructure remained virtually untouched'.[686]

With Kruluk's firm backing, Major General Lewis Walt was able to conduct an independent campaign of pacification in the I Corps area of operations in the northernmost region of South Vietnam. Walt created a coordinating council of regional civilian agency heads and Combined Action Platoons (CAP), which integrated marine rifle squads with the South Vietnamese Regional Forces platoons. Living in the villages among the rural population, the CAP units were able to focus their efforts on pacification while regular USMC units conducted platoon-sized patrols and civic action programmes. In the planning rooms of Washington, Greene and Krulak fought in vain against the entrenched big war paradigm. Despite the encouraging results of CAP in I Corps, Westmoreland was loathed to introduce the CAP concept to the Army's area of operations. The pure military approach as advocated by Westmoreland was to continue in MACV administered sectors until 1968, when a belated effort was made to revitalise and inject some synergy into the pacification programme in South Vietnam.

The last and final shake-up of the pacification programme in 1967 resulted in an acrimonious dispute between the military and civilian bureaucracies in Washington and South Vietnam. The main issue of contention was 'whether pacification should be considered primarily a political or a military problem, a matter of social development or of national security'.[687] Over the years, based on findings that the 'division was a purely military instrument and could not adequately control the integrated civilian-military effort that was needed at the province level', various study groups such as the Roles and Missions Study Group advocated removing the ARVN Divisions from the chain of command on Pacification. Westmoreland, however, did not concur with the recommendations and argued that if carried out, 'the Corps span of control would be too large for effective direction', and the notion, was therefore 'illogical'.[688] When

[686] Robert Buzzanco, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 230.
[687] William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996, p. 272.
[688] *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision Making in Vietnam*, The Senator Gravel Edition, Vol. 2, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, p. 620.

the dust eventually settled, it was the military view that prevailed. In the final attempt at integrated civil-military pacification, the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) programme headed by the ebullient Ambassador Robert Komer was set up, albeit under the jurisdiction of MACV.

Under CORDS, American military forces, as well as those of her allies engaged in an extensive civic action programme, intended to assist the populace in the vicinity of their base areas. Troops were involved in the distribution of food, clothing, building materials and fertilizer, in the construction and repair of bridges, the building of schools and medical clinics, and the provision of medical examinations and immunisations. However, these efforts could do little as long as the status quo at the higher level remained unchanged. Just as firepower and technology came to be the substitutes for an effective military strategy, utilising the financial resources of the world's largest capitalist economy was the dominant approach in the civil affairs arena. Indeed U.S. policy in Vietnam as a whole failed to realise the fundamental importance of the social and psychological factors in pacification, particularly the need for effective population security measures that would separate the insurgent from the population as well as prove to the people that the government was committed to their safety and well-being. In other words, the incoherent application of immense material resources to win over a population which the government little understands does not automatically lead to strategic success.

On the other hand, as a smaller case study in post-colonial insurgency/COIN, the Second Emergency presents three main conclusions and considerations for further deliberation. The primacy of population control and how the development of a population-centric comprehensive approach can deliver strategic victory has been emphasised throughout this thesis. We have seen how the federal Malaysian government and, to a lesser extent, the city state of Singapore were able to achieve this by state-building, extending the arms of the state and its institutions throughout hitherto impenetrable sovereign territory. Conversely, rather than extend its parallel underground infrastructure like the Vietcong, the CPM sowed the seeds of its own demise by destroying its precious underground cells in open competition with the CPMRF and CPMML.

221

Thus the first main conclusion is this - emergent nation-states plagued by insurgency benefit from attaching higher priority to contested population groups and extending the reach of state institutions and agencies into the regions where such communities are concentrated. The British colonial authorities were able to build a successful counterinsurgent state in the First Emergency that had its footprints firmly planted right down to the district and village levels – particularly in the highly contested black areas. Upon independence, what the British bequeathed to the post-colonial Malaysian government was not a failed state unsure of its survival, but a polity with an efficient civil service, well developed physical infrastructure and vibrant export-orientated economy. To be sure, there were lingering pockets of potential sympathisers which the insurgents could exploit. Much of the population-centric apparatus from the First Emergency however remained. The Malaysian government was able to adapt its population-centric inheritance to the needs of the Second Emergency albeit in a slightly different manner. The principle governing the overall strategy nonetheless remained the same – identifying, controlling and winning over of key population groups with a targeted approach that is in touch with the psyche and social characteristics of the particular group.

The second consideration is related to the first - no population can be effectively secured in a cross-border insurgency without effective assistance from its immediate neighbours. It would be ahistorical to refer to this particular experience as a template of success for other post-colonial COIN efforts, but the breeding grounds of insurgencies have traditionally been in regions with a conspicuous absence of state authority – in this case the badlands of Southern Thailand. As we have seen, the fact that the Thais no longer tolerated the CPM as a state within a state and chose instead to cooperate with Malaysia in their COIN efforts was a key determinant that turned the strategic tide in Malaysia's favour. In the case of Vietnam, the porous nature of the Cambodian-Vietnamese border allowed the Vietcong to set up an intricate network of infiltration routes that the American forces failed to interdict from both land and air. The Thai-Malaysian security forces were never able to completely cut off all of the CPM's infiltration routes or uproot the most impenetrable CPM safe havens, but the joint pressure certainly attrited CPM strength. Indeed, by the late 1970s, the CPM was weakened to the point of fighting for survival rather than advancing its armed struggle southward. The CPM's inability to mount any concerted southward

advance allowed the Malaysian government to secure the population in the Northern States and thus the whole of Peninsular Malaysia. It is difficult to conceive how Malaysia could have succeeded without Thai assistance and a more secure border. Had the Thais persisted with a 'live and let live' policy, the Second Emergency might have persisted well beyond 1989.

The final conclusion is perhaps the most consistent across this narrative, namely, that the large-scale application of kinetic military force is likely to prove indecisive in a COIN scenario. The experiences related here seem to indicate that the reverse might even apply. After all, the inability of the Malaysian security forces to come to grips with the CPM at the tactical level did not adversely set back the overall COIN effort. Conversely, the tactical successes of the U.S. Army on the battlefield failed to secure the Vietnamese countryside. Indeed, the most effective contribution of the Malaysian security forces during the Second Emergency was population protection and the protection of key development projects. The restricted operating environment of the Second Emergency and the fact that the Federal government got its grand strategy right meant that the tactical and operational shortcomings of the Malaysian security forces did not snowball into strategic defeat. The ghosts of failure from the Vietnam War, however, are still being exorcised into lessons. As T.E. Lawrence observed, such lessons are often counterintuitive to military commanders and the soldiers that they command. As he recalled, 'It seemed a regular soldier might be helpless without a target. He would own the ground he sat on, and what he could poke his rifle at'.[689] Even as we acknowledge the shift in historical context and milieu, perhaps this peculiar trait of soldiering observed by Lawrence close to a century ago will stand the test of time.

---

[689] T.E.Lawrence, 'The Evolution of a Revolt', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, (October 1920) , 8.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Internal Security Department, Singapore

Internal Security Department (Singapore) Files, *The Voice of the Malayan Revolution*, 26 May 1971.

Internal Security Department (Singapore) Files, *The Decline of Propaganda Items Broadcast by the Voice of the Malayan Revolution (1979) Against Singapore*, 8 November 1979.

Internal Security Department Heritage Centre, The Voice of Malayan Revolution Exhibit.

Ramakrishna, Kumar (Intro), *Freedom News: The Untold Story of the Communist Underground Publication*, Singapore: RSIS, 2008.

Wang, Gungwu and Ong, Weichong (eds), *The CPM Radio War Against Singapore and Malaysia 1969-1981*, Singapore: RSIS, 2009.

Government Papers and Reports, Malaysia

Malaysian Government White Paper, *The Resurgence of Armed Communism in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Department, 1971.

Rukunegara, Kuala Lumpur, Ministry of Information, 1971.

Restricted Report on the KESBAN Doctrine.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/806, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1969, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 14 January 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Malaysia-Thailand: New Border Agreement for Cooperation Against Communist Terrorists, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, 16 March 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/819, Note by the Ambassador, Bangkok: Situation in South of Thailand, British Embassy, Bangkok, 31 March 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Insurgency and Subversion in Thailand, Diplomatic Report No.255/70, 13 April 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Capture of Communist Camp,Telegram No.222, British Embassy, Bangkok, 1 May 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Comments by Defence Attache Bangkok on Situation near Thai-Malaysian Border, British Embassy, Bangkok, 13 May 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Combined CSOC Headquarters in Songkhla Province, British Embassy, Bangkok, 20 May 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, CT Camps in Amphoe Betong, British Embassy, Bangkok, 28 May 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/827, Thai Action Against CTs in the Far South, British Embassy, Bangkok, 5 June 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/879, Internal Security, British High Commission Singapore, 7 July 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/812, Report from Sir Michael Walker to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 October 1970.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1164, Malaysia/Chinese Relations, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 15 February1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1164, Gordon Barrass: Letter From Peking dated 9 February 1971, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Research Department, Far East Section, 16 February1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(2), Statement by the Prime Minister at the Press Conference on the Second Malaysian Plan 1971, 27 May 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1203, Chinese Foreign Policy: Ping Pong and After, Diplomatic Report No. 411/71, British High Commission Singapore, 27 July 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, The Communist Threat to Malaysia, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 16 August 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(2), Kuala Lumpur Despatch of 16 August 1971: The Second Malaysian Plan, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 16 August 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1154, Malaysia: Communalism and Politics, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 17 August 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1161, The Communist Threat to Malaysia, Southwest Pacific Department, FCO, 3 September 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, Possible Approach to the Thais About Malaysian Border, Southwest Pacific Department, FCO, 4 October 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 24/1019, Thoughts on the Southeast Asian Scene on the Closure of Far East Command, Diplomatic Report No.491/71 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 October 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1154, Letter from George Wong to A.A Duff, British High Commission Singapore, 4 November 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1161, Malaysian Intelligence Organisation, FCO Telegram No. 7195 November 1971.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1462, Singapore: Annual Review 1971, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office FCO 24/1746, Malaysian Foreign Policy, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 15 January1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, Malayan Islamic Fraternal Party, Information Research Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 24 January 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1462, Singapore: Annual Review 1971, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1439, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1971, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 27 January 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1463, Barisan Sosialis and Singapore General Election, Information Research Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), 30 March 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1172(1), The Second Malaysia Plan, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 26 June 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, China's Attitude Towards the Nationality of Overseas Chinese, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Research Department, Far East Section, 2 August 1972

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1463, Singapore General Elections, British High Commission Singapore, 5 September 1972.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1778, Singapore: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 24/1745, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 4 January 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1779, State of Security Assessment - Singapore, Security Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 11 January 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, Sino-Malaysian Relations: September 1971-December 1972, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, January 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1747, China's Attitude Towards the Overseas Chinese Population, April 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/1740, Communist Threat to Malaysia, Southwest Pacific Department, 6 September 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 24/812, The Malaysian Chinese Association Reform Movement, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 18 September 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office FCO 24/1779, Minute by George Wong, South West Pacific Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, 10 October 1973.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Perak, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 January 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1921, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1973 and Sir J. Johnston's Valedictory, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 11 January 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation in Peninsular Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 22 January 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2074, Sino-Malaysian Relations January 1973-December 1974, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 24 March 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Sino-Malaysian Relations, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 25 May 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, CT Activities in Peninsula Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 28 May 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, Exercise/Operation Gonzales, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 31 May 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Joint Communique of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Malaysia, Beijing, 31 May 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Razak's Visit to Peking, Southeast Asian Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 4 June 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Priority FCO Telegram No.348, British High Commission Singapore, 22 June 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Arrests in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 28 June 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1973 – July 1974, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 July 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1924, Malaysia and China: The Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, British Embassy, Beijing, 2 July 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Arrests of Communist Activists in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 21 August 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/918, The Malaysian Elections of 1974 and the New Government, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 24 September 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1904, Singapore Internal Situation, Foreign Policy, and Anglo-Singapore Relations, South East Asia Department, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 30 September 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/1919, The Security Situation: Split in the CPM, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 October 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/918, Student Disturbances, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 December 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Kedah: State Development, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 December 1974.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2069, Singapore: Annual Review for 1974, British High Commission, Singapore, 6 January 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Security Situation, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 6 January 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2072, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1974, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 13 January 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Malaysia: The Underlying Tensions, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 9 July 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2071, Letter from A J M Craig, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 October 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up December 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 12 December 1975.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2126, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 January 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up December 1975, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 12 January 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2157, Singapore: Annual Review for 1975, British High Commission, Singapore, 19 January 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up January 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 January 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up February 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 March 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up March 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 April 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up April 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 May 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 14 June 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up June 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 July 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, Singapore: The Next Phase, Diplomatic Report No.302/76, British High Commission Singapore, 15 July 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up July 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 August 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up August 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 August 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1975-July 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 30 August 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up September 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 October 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2158, A Southeast Asian Looking to 1980, Address by the Prime Minister, Mr Lee Kuan Yew at the National Press Club Luncheon, Canberra, 21 October 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up October 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up November 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 3 December 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2235, Malaysia: Annual Review for 1976, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 31 December 1976.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2230, Singapore: Annual Review for 1976, British High Commission, Singapore, 1 January 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up January 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 February 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up February 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 March1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up March 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 April 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2232, Singapore: Arrests and Security (December 1976-March 1977), British High Commission Singapore, 12 April 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 May1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Monthly Security Round-up April 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 9 May 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2161, Monthly Security Round-up May 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 20 June 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up June 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 1 July 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up July 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 1 August 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Malaysia: Quarterly Security Report, 1 April – 2 July, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, August 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2239, Monthly Security Round-up August 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 August 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2234, Communist Threat to Malaysia: July 1976-July 1977, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 September 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Singapore: An Over-view of Recent Months, British High Commission Singapore, 4 October 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Ministry of Home Affairs Press Release, Ministry of Home Affairs Singapore, 15 October 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2231, Arrest of Communists in Singapore, British High Commission Singapore, 19 October 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2161, Communist Threat to Malaysia, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 21 October 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2359, Malaysia: Internal Political Developments, Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 1977.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2359, Monthly Security Round-up – December 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia, 13 January 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up January 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 31 January 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up February 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 27 February 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2232, Briefing Notes, British High Commission Singapore, 25 April 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2360, Malaysian Chinese Discontent, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 3 May 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up April 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 8 May 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Visit to Operational Areas in Malaysia: 3 and 4 May 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 10 May 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2363, Parliamentary Question by Mr Robert McCrindle MP for Oral Answer on 28 June: Whether the Secretary of State will Visit Malaysia, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , Southeast Asia Department, 20 June 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up June 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 July 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Files, FCO 15/2363, Parliamentary Response of Secretary of State, Goronwy-Roberts, 17 August 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up August 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 29 August 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2357, Monthly Security Round-up October 1978, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 November 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2361, The Malaysian Internal Scene: Autumn 1978, 11 December 1978.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence in Malaysia, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 March 1979.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, FCO 15/2505, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.

NA, Foreign and Commonwealth Office , FCO 15/2505, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Defence Advisor Malaysia –Annual Report June 1978-June 1979, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 19 June 1979.

Ministry of Defence, UK

NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/694, Ministry of Defence Files, British Defence Liason Staff Malaysia Quarterly Report No.3/70 July-September 1970, British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur, 22 October 1970.

NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia Annual Report January 1975-May 1976, British High Commission Kuala Lumpur.

NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11/849, Defence Adviser Malaysia – Annual Report June 1976-June 1977, British High Commission, Malaysia.

NA, Ministry of Defence Files UK, DEFE 24/1822, Singapore's Defence: The End of an Era, British High Commission Singapore, 2 April 1976.

NA, Ministry of Defence UK, DEFE 11-849, SAS Training Assistance to Malaysia, DS6 Ministry of Defence UK, 21 April 1978.

Department of Defence, Australia

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia – Internal Security – Operation Gerakan Setia, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 28 September 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Directive to the Officer Commanding RAAF Butterworth, Department of Air, Canberra, 2 October 1970.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Monthly Savingram on Internal Security Summary in West Malaysia – September 1971, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 October 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Letter from J.R. Rowland, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 October 1971.

AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, ANZUK JIC Assessment No. 1/1971: The Threat to Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore up to the end of 1973, ANZUK Joint Intelligence Committee, 6 October 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Confidential Brief, Department of Defence, Canberra, 15th October 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Monthly Internal Security Summary for West Malaysia, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 November 1971.

AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/71/2042, Communist Terrorist Organisation, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 4 November 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram on Malaysia Security Situation and Five Power, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 5 November 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram, Malaysia: Weekly Political Savingram, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 11 November 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Intelligence Briefing Given by Chief of Staff and DMI for Air Commodore Cornish, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 2 December 1971.

NAA, NAA 696/6/7 Part 11, Malaysia: Savingram, Internal Security, Australian High Commission Kuala Lumpur, 7 December 1971.

AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Reinforcement of the Australian Force in Malaysia and Singapore, Director Joint Staff, 17 February 1972

AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Minute by the Chiefs of Staff Committee at a Meeting on Wednesday 12th April 1972, Chiefs of Staff Committee, 12 April 1972.

AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 28 June 1972.

AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore - Army Study Scenario 1 and Requirement 1, DOP, 18 July 1972.

AWM, Department of Defence, AWM 122/68/2018, The Nature and Extent of the Communist Subversive and Insurgent Threat to the Treaty Area, SEATO Intelligence Assessment Committee, 27 July 1972 .

AWM,Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore, DCNS, 14 August 1972.

AWM, Department of Defence, NAA, NAA 3024/2/9 Part 12, Review of Current Intelligence No. 21/72 for the Fortnight Ended 19 October 1972, ANZUK Intelligence Group, Singapore, 26 October 1972.

AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Study on Counter-insurgency Aid to Malaysia/Singapore, DCAS, November 1972.

AWM, Directorate of Military Operations and Plans, AWM 121/214/J11, Counter Insurgency Aid to Malaysia and Singapore, DCNS, 6 December 1972.

Official Histories

Mao, Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol I, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965.

Mao, Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol III, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965.

Mao, Tse Tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung* Vol IV, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1961.

Liu, Shaoqi, *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*,Vol VI, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1981.

Interviews

Interview with General Kitti Ratanachaya, Royal Thai Army.

Interviews with retired diplomats of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who wish to remain unattributed, UK.

Newspaper Articles

'Lee, Razak Hold Talks on Vietnam Issue', *The Straits Times*, 01/05/1975.

'Red Victories Pose No Threat', *The Straits Times*, 05/05/1975.

Others

University of Singapore: Singapore University Courses and Curricula1978/79, Singapore: University of Singapore, 1978.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books and Monographs

Arreguin-Toft, Ivan, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Asprey, Robert Brown, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History*, London: Macdonald & Jane's, 1976. Barber, Noel, *The War on the Running Dogs: How Malaya Defeated the Communist Guerrillas 1948–1960*, London: Collins, 1971.

Barnett, A. Doak, *Communist China and Asia: Challenge to American Policy*, New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

Bayly, Christopher and Harper, Tim, *Forgotten Wars: The End of Britain's Asian Empire*, London: Penguin Books, 2008.

Beeson, Mark and Bellamy, Alex J., *Securing Southeast Asia: The Politics of Security Sector Reform*, London & New York: Routledge, 2008.

Belden, Jack, *China Shakes the World*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970.

Bin Hashim, Sharon (ed), Mahmud, Mohamed Ghazemy (Trans), *The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia 1968-1989*, Kuala Lumpur: Army Headquarters, Ministry of Defence, 2001.

Bloodworth, Dennis, *The Tiger and the Trojan Horse*, Singapore: Times Publishing, 1986.

Buzzanco, Robert, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Chin Peng, *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History*, Singapore: Media Masters, 2003.

Chin, Aloysius, *The Communist Party of Malaya: the Inside Story*, Kuala Lumpur:Vinpress, 1995.

Christie, Clive J., *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separatism*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1996.

Christie, Clive J., *Southeast Asia in the Twentieth Century: A Reader*, London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998.

Clutterbuck, Richard, *Conflict & Violence in Singapore & Malaysia: 1945-1983*, Singapore: Graham Brash, 1984.

Clutterbuck, Richard, *Guerrillas and Terrorists*, London: Faber, 1977.

Coates, John, *Suppressing insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1992.

Duiker, William J., *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.

Fairbank, John King, *The Great Chinese Revolution 1800-1985*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1987.

Fellows, Roy with Popham, Hugh, *The Jungle Beat: Fighting Terrorists in Malaya 1952-1961*, London: Cassell, 1990.

Garver, John W., *Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China*, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.

Gittings, John, *The Role of the Chinese Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Golam W. Choudhury, *China in World Affairs: The Foreign Policy of the PRC Since 1970*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982.

Grey, Jack, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to 2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Gwynn, Charles, *Imperial Policing*, London: Macmillan & Company, 1939.

Hack, Karl, *Defence and Decolonisation in South East Asia: Britain, Malaya and Singapore 1941–1968*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001.

Halberstam, Daniel, *The Making of a Quagmire*, London: The Bodley Head, 1965.

233

Hanson, Victor Davis, *Why the West has Won: Carnage and Culture from Salamis to Vietnam*, London: Faber and Faber, 2001.

Harper, Tim, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Hong, Lysa and Huang, Jianli, *The Scripting of A National History: Singapore and its Past*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008.

Houn, Franklin W. , *To Change a Nation; Propaganda and Indoctrination in Communist China*, New York: Crowell-Collier, 1961.

Hoyt, Edwin P, *The Rise of the Chinese Republic: From the Last Emperor to Deng Xiaoping*, Da Capo Press, 1991.

Ikenberry, John G., *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Jackson, Robert, *The Malayan Emergency, the Commonwealth's Wars 1948–1966*, London: Routledge, 1991.

Johnson, Chalmers A., Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962.

Jumper, Roy Davis Linville, *Death Waits in the Dark: The Senoi Praaq, Malaysia's Killer Elite*, Connecticut, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Keegan, John , *A History of Warfare*, London: Pimlico, 2004.

Komer, Robert W., *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980.

Laqueur, Walter, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Historical and Critical Study*, New Brunswick, Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1998.

Lee, Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story 1965-2000*, Singapore: Times Media, 2000.

Lerner, Daniel, *Psychological Warfare Against Nazi Germany: The Sykewar Campaign, D-Day to VE-Day*, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971.

Lewy, Guenter, *America in Vietnam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Linebarger, Paul M.A., *Psychological Warfare*, New York: Arno Press, 1972.

Macciocchi, Maria Anotonietta, *Daily Life in Revolutionary China*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

Mallette Jr, James Robert, *Operational Art in the Success of the Malayan Counterinsurgency Campaign*, Newport: Naval War College, 1997.

Mao, Tse-Tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Trans and Introduction by Samuel B. Griffith II, Baltimore, Maryland: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1992.

Merom, Gil, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars, State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Mockaitis, Thomas R., *British Counterinsurgency, 1919–1960*, New York: St Martins Press, 1990.

Nagl, John, A., *Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam: Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002.

Paget, Julian, 'Emergency in Malaya' in Gerard Chaliand (ed.), *Guerrilla Strategies: A Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Paget, Julian, *Counter-insurgency Campaigning*, London: Faber and Faber, 1967.

Percival, Bronson, *The Dragon Looks South: China & Southeast Asia in the New Century*, Westport Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2007.

Poole, John, *Phantom Soldier: The Enemy's Answer to U.S. Firepower*, Emerald Isle, NC: Posterity Press, 2001.

Postgate, Malcolm, *Operation Firedog: Air Support in the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1992.

Ramakrishna, Kumar, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds 1948–1958*, Surrey: Curzon, 2002.

Selden, Mark, *China in Revolution: The Yenan Way Revisited*, Armonk, New York: ME Sharpe, 1995.

Short, Anthony, *In Pursuit of Mountain Rats: The Communist Insurrection in Malaya*, Singapore: Cultured Lotus, 2000.

Simpson, Christopher, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare 1945-1960*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Smith, Rupert, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, London: Penguin, 2006.

Snow, Edgar, *Red Star Over China*, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972.

Stubbs, Richard, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948–1960*, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2004.

Tarling, Nicholas, *Southeast Asia: A Modern History*, Melborne: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Taylor, Jay, *China and Southeast Asia: Peking's Relations with Revolutionary Movements*, New York: Praeger, 1976.

Taylor, Philip M. , *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Day*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decision Making in Vietnam, The Senator Gravel Edition, Vol. 2, Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

Thompson, Robert, *Revolutionary war in World Strategy 1945–1969*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1970.

Thompson, Robert, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1974.

Turnbull, Mary C, *A History of Malaysia Singapore and Brunei*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989.

Weigley, Russell F., *The American Way of War: A History of US Military Strategy and Policy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977.

Whitson, William W., The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics: 1927-71, London: Macmillan, 1973.

Yahuda, Michael, *Towards the End of Isolationism: China's Foreign Policy After Mao*, London: Macmillan, 1983.

Yu, Frederick, *Mass persuasion in Communist China*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1964.

Journal Articles, Edited Volumes and Occasional Papers

Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan, Liok Ee, (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003.

Barr, Michael D. & Trocki, Carl A. (eds), *Paths not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2008.

Cassidy, Robert M. , 'The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The Salience of Military Culture', *Military Review* (May–June 2005), 53-59.

Cassidy, Robert M., 'Why Great Powers Fight Small Wars Badly', *Military Review* (September–October 2000), 41–53.

Chin , C.C & Hack, Karl (ed), *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004.

Chin, C . C., 'The United Front Strategy of the Malayan Communist Party of Singapore, 1950s-1960s' in Michael D. Barr & Carl A. Trocki (eds), *Paths not Taken: Political Pluralism in Post-War Singapore*, Singapore: National University Press, 2008.

Clementson, J., 'Malaysia in the Seventies: Communist Resurgence and Government Response', *RUSI Journal* 124(4), December 1979, 50-57.

Cohen, Eliot A. , 'The Strategy of Innocence? The United States, 1920–1945' in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox & Alvin Berstein (eds.), *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Hack, Karl, 'Iron Claws of Malaya: The Historiography of the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 30 (1), 1999, 99–125.

Hack, Karl, 'The Long March to Peace of the Malayan Communist Party in Southern Thailand' in Michael J. Montesano & Patrick Jury (eds) *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2008.

Haji Ahmand, Zakaria, 'The Military and Development in Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore,' in J. Soedjati Djiwandono & Yong Mun Cheong (eds), *Soldiers and Stability in Southeast Asia* ,Singapore: ISEAS, 1988.

Hamby, Joel E. , 'Civil-Military Operations Joint Doctrine and the Malayan Emergency', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 32, 2002, 54–61.

Huxley, Tim, 'Insecurity in the ASEAN Region', *RUSI Whitehall Paper 23*, 1993.

Huxley, Tim, 'Recent Military Developments in Southeast Asia: Their Implications for Australia's Security', *Basic Paper*, No.2, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1983.

Huxley, Tim, 'The ASEAN States' Defence Policies 1975-81: Military Responses to IndoChina', ANU, *Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Working Paper* No. 88, 1984.

Jeshurun, Chandran, 'Malaysia: the Delayed Birth of a Strategic Culture,' in Ken Booth and Russell Trood (eds), *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, London: Macmillan, 1999.

Kratoska, Paul H. ,'Country Histories and the Writing of Southeast Asian History' in Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan Liok Ee (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003.

Lasswell, Harold D, 'Political and Psychological Warfare' in William E Daugherty (ed), *A Psychological Warfare Cas*ebook, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1964.

Lawrence, T.E., 'The Evolution of a Revolt', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal*, (October 1920).

Lee, Ting Hui, 'The Communist Open United Front in Singapore: 1954-66' in Lim Joo-Jock & Vani S (eds), *Armed Communist Movements in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984.

Luttwak, Edward N., 'The Impact of Vietnam on Strategic Thinking' in Patrick J. Hearden (ed.), *Vietnam: Four American Perspectives*, West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1990.

Mack, Andrew ,'Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict,' *World Politics*, 27 (January 1975), 181–82.

Morrison, Ian, 'The Communist Uprising in Malaya', *Far Eastern Survey*, 17 (24), (December 1948), 281-286.

Nathan, K. S. and Govindasamy, Geetha, 'Malaysia: A Congruence of Interests,' in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia,* Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Newsinger, John, '*Counterrevolution The Malayan Example'*, *Monthly Review*, 45(9), 1994, 19–30.

Ramakrishna, Kumar , 'Transmogrifying Malaya: the Impact of Sir Gerald Templer (1952-54)', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32(1), 79-92, 2001.

Ramakrishna, Kumar, 'Anatomy of a Collapse: Explaining the Malayan Communist Mass Surrenders of 1958', *War and Society*, Vol 21 (2), 2003, 109-133, 128.

Ramakrishna, Kumar, 'Bribing the Reds to Give Up: Rewards Policy in the Malayan Emergency', *War in History*, 9(3), 2002, 332–353.

Record, Jeffery, 'How America's Own Military Performance in Vietnam Aided and Abetted the North's Victory' in Marc Jason Gilbert (ed.) *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*, New York: Palgrave, 2002.

Record, Jeffery, 'The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency', *Executive Summary*, No. 577 (September 2006).

Rich, Paul B & Stubbs, Richard (eds), *The Counter-Insurgent State: Guerrilla Warfare and State Building in the Twentieth Century*, London: Macmillan Press, 1997.

Shy, John and W. Collier, Thomas, 'Revolutionary war' in Peter Paret (Ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy; From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Sim, Richard, 'Malaysia: Containing the Communist Insurgency', *Conflict Studies*, 110, August 1979, 1-17.

Simpson, Jay Gordon, *'Not by Bombs Alone'*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, 22 (Summer 1999), 91–98.

Sioh, Maureen, 'An Ecology of Postcoloniality: Disciplining Nature and Society in Malaya, 1948-1957', *Journal of Historical Geography* (30), 2004, 729-746.

Stockwell, A.J. , 'Chin Peng and the Struggle for Malaya', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 16 (3), 2006, 279-297.

Stockwell, A.J. , 'Forging Malaysia and Singapore: Colonialism, Decolonisation and Nation-building' in Wang Gung Wu (ed), *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, Singapore: ISEAS Publications, 2005.

Strachan, Hew, 'The British Way in Warfare' in David Chandler & Ian Beckett (Eds.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Stuart-Fox, Martin, 'Communism and the Cold War' in *China and Southeast Asia Vol VI: The People's Republic of China and Southeast Asia*, London: Routledge, 2009.

Stubbs, Richard, 'From Search and Destroy to Hearts and Minds: The Evolution of British Strategy in Malaya 1948-60,' in Daniel Marston & Carter Malkasian (eds), *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare* , Oxford: Osprey Publications, 2008.

Tan, Andrew, 'Armed Rebellion in the Asean States: Persistence and Implications', *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence*, No.135, 2000.

Tilly, Charles, 'War Making and State Making as Organised Crime' in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds), *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Turnbull, C.M., 'Regionalism and Nationalism' in Nicholas Tarling (ed) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol 4, From World War II to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Wang, Gung Wu, 'Contemporary and National History: A Double Challenge' in Wang Gung Wu (ed), *Nation-Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*.

Wei, William, 'Political Power Grows Out of the Barrel of a Gun: Mao and the Red Army' in David A. Graff & Robin Higham (ed), *A Military History of China*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002.

Winichakul, Thongchai , 'Writing at the Interstices: Southeast Asian Historians and Postnational Histories in Southeast Asia' in Abu Talib Ahmad & Tan Liok Ee (eds), *New Terrains in Southeast Asian History*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2003.

Womack, Brantly, 'Theory and Practice in the Thought of Mao Tse Tung' in James Chieh Hsiung (ed), *The Logic of Maoism: Critiques and Explication*, London: Praeger, 1974.

Wou, Odoric Y.K., 'Community Defense and the Chinese Communist Revolution: Henan's Du Eight-Neighbourhood Pact', *Modern China*, 25, 1999, 264-302.

Yu, Frederick T. C., 'Communications and Politics in Communist China' in Lucian W. Pye (ed), *Communications and Political Development*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963.

PhD Theses and Master Dissertations

Petraeus, David, *The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era*, Ph.D. thesis, Princeton, 1987.

Zakaria Yadi, Mohd, *Malaysian Emergencies-Anthropological Factors in the Success of Malaysia's Counterinsurgency*, Master's thesis, Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2004.

Websites

http://www.felda.net.my/feldav2/en/profile/faq

http://www.elections.gov.sg/elections_past_parliamentary.html