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INSURGENCY AS A STRATEGIC PROBLEM

P. Kecskemeti

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PREFACE

The following paper was prepared initially for use in a series of seminar discussions with members of the RAND Social Science Department in the spring and summer of 1966 to discuss strategic alternatives in Vietnam. The first draft was reworked in the light of these discussions and also in consideration of comments received from members of other departments.

The purpose of the paper is to call attention to certain political aspects of insurgency, notably the "amalgam" of Communist, nationalist and populist motivations and organizational capabilities.

Related RAND studies include RM-4844-PR, Some Thoughts on Graduated Escalation, by A. L. George, and RM-4814-PR, Lin Piao on People's War: China Takes a Second Look at Vietnam, by D. P. Mozingo and T. W. Robinson.

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SUMMARY

1. The escalation of the Vietnam conflict cast doubt upon advisability of treating counterinsurgency warfare the standard method of dealing with essentially undeterrable forms of low-level Communist armed aggression. The concept of "crisis management" was developed to eliminate the root causes of "subversive insurgency" on a global scale, and thus to obviate the need for counter-insurgent operations.

2. Examination of the major recent historical examples of "insurgency" reveals that its main causes are to be sought in political factors like alien rule, rather than in economic deprivation. Nationalist and peasant-populist aspirations provided the principal motives for joining insurgent forces. In seeking to control insurgent movements, the Communists avoided stressing their distinctive ideology and acted as the spokesmen of nationalism, populism, and related movements. They succeeded in controlling insurgencies only in special historical circumstances, like those prevailing in Vietnam. Elsewhere, notably in the major insurgencies of Algeria and Indonesia, the decisive control positions remained in non-Communist (nationalist-populist) hands.

3. Removing the political causes of insurgency is beyond the capability of any single administrative agency, but to the extent that insurgency is of nationalist or populist origins this does not imply any fatal weakness of the American security posture in relation to "undeterrable" forms of Communist aggression.

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I. COUNTERINSURGENCY VS. PREVENTION OF INSURGENCY

During the early stages of the Vietnam conflict, counterinsurgent warfare was viewed as fulfilling a specific strategic function.

The paramount strategic problem, to be sure, was possible attack by Soviet nuclear forces, but the American strategic deterrent had "solved" this problem. If the enemy did attack, it was argued, our retaliatory strike would destroy him; but since he knows this, he will not move. So far, so good, but an approach was still needed to deal with those forms of attack that were not considered to be reliably deterred by our strategic posture. In the early nineteen-sixties, insurgency emerged as the principal form in which Communist aggression seemed likely to materialize. As President Kennedy put it in June 1961, after his meeting with Khrushchev in Vienna:[1]

> In the nineteen-forties and early fifties the great danger was from Communist armies marching across free borders, which we saw in Korea. Our nuclear monopoly helped to prevent this in other areas. Now we face a new and different threat. We no longer have a nuclear monopoly. Their missiles, they believe, will hold off our missiles, and their troops can match our troops should we intervene in these so-called wars of liberation.
>
> Thus the local conflict they support can turn in their favor through guerrillas or insurgents or subversion. A small group of disciplined Communists could exploit discontent and misery in a country where the average

[1] The New York Times, June 7, 1961.

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> income may be $60 or $70 a year and seize control, therefore, of an entire country without Communist troops ever crossing any international frontier.

Thus "counterinsurgency" suggested itself as the American war-fighting strategy par excellence, for it filled a major gap left open by the strategy of nuclear retaliation.

The key condition for successful deterrence is credibility, that is, a high degree of certainty, shared by the deterring power and the recipient of the threat, that the former would actually carry out its threat if it were challenged. While conditional threats must be "realistically" credible if they are to have a deterrent effect, credibility alone is not sufficient for deterrence, since a credible threat that is taken in stride is not a deterrent threat. Conditional threats are deterrent threats only if, besides being credible, they are of a kind which the potential opponent, having calculated the probable damage to his forces or society, wants to prevent being carried out. In order to be successful, a deterrent strategy need neither be based upon any decisive disparity of forces nor promise an "asymmetrical" outcome. Deterrent strategies can work under conditions of reciprocity. But this does not hold for war-fighting strategies. These stand under the constraint of asymmetry. That is, if in a potential conflict situation I have serious doubts either about the credibility or about the unacceptable nature of my threatened countermove to the enemy's attack, the central question for me will be whether, and how, I can achieve an asymmetrical outcome, one that will give me dominant bargaining power based upon

a superior position of strength at the end of the conflict. This asymmetry implies, in particular, that the costs and losses incurred will not leave me exhausted or seriously weakened.[2]

Now counterinsurgency was deemed eminently suitable as a war-fighting strategy, because it would cope with the very type of attack that could not be deterred and that therefore might occur at any time when the asymmetry condition appeared satisfied. The counterinsurgent objective could be attained at relatively low cost, it was assumed, if the right mixture of military, political, socio-economic, and psychological moves were employed.

This confidence in the asymmetrical nature of counterinsurgency as a strategy may appear odd in view of the many successful insurgencies on record and in particular in view of the notoriously heavy toll that guerrillas can levy upon regular military and security forces. The disproportionate costs and manpower requirements of anti-guerrilla warfare were familiar to American military experts: They noted that in recent instances one guerrilla could tie down ten regular soldiers, that the fatality ratio could be fifteen to one as between regular and irregular forces, that in Malaya a numerical ratio of thirty to one was needed to put down the insurgency,

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[2]If the would-be attacker knows that the defender has an asymmetrical, winning strategy, this will in itself be sufficient to deter him, if he is rational. But it does not follow that the defender can always use his possession of an asymmetrical strategy to achieve deterrence. In order to threaten credibly, he must communicate his winning strategy to the attacker, but the result then may be that, far from being deterred, the attacker

and so on.[3] According to the counterinsurgency doctrine developed in the early sixties, however, these disproportionate manpower requirements could be reduced if the local government gained the confidence of the population by suitable socio-economic policies and mastered the specialized military techniques of antiguerrilla warfare developed in earlier parallel cases. The United States could provide threatened local regimes with the needed military and economic means, as well as with instruction and advice in counterinsurgency tactics, without having to assume heavy war costs and losses. The major manpower needs, in particular, would be supplied by the local government.

Secretary of Defense McNamara outlined this approach in 1962 in the following terms:

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will develop an effective counterstrategy removing the asymmetry. A visible, obvious, asymmetrical posture necessarily has a deterrent effect. It may be said in this sense that the best (most reliable) deterrent posture also is a potentially winning posture. But some winning postures can work only if they are not conveyed to the opponent in the form of a deterrent threat, while some deterrent postures can work under conditions of reciprocity.

[3]See Bernard Fall, "Revolutionary Warfare in Southeast Asia," in Readings in Guerrilla Warfare, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, U.S. Army Special Warfare School, 1960, p. 156, and William H. Hessler, "Guerrilla Warfare is Different," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, April 1962, cited in John S. Pustay, Major, USAF, U.S. Air Force Academy, Counterinsurgency Warfare, Free Press, New York, 1965, pp. 86f.

> But we shall have to deal with the problems of "wars of liberation." These wars are often not wars at all. In these conflicts, the force of world Communism operates in the twilight zone between political subversion and quasi-military action. Their military tactics are those of the sniper, the ambush, and the raid. Their political tactics are terror, extortion, and assassination. We must help the people of threatened nations to resist these tactics by appropriate means. You cannot carry out a land reform program if the local peasant leaders are being systematically murdered.
>
> To deal with the Communist guerrilla threat requires some shift in our military thinking. We have been used to developing big weapons and mounting large forces. Here we must work with companies and squads, and individual soldiers, rather than with battle groups and divisions. In all three services we are training fighters who can, in turn, teach the people of free nations how to fight for their freedom.... Combating guerrilla warfare demands more in ingenuity than in money or manpower.[4]

The escalation of the Vietnam war since 1964, however, has changed the outlook. When it turned out that American forces had to be committed en masse, the possible recurrence of insurgency became an extremely forbidding prospect. Counterinsurgency could no longer be considered a universally applicable war-fighting strategy.

An analogous problem had already arisen in connection with the Korean War. Limited, undeterred aggression at that time took the form, not of insurgency, but invasion by regular military units. The attack was turned back, but there was general consensus that the

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[4]Address before the Fellows of the American Bar Association, Chicago, February 17, 1962. (Author's emphasis.)

United States would never again become involved in limited conflicts of the Korean type. Should this happen, it was said, it could only lead to our being "nibbled to death."

The question then became: How does one prevent such limited peripheral attacks? The answer was found in deterrence. "Massive retaliation" emerged as the counter to limited, "nibbling-to-death" aggression, and the United States seemed to be saying that it could invest local attacks with deterrability by putting them in the front rank of threats to U.S. interests along with all-out nuclear attack. Secretary of State Dulles formulated the doctrine of "massive retaliation" six months after the conclusion of the Korean armistice. He pointed out that forces sufficient to meet local attacks could not be stationed everywhere. The basic decision was

> to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, by means and at places of our own choosing. Now the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff can shape our military establishment to fit what is our policy, instead of having to try to be ready to meet the enemy's many choices. That permits a selection of military means instead of a multiplication of means. As a result, it is now possible to get, and share, more basic security at less cost.[5]

Bernard Brodie stressed the close connection between the Korean experience and the "massive retaliation" doctrine. Secretary Dulles's speech, he noted, "was a rejection, on tactical and strategic grounds, of our entire

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[5] Speech before the Council on Foreign Relations, February 12, 1954. For a discussion, see Bernard Brodie, Strategy in the Missile Age, The RAND Corporation, R-335, January 1959, pp. 248ff.

strategy in that war.... The Secretary fairly condemned the scope and methods of Korea as intolerably wasteful and unsatisfactory."[6] In the present author's opinion, however, the "rejection" of the Korean strategy was not meant in the sense (as Brodie seems to imply) that we ought to have waged the war differently by extending the scope of our action beyond the local theater; it only amounted to proposing that in the future the United States ought publicly to rule out localized warfare, in order to deter local attacks.[7]

Although American force planning in the nineteen-fifties and sixties actually stressed massive second-strike retaliatory power and thus reflected a deterrent orientation, strategic thinking in the military

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[6] Ibid., pp. 250f.

[7] The "massive retaliation" doctrine was widely criticized on various grounds. Many critics took this as a prescription for war-fighting, that is, as a strategy for coping with a recurrence of local attacks of the Korean type, an eventuality with which we had to reckon at any time. On this interpretation, the doctrine clearly was untenable, inasmuch as the Soviets had developed a matching -- or, according to some, superior -- overall nuclear capability. In these circumstances, "massive retaliation" as a deterrent strategy would have been a cure worse than the disease, since it lacked asymmetry.

Another criticism was that the threat of "massive retaliation" represented a poor deterrent strategy, since it lacked credibility. To be credible, retaliatory threats had to be "graduated," made proportionate to the offense. (On "graduated deterrence," see Morton H. Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, Wiley & Sons, New York and London, 1963, pp. 61ff.)

Dulles himself abandoned "massive retaliation" in favor of the use of tactical nuclear weapons in case of

establishment was much concerned with the possibility of the failure of deterrence and hence with war-fighting problems.[8] Yet the practical difficulties in the way of evolving an asymmetrical formula turned out to be formidable. Insofar as strategic forces are concerned, we still have to rely on their deterrent function. The only asymmetries that have emerged are those related to minimal use of force in the creation of political faits accomplis. The Communist regimes, as well as various local Communist parties, have exerted considerable effort in this field, with varying success. The counterinsurgency doctrine developed in the United States also belonged to this general problem area, but it turned out not to provide enough asymmetry. Hence the need to transform large-scale insurgency into a preventable activity. This is the strategic problem raised by recent developments in Vietnam. The solution, however, cannot be sought in the direction of deterrence. Since the objective in counter-insurgent warfare is not just to penalize or defeat an enemy, but to bring a disaffected population back to the government's allegiance, threats of massive retaliation or unlimited escalation cannot be credible. Is some other strategy available to prevent insurgency?

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local attacks ("Challenge and Response in United States Policy," Foreign Affairs, October 1957), but this idea, as he developed it, also seems to have been conceived essentially along deterrent lines.

[8] On the problem of "flexible response," see William W. Kaufmann, The McNamara Strategy, Harper & Row, New York, Evanston, and London, 1964, Chapter II ("The Search for Options"), esp. pp. 51f.

II. THE DETERRENT EFFECT OF THE OUTCOME

The outcome of the Vietnam conflict, it is widely believed, will in itself have a decisive effect upon the future recurrence or nonrecurrence of insurgency. This belief was reflected, for example, in the following statement by President Johnson:

> What happens in South Vietnam will determine -- yes, it will determine -- whether ambitious and aggressive nations can use guerrilla warfare to conquer their weaker neighbors.
>
> It will determine whether might makes right. Now, I do not know of a single more important reason for our presence than this.... The American purpose is to convince North Vietnam that this kind of aggression is too costly, that this kind of power cannot succeed![9]

In other words, besides solving the immediate problem, our intervention in Vietnam will also achieve a deterrent effect by inhibiting the recurrence of aggression.

Deterrence, however, rests upon the credibility of the deterrent threat. The defender's success in a past encounter will discourage future attack only if the prospective attackers are convinced that the defender's response would be the same and achieve the same result. The successful outcome of the Vietnam conflict, however, would not establish a convincing precedent for similar intervention in analogous situations. In fact, the strategic problem raised by escalation in the Vietnam conflict is precisely how to prevent the recurrence of insurgency <u>without</u> relying on escalatory threats. The

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[9] Omaha speech, <u>The New York Times</u>, July 1, 1966.

outcome in Vietnam cannot solve this problem, whatever other political advantages it may achieve.

The "war to end war" argument (if we win this one, we need not worry about having to fight any more) is congenial to the American temper, but repeated tests have cast considerable doubt upon its validity. Even complete defeat inflicted upon the aggressors in the so-called "total" wars of the twentieth century did not eliminate the possibility of aggression once and for all. This result is still less to be expected from the defeat of limited acts of Communist aggression, which differ in kind from the aggressive acts of the thirties and forties, and in any case take place in a political and technological environment different from that of the period preceding the Second World War.

In the East-West cold war confrontation, both sides are determined to avoid all-out conflict. Armed clashes indeed have occurred only over limited, peripheral issues, which have been handled on a local basis. Intervention policy has not been governed by any immutable principle. The United States has intervened in some cases and abstained from intervention in others, depending on the value of the objective and on such contingent matters as the capabilities available and the prospective risks and costs.

The record indicates that whenever the United States has decided to intervene it has tended to persevere until the minimum objective of preserving or restoring the status quo was achieved and the aggrandizement of the opponent's side prevented or reversed. Presumably

the Communist powers view the United States' "operational code" for dealing with local attack as providing for two main alternative responses -- nonintervention, or intervention to restore the status quo ante. The pursuit of such a minimum objective, however, limits both sides' costs and risks. Defensive success achieved in these circumstances can "prove" only that aggression, if opposed by the United States, cannot lead to aggrandizement. It does not "prove" that aggression as such is a high-risk proposition. Thus the precedent of a defensive success need not deter further aggressive probing. Whenever it appears doubtful that the United States will intervene, or that it has enough time to intervene with effect before a fait accompli is secured, Communist powers can afford to experiment with local probing moves, in view of the fact that their existing holdings are secure.

The point of this argument is not that a defensive success in Vietnam (the preservation of the Saigon regime) would be irrelevant to deterring future Communist aggression, but only that its deterrent effect would be conditional and incomplete. It would only extend to those cases in which successful intervention would be credible on grounds of feasibility, cost, and risk. This would leave us in a bleak position if Vietnam-type (large-scale, Communist-led) insurgency were to become a global phenomenon. As we shall argue later, however, such a pessimistic assumption is not warranted.

In any case, forestalling insurgency is not necessarily a matter of deterrence. The problem may be tackled from a different angle.

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III. CRISIS PREVENTION

An alternative approach to the wider strategic problem of preventing insurgency consists in attacking its root causes, the conditions that give rise to it. This preventive concept has been authoritatively described by General Maxwell D. Taylor:

> We should give priority to the prevention of subversive insurgency and emphasize what should be done to improve preventive measures including the early detection of symptoms.
>
> The next question is, where do you look for symptoms of subversive insurgency? The answer is that they are found in virtually every emerging country in the world. Subversive insurgency is encouraged and fomented by conditions of poverty, of poor government, of lack of education, all of which are conditions one finds in most of the 90-odd emerging countries.[10]

The preventive strategy called upon to obviate "subversive insurgency," General Taylor went on, required an organization that would, to begin with, "observe and evaluate continuously the conditions in some 90 countries in the world." But this would not be sufficient. Crises could occur elsewhere than in the newly independent countries, suggesting that the study of potential crisis situations also had to include the other countries of the world within its purview; "the basic organizational requirement is really crisis anticipation and crisis management wherever found." According to this concept,

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[10] Speech to the American Foreign Service Association luncheon, March 31, 1966, in Foreign Service Journal, May 1966, p. 35.

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"crisis management" on a global basis, using general indices of social, political, cultural, and economic deficiencies as predictive indicators, provided the answer to the strategic problem raised by the escalation of the Vietnam conflict.

Now there can be no doubt that grave social ills go together with political instability, radicalization, and potential violence. A global program designed to mitigate social ills is well warranted from the point of view of promoting political stability, besides being desirable on general humanitarian, social, and moral grounds. In the strategic setting with which we are concerned here, however, "subversive insurgency" arises as a specific problem, affecting the world political balance. What we are interested in predicting and forestalling is civil war affecting the interests of great powers, and possibly provoking their intervention.

Can indices of general socio-economic and related deficiencies serve as predictive indicators of "subversive insurgency" in this sense? In other words, if studies focused upon poverty, bad government, lack of education, etc., had been made in the past, would they have alerted us beforehand to the massive "subversive insurgency" of the civil war type that did in fact occur? Let us consider briefly the most important recent instances of "subversive insurgency." If these coincide with a clustering of the lowest socio-economic indices, we shall have prima facie evidence in favor of this sort of indicator. If not, then perhaps some more fitting indicator will suggest itself.

IV. TYPES OF INSURGENCY

"Subversive insurgency," which the Communists call "people's liberation war," is not just any social disturbance that may be provoked by poverty or bad government. It is a form of warfare, characterized by guerrilla or terrorist tactics, sometimes combined with the use of regular units, sustained through time, and engulfing extended areas.[11] The scale of this phenomenon must first be taken into account if we wish to understand it. Why do such large segments of the population of entire regions or countries become and long remain involved in combatant or auxiliary activities? Can their behavior be explained in terms of particularly bad social conditions capitalized upon by counter-elites, notably the Communists?

This would be a satisfactory explanation if a correlation were found to exist between the incidence of "insurgency" and the gravity of socio-economic, cultural, and related ills. The actual instances of "insurgency" observed in our time, however, fail to reveal such a correlation.

In our time, more or less protracted and extensive warfare of the "insurgency" type has been observed, to mention only the most salient cases, in China, Yugoslavia,

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[11] On the doctrine and strategy of insurgent warfare, see Pustay, Counterinsurgency Warfare, with extensive references. Also Peter Paret and John W. Shy, Guerrillas in the 1960's, Princeton Studies in World Politics, No. 1, published for the Princeton Center of International Studies, Praeger, New York, 1962.

Greece, the Philippines, Malaya, Vietnam, Indonesia, Palestine, Algeria, Cyprus, and Cuba. These are all relatively poor countries. Taken as a group, however, they are not set apart by a particularly low standard of living or educational level. What does seem to distinguish them from other poor countries not affected by "insurgency" is their experience of either alien (colonial) rule that was not given up voluntarily, or invasion by a foreign power. All the populations in question experienced either the denial of their aspirations to national independence or an extreme threat to their national existence and integrity. Nationalist motivations, then, seem intimately connected with the phenomenon of "subversive insurgency," although the role they have played has varied from one case to another.

In anticolonial insurgency, the impulse was given by a colonial or mandate power's refusal to relinquish authority (Algeria, Indonesia, the first Vietnam war, Palestine, Cyprus). This type of insurgent warfare shows a relatively simple structure. The insurgent activists resorted to guerrilla warfare and acts of terrorism to paralyze the control and security machinery of the colonial power, and also to force as large a part of the population as possible to cooperate with them. In addition to this, regular combat units were committed where available. Anti-invasion partisan warfare, however, as exemplified in our list by China, Yugoslavia, and Greece, was a more complex matter.

The anti-invasion (partisan) forces employed techniques similar to those used by the anti-colonial

insurgents, but partisan warfare itself made up only a segment of a wider war effort. In combating the invader, the partisans operated separately from national and allied forces, and also from rival resistance or partisan networks, where these existed. All these war activities were more or less loosely coordinated, but leadership was typically fragmented. (We are not speaking here of the Soviet Union in World War II, where Communist partisan forces were controlled by a Communist national regime. In the three examples cited above, the national regimes were strongly anti-Communist; before the war, the Communists had engaged in extreme, extra-legal opposition. The resulting internal conflicts were more or less precariously suspended or soft-pedalled during the war, but the Communist forces maintained their organizational and operational autonomy.)

When the invader was defeated by the wider war effort, the separately operating partisan armies became civil war forces. Those under Communist control moved to subvert or destroy the national regimes (as well as the rival partisan units, if any), and to install a Communist one-party regime. In China, this meant overt civil war in which subversive political methods played a large role, but military activities as such were predominantly carried out by regular rather than guerrilla units. In Yugoslavia, there was latent civil war with no encounter between regular units, but massive application of police terror. In Greece, the Communist partisans organized insurgency against the national government in rural areas. (It may be noted that this change of front by the wartime partisans was not the result of a globally directed, central Communist strategy.

Stalin, the supreme leader of the Communist movement, opposed it. Only partisan forces not sufficiently controlled by Moscow started civil wars. The French and Italian Communist resistance forces, over which Moscow had effective organizational and political control, did not. Here, of course, the presence of American forces was a weighty inhibiting factor.)

In the post-liberation civil wars or insurgencies, the wartime partisans, although now fighting domestic rather than foreign opponents, still made the national mystique work for them. The momentum of the wartime impulse to combat a foreign enemy carried over into domestic civil war. The Communists' objective was to establish themselves as the standard-bearers of genuine national unity, sovereignty, and freedom, and to discredit the old regimes as not truly national, but rather neocolonial puppets.

Some of the cases included in our list cannot be classified either as anticolonial or anti-invasion (partisan-type) insurgencies. Thus, in the Philippines and Malaya, the achievement of national independence was not an issue; in both countries postwar insurgency had ethnic as well as social overtones. In the Philippines, the existence of a legitimate sovereign domestic government made it possible to isolate the insurgent hard core and to pacify the area of insurgency without great difficulty. In Malaya, pacification was achieved by heavy commitment of regular forces.

In Cuba, the target of the insurgency was domestic rather than alien authority. But the Batista regime's

national legitimacy was impugned, and the insurgency had a strong element of nationalist, anti-imperialist fervor. American influence and economic penetration acted as a potent irritant.[12]

Finally, in the second Vietnam war, which also belongs neither to the purely anticolonial nor to the purely anti-invasion or post-invasion type, the defective national legitimacy of the Saigon regime is an important political factor. One of the political weaknesses of the South Vietnam regime in relation to that of North Vietnam, for example, is the lack of a platform of national unification; another is the presence of the American supporting force.[13] These enable the Viet Cong and Hanoi to denounce the Saigon regime as a colonial puppet.

We may say, then, that frustrated national-ethnic aspirations provided mobilizing slogans, not only in anticolonial and anti-invasion insurgency, but also in the other instances observed.

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[12] On Cuba and Castro see Theodore Draper, Castro's Revolution: Myths and Realities, Praeger, New York, 1962; Castroism: Theory and Practice, Praeger, New York-Washington-London, 1965. For a pro-Castro view, see J.P. Murray (ed.), Cuba and Communism, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1961.

[13] Pustay, Counterinsurgency Warfare, pp. 109f, points out that foreign assistance exposes the local regime to the charge of being a "foreign puppet regime."

V. NATIONALISM, POPULISM, AND COMMUNISM

National goals (the achievement of independence, the liberation of the national territory) did not provide the sole impulse, the sole motivation for sustained, organized violence in subversive insurgencies. It was only in Palestine and Cyprus that insurgency had a purely nationalist character. Elsewhere, social and economic grievances were a potent factor in radicalizing broad strata of society and stimulating insurgent activity. In typical "subversive insurgency," we find nationalism merged with various socio-political revolutionary or reforming ideologies.[14] The role of populism, the anti-landlord ideology of landless peasants and poor tenant farmers, is particularly significant. In some colonial areas, the pre-emption of land by European settlers acted at once as a national and social irritant. In radicalized urban groups, democratic, libertarian, socialist, and Communist ideologies provided strong combat motivations. But each of these socio-economic ideologies appealed to a distinct social stratum; thus they all had a potentially divisive and fragmenting effect. Nationalism, by contrast, offered an integrating platform on which all radicalized groups could unite. Also, in our age, nationalism is that ideology which has the greatest efficacy in mobilizing people for sustained combat. In this it is far superior to revolutionary class ideologies and even to populism, which in poor agricultural countries pervades a large part of the society.

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[14] For China, see Chalmers A. Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power, Stanford University Press, 1962.

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Although nationalism was the principal recruiting slogan and mobilizing ideology in all insurgencies, whether of the anticolonial, partisan, or some other type, the largest share of political power and influence did not uniformly belong to nationalist-populist leaderships. Who had political control depended on special circumstances. In the anti-invasion insurgencies, for example, the Communists generally had political and organizational ascendancy; and this was also true of one anticolonial campaign, Vietnam I. In the other anticolonial insurgencies, political and military control positions were held, wholly or in part, by nationalist-populist elements organizationally independent of the Communists (though often harboring strong political sympathies for the Communist movement).

In Cuba, Castro personally enjoyed complete ascendancy by virtue of his political charisma. As long as he acted as a populist-nationalist leader, the Cuban revolution had a predominantly populist-nationalist character. When he identified himself with Marxism-Leninism and gave his personal apparatus a Communist orientation, Cuba passed into the Communist orbit.[15] It is noteworthy that

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[15] In his books on the Cuban revolution referred to in fn. 13, Theodore Draper goes extensively into the question of the class background of the Cuban revolution. In Castro's Revolution, he emphasized middle-class leadership and peasant rank-and-file participation. In Castroism: Theory and Practice, he arrives at the following conclusion:

> Castroism is not a peasant movement or a proletarian movement any more than it was a middle-class movement. The déclassé revolutionaries who determined Cuba's fate have used one class or another, or a combination of classes, for different purposes at different times. Their leader functions above classes, cuts across

the Cuban Communist Party, even where it was in organizational and military control, relied on the mobilizing efficacy of nationalism and populism, rather than of Marxism-Leninism as such, to attract combatants. It was by presenting themselves as the most authentic spokesmen of popular aspirations that the Communists gained access to broad, varied, radicalized strata of the population.

In no insurgency could the rank and file be considered as predominantly Communist in their composition. In fact, to insist upon belief in Marxist-Leninist doctrine as a precondition for admission to the ranks would have been suicidal; politically knowledgeable Communist leaderships always avoided this in spite of their own strong ideological

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> classes, or maneuvers between them. He belongs to a leadership type, not unprecedented in this century, which establishes a direct, personal, almost mystical relationship with the masses that frees him from dependence on classes. (P. 133.)

The present writer believes that, in any case, political power cannot be understood as the projection of class power. It belongs in a different dimension. In stable stratified societies, class membership is associated with differences in "power" in the sense of access to sources of income and wealth, educational advantages, chances of entering the decision-making elite, and so on. But the distribution of political power as such is subject to a mechanism of its own; political elite positions are not obtained by virtue of class membership or class support. Likewise, in societies caught up in a process of revolutionary transformation, the acquisition of political power is not predicated upon class membership or class support but upon the effective use of specifically political instruments of power. Ability to mobilize radicalized elements of <u>various</u> classes is essential to this, but in any case the final constitution of a political elite presupposes a power struggle among contenders <u>not</u> differentiated in terms of class membership or class support.

attachment. Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy was a criterion only for filling leading political and military positions.

The acquisition and consolidation of exclusive political power by the CP was a different matter. This was in every case an operation separate from the mobilization for insurgency and the conduct of insurgent (partisan) operations. The latter required emphasis upon general, undifferentiated, national or societal (populist) objectives rather than specifically party ones. The establishment of the one-party state, on the other hand, was predicated upon the subversion or forcible breaking up of national forces, rival insurgent groups, and those elements in the insurgency itself who were not ideologically indoctrinated and organizationally controlled by the party.

This second operation apparently could succeed only where the Communists monopolized military command positions. Post-liberation regimes possessing a military establishment not fully controlled by the party could not be subverted (as in Algeria and Indonesia).

Sometimes the Communists achieved a monopoly of military strength by destroying those forces that had participated in the liberation struggle and had been organized under non-Communist (in fact, anti-Communist) auspices. This pattern may be seen, notably, in China and Yugoslavia. In the first Vietnam war, an anticolonial struggle, the liberation army as a whole had been created under Communist auspices. When the campaign ended, military command monopoly was achieved automatically. The "second operation," the setting up of the party state in North Vietnam, only called for the purge of the alien elements

in the party who had been active in the insurgency. Vietnam II, the present conflict, on the other hand, is not an anticolonial struggle, but in part a civil war between two indigenous armed forces, both of which have an anti-French colonial record and tradition. Here the Communist (Viet Cong and North Vietnamese) objective is to eliminate (destroy or subvert) the South Vietnamese army, thus gaining military command monopoly; this struggle, however, is deadlocked as a result of American intervention.

The Vietnamese civil war, then, cannot be viewed as a prototype or paradigm of Communist aggression and expansion. It is the outgrowth of an anticolonial insurgency in which forces under Communist control gained a decisive victory but failed to occupy the entire colonial territory when the French forces withdrew. On the basis of the indicators emerging from this discussion -- nationalism, populism, Communist organizational and military strength -- both the first and the second round in Vietnam could have been predicted. But, by the same token, one would have to expect Communist seizure of power via "subversive insurgency" only where analogous conditions prevailed -- alien rule, populist-nationalist ferment, and a heavily armed Communist movement capable of posing both as the standard-bearer of national independence in the past and as the champion of national unification in the future.

This specific constellation of circumstances exists in Vietnam but not elsewhere. It cannot be used to define the problem of limited Communist aggression that the United States may actually have to face, or avert, by "crisis prevention" methods. Vietnam must be viewed as

the last reverberation of a cycle of anti-invasion and anticolonial struggles into which the Communists were able to inject massive organizational and military strength owing to specific historical circumstances. It is not the pattern for widespread outbreaks of limited Communist aggression.

VI. POTENTIAL CRISIS AREAS TODAY: AFRICA

Nationalist and populist uprisings and disturbances are indicators of possible "subversive insurgency" in parts of sub-equatorial Africa: the Portuguese colonies, Rhodesia, and the South African Union. While only the Portuguese colonies represent "alien rule" of the classic type, Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa also may be placed in the same general category, inasmuch as their nonwhite populations are disfranchised and subject to civic and economic discrimination.

Whether "subversive insurgency" will actually materialize in these countries is contingent upon the armed strength of the potentially insurgent groups in relation to that of the incumbent colonial or racial-minority regimes. At present, the ascendancy of the latter does not seem to be in immediate danger, but a crisis may break out sooner or later.

In any case, possible insurgency in sub-equatorial Africa is not directly related to the strategic problem raised by "subversive insurgency" in Vietnam. Should a violent crisis erupt, the advent of radical nationalist-populist rather than Communist regimes would seem to be the most likely outcome. But the problem goes beyond considerations of advantage in the cold war. Protracted civil war in South Africa would have extremely damaging consequences, not only locally, but for the Western economy as a whole. The importance of preventing a disastrous crisis of this sort can hardly be exaggerated. Yet American policy cannot undertake to preserve the status quo by

every means in its power. The traditional American approach to preventing crises of this sort consists in encouraging evolutionary change. It is problematic, however, whether this approach would work in South Africa. American policy is caught between pressures for coercive measures and sanctions on the one hand, and pressures to keep revolutionary forces under control on the other. While for this reason it is difficult to develop a coherent American policy toward South Africa, active involvement in the forcible maintenance of colonial or racial-minority rule seems out of the question. "Counterinsurgency" does not appear to be an appropriate or feasible response, and the prospects for "crisis management" are uncertain.

VII. POTENTIAL CRISIS AREAS TODAY: LATIN AMERICA

Nationalist resentment directed at the United States is a pervasive element in the political life of the Latin American countries. The overwhelming power of the United States, American economic penetration, and the American presence act as chronic irritants. Memories of numerous interventions add up to a hateful image of "dollar imperialism" which was not blotted out by Roosevelt's "good neighbor policy" in the nineteen-thirties.[16] The following is a characteristic expression of the typical position taken by Latin American intellectuals:

> Whatever the dominant beliefs in Washington concerning the nature of economic imperialism, in Latin America opinion is practically unanimous that this phenomenon is one of the primary causes, if not the primary source of such striking evils as the low standard of living of the masses and the resurgence and strength of despotic governments engendered by small privileged groups and based on the pretorianism of the so-called national armies. It is for this reason that attitudes toward imperialism are, among Latin Americans, the touchstone of political and moral positions and an unavoidable aspect of any discussion of political and social matters.[17]

Here frustrated nationalism, the sense of being crushed by alien power, is clearly the primary "crisis indicator."

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[16] Bryce Wood, The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy, Columbia University Press, New York, 1963.

[17] Gonzalo Barrios, "Seguridad Politica e Imperialismo en la America Latina," Humanismo, No. 25, November 1954, p. 63, quoted in Luigi Roberto Einaudi, "Marxism in Latin America," unpublished dissertation, 1966, p. 138.

Thus Latin America must be reckoned among potential crisis areas, although it offers no terrain for the major pure type of "subversive insurgency," anticolonial warfare. There is no alien power apparatus or alien ethnic ruling minority to be combated or overthrown by the national forces; where colonial rule has not been liquidated or is not in the process of liquidation, it is not felt to be oppressive. Thus "subversive insurgency" could materialize only in the form of domestic civil war.

Now certain phenomena related to civil war and revolution are endemic to Latin America. Coups d'état and sudden changes of regime are frequent, and there is a historic pattern of desultory guerrilla activity. It should be noted, however, that there have been few sustained civil wars of the "subversive insurgency" type, involving a large part of the population in an active or supporting capacity and recently familiar to us from events elsewhere. Revolutionary action tends either to achieve quick success or to lose momentum. But political instability is chronic, and there is a constant pattern of radicalization, involving potential coalescence of nationalist, populist, libertarian, and Communist action groups. In Cuba, this combination has produced a successful insurgency, eventually resulting in a Communist takeover. But, as suggested above, this outcome was due to a unique set of circumstances. Castroism cannot be regarded as a paradigm readily transferable to the other Latin republics. Here, as in Vietnam, the observed pattern of insurgency fails to represent a strategic prototype.

Because of the chronic instability of Latin American politics, one must always reckon with more or less radical political upheavals. This is necessarily a matter of deep concern for the United States, not so much because immediate or delayed (Castro-type) takeover is particularly likely, but because shifts in the direction of more radical nationalism and populism, possibly of a "popular front" character, can widen the gulf between the United States and Latin America.

Exploiting nationalist as well as populist and other economic grievances is a prime objective of the Communist movement in Latin America. Here, as elsewhere, it is by championing general societal causes that the Communists expect to gain access to politically and numerically important groups of potential supporters, sympathizers, and allies. The most significant dimension of Communist political activity is neither "direct action" nor ideological propaganda and recruitment, but the establishment of connections with other political forces. This policy is a source of division within the Communist movement: The most radical sector (sometimes identified with the "Chinese" tendency) is inclined to advocate direct action and to reject cooperation with more moderate elements. It can be isolated and has little chance of organizing large-scale insurgency. The less militant type of Communist political action, oriented toward political combinations of the "popular front" type, presents more urgent problems for American policy.

VIII. THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF "CRISIS MANAGEMENT"

The objective of "crisis management" is to forestall the outbreak and snowballing of "subversive insurgency" by removing its causes. This raises a fundamental question about the dynamic requirements of "crisis management." What kind of power is needed to accomplish the objective in areas of potential insurgency? This question will be answered according to how one views the dynamic factors involved in "subversive insurgency" itself.

According to a widespread theory, which may be called the "manipulative" one, the chief dynamic element in insurgency is the organizational and agitational activity of a small, closely knit, professional revolutionary vanguard of the Leninist type, operating at the core of insurgent activity. The extreme version of the manipulative theory holds that such a vanguard can bring about a civil war situation in <u>any</u> society, regardless of what social, political, economic, or other conditions prevail. In the West, it is often argued that the examples of Russia, China, and Cuba have demonstrated what a handful of revolutionaries can achieve by the sheer application of conspiratorial techniques. On this theory, police methods alone can effectively deal with problems of subversive insurgency. The danger can be averted only by the relentless hunting down of all Communist conspiratorial centers.

The main tradition of Communist revolutionary doctrine, while stressing the importance of the revolutionary "vanguard," is rather hostile to the manipulative view in its extreme form. The accepted, orthodox thesis is

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that revolutionary action can be successful only where an objective "revolutionary situation" exists. Disregarding this all-important caveat is "adventurism," a grievous deviation. In practice, however, there are widely divergent views in the Communist movement about whether a given situation does or does not have a "revolutionary" character. Some Communists tend to apply stringent, restrictive criteria, thus steering clear of any highly manipulative concept of revolution. For the most radical ones, on the other hand, the general conditions in society are so unspeakably bad as to amount to a chronic "revolutionary situation," leaving no doubt that action is called for. Among Communist writers dealing with revolutionary warfare, Che Guevara comes closest to the manipulative view, as far as Latin America is concerned:

> Given suitable operating terrain, land hunger, enemy injustices, etc., a hard core of thirty to fifty men is, in my opinion, enough to initiate armed revolution in any Latin American country.[18]

Though Guevara here acknowledges the causal role played by broad objective conditions, manipulative activity emerges as the main independent variable. Elsewhere he has suggested that the insurrectionist center could <u>create</u> revolutionary conditions, but he has also referred to certain minimum conditions that have to be satisfied to render this possible.[19]

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[18] Ernesto "Che" Guevara, <u>On Guerrilla Warfare</u>, Praeger, New York, 1961, p. 3, quoted in Pustay, <u>Counter-insurgency Warfare</u>, p. 46.

[19] Theodore Draper, <u>Castroism</u>, p. 65.

He cannot be taken to hold the purely manipulative view, in spite of the emphasis he puts upon the potentialities of conspiratorial activity.

American policy-makers on the whole seem to lean toward a qualified manipulative theory, as reflected in President Kennedy's statement quoted above (p. 2). It is this view, according to which Communist conspiratorial activity can set off insurgency wherever living conditions are poor, that underlies the "crisis management" approach outlined by General Taylor (p. 19). The observations presented above, however, argue not only against the extreme manipulative theory, but also against specifying poor living conditions as the "root cause" of insurgency, that factor which lies behind general turbulence and its exploitation by conspiratorial and manipulative Communist activity. The crucial factors on which the likelihood of insurgency in general, and of its resulting in a Communist takeover in particular, seems to depend in the first place are, as we have found, <u>political</u>: alien or illegitimate rule, external aggression, coalescence among various radicalized elements, control over administrative and military command positions, and so on.

Emphasis upon these political variables by no means implies belittling the causal role played by Communist political manipulation. On the contrary, the latter clearly has the potential to shape history. Only there is more to it than agitation harping upon economic discontent, or the recruitment by a conspiratorial center of adherents to be trained in methods of sobotage and terror. It is not by these micro-techniques in themselves

that Communist core groups can change the course of history, but by complex strategies designed to tap large reservoirs of human energy built up outside the movement under the impact of climactic historical and political developments. Civil wars, whether conducted under populist-nationalist or Communist auspices, belong in the realm of what may be called political "macro-dynamics," where a large part of the human energies stored up in the society becomes released to generate society-wide patterns of violence that tend to break up the existing political authority structure.

Accordingly, such an objective as the elimination of the root causes of insurgency also must be approached from the "macro-dynamic" point of view. Where a potential insurgency situation exists, micro-techniques such as propaganda or piecemeal police action cannot cope with it. Only political measures affecting the entire society and its general political structure can be effective.

A strong repressive apparatus can "deter" insurgency, but this is not the same thing as eliminating its causes, which is the specific objective of "crisis management." Repression can preserve the status quo but in doing so it may intensify the macro-dynamic ferment and prepare the ground for a violent explosion. "Crisis management" in the sense of removing the political root causes of insurgency, on the other hand, calls for changing rather than freezing the status quo. It boils down to replacing an alien and illegitimate central authority with an indigenous and legitimate one. This, however, is enormously difficult, except perhaps in the special case of colonial

rule: Colonial powers can forestall insurgency by relinquishing authority. This will remove the main irritant, alien rule, but even so the second part of the problem, the establishment of legitimate indigenous rule, will still remain to be solved. The arduousness of this task is clearly shown by the situation prevailing in many newly independent countries.

But the liquidation of colonial rule is just the easiest macro-dynamic "crisis management" problem. It is much more difficult, in a soverign country, to forestall revolution by constitutional reform and to transform illegitimate into legitimate rule. For one thing, entrenched illegitimate and unpopular regimes, in order to stay in power, often prefer massive repression to voluntary concessions. For another, voluntary concessions, far from removing the irritant, may stimulate radical opposition and turbulence. For example, the relaxation of police terror after Stalin's death had serious destabilizing effects in some of the Communist bloc countries (although it did contribute to the normalization of the situation in the Soviet Union itself).[20]

In any case, macro-dynamic "crisis management" on a worldwide scale is clearly beyond the capabilities of any organization set up within the policy apparatus of a single power, even one wielding worldwide influence. The liquidation of the colonial system, it is true, was an instance

[20] On the destabilizing effects of "decompression" after Stalin's death, see the papers in Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CCCXVII, May 1958.

of global "crisis management," but it was largely carried out under the auspices of the interested powers themselves. American policy could only make a minor contribution. The limitations upon the American role in managing macro-dynamic domestic political crises are even more stringent. Even within its own sphere of influence, the United States cannot remove illegitimate and unpopular governments and replace them with legitimate ones. In fact, where the irritant is the government's lack of a generally recognized, national representative function, remedying the deficiency under the guidance and control of a foreign power is a contradiction in terms.

We must conclude that effective "crisis management" techniques, by which Communist armed aggression in a macro-dynamic societal setting could be prevented, are not available to the United States. Economic aid and the like may lower the level of discontent and thereby help prevent the outbreak of economically motivated disturbances. But where major political irritants are present, economic measures will not remove them. Insurgency (under populist, nationalist, or Communist auspices) can then be prevented either by repression (as long as it works) or by "crisis management" (reform), but in either case effective action belongs essentially in the domain of the exercise of local governmental power. This applies in particular to the "crisis management" approach, that is, the removal of political irritants. No political machinery operating from the outside can undertake this. The case of repression is somewhat different: The United States can encourage or finance it, but this is inadvisable because underwriting the

political status quo when it is under severe pressure is a precarious and possibly self-defeating policy. In any case, opportunities for doing so are limited.[21]

The course of macro-dynamic political crises is essentially determined by the interaction of local social and political forces. The United States cannot direct or "manage" this process; it can only take a position in relation to it, counteract risks, and seize its opportunities.

This would be a gloomy conclusion if the macro-dynamics of the political process unfolding in the outside world (notably in "Asia, Africa, and Latin America," to use the stock formula of Communist propaganda) actually favored insurgency issuing in a Communist takeover. What we have found instead, however, is a trend toward nationalism and populism. This trend involves considerable political liabilities for the West. The advance of radical, anti-imperialist, nationalist currents means both the diminution of Western influence and increased political leverage for the Communist movement. But this problem cannot be handled in terms of protecting political freedom against Communist totalitarian encroachment.

In all newly independent regimes, there is likely to be both political affinity and latent tension between the nationalist-populist and Communist elements. Western policy might be able to take advantage of the tension, but it cannot ignore the affinity. In other words, we cannot

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[21] Intervention after insurgency has broken out is a problem sui generis. In such cases there are fewer inherent limitations, but the question with which we are concerned in this study is not how to deal with overt insurgency but how to prevent it.

expect the nationalist-populist regimes and their rank and file to equate "Communism" with "aggression" and "denial of freedom." Political strategies based upon this equation are bound to be sterile in the "third world." A priori, anti-imperialist populists and nationalists are prone to see imperialism rather than Communism as the prime menance to freedom. This calls for Western policies that allow latent tensions between nationalism-populism and Communism to work themselves out in indigenous terms. Even where nationalist-populist regimes are threatened by Communist subversion and move to protect themselves against it, we cannot expect them to adopt our cold-war attitude toward Communism in general.

The key strategic and political problems facing the United States in the contemporary world cannot be sliced into two segments -- "all-out aggression" which is to be deterred, and "insurgency" which is to be "managed" -- so that both will be prevented. To be sure, "deterrence" still is the basic strategy, as far as all-out attack is concerned. But in dealing with "insurgency," prevention cannot be our sole objective. For one thing, we have to reckon with insurgencies, notably of the nationalist-populist kind, that cannot be prevented. For another, there is no need to consider massive intervention with counterinsurgency warfare as the only alternative open to us if insurgency is not prevented. While insurgencies that may break out in the areas of interest to us are bound to pose challenges, the chances are that it will be possible to come to terms with them without opening the road to Communist expansion. Keeping macro-dynamic pressures under a lid forever cannot be the sum and substance of American policy.

We must recognize that the world political constellation is no longer bi-polar either in the grouping of states or in ideology. We are no longer faced with Communist expansion as the sole alternative to freezing the status quo. Nationalism has entered the picture as a factor cementing or breaking up coalitions, reinforcing or diluting Communism and other ideological motivations.

No sound "crisis anticipation" is possible without taking the nationalist factor into account. Not much would be gained, however, if one were to deal with nationalist currents only to the extent that they may be conjoined with anti-Western populism and Communism. The real problem is a wider one. In fact, our major "insurgency" indicator, nationalist opposition to foreign rule appears outside areas at present or formerly subject to Western imperialist control or ascendancy. It represents a substantial threat to the cohesion of the Communist empires and of the Communist camp. "Crisis anticipation" must take this point into account.

Nationalism in Communist states has nothing to do with the cold-war concept of "rolling back" Communism. American policy is essentially status-quo-oriented; the breaking up of the Communist empires is not one of its working objectives. But centrifugal tendencies do manifest themselves within the Communist world, and American policy cannot avoid involvement in them, whether they appear in the form of insurgency, of some other kind of armed conflict, or -- what of course seems most likely -- on the level of non-violent political conflict. (That a major indicator of insurgency is present does not mean that actual insurgency

is inevitable or even very likely. Military weakness may inhibit resort to arms on the nationalist side. Many countries do not offer a favorable terrain for insurgency.)

It is conceivable that even in the absence of armed resistance or insurgency the Soviets may resort to armed force to prevent the further disintegration of their empire. In other areas, too, invasion or intervention by the regular (conventional) forces of Communist powers must be reckoned a possible concomitant of political struggles. Thus, limited conflict may well continue to arise as a strategic problem. Here we see a serious gap in our planning, since the problem of "asymmetry" in a nuclear environment is still unsolved. The solution is being sought in the direction of controlled escalation, but it is uncertain whether and how escalation in limited war can be controlled. In any case, "insurgency" (and its prevention by "crisis management" or other methods) covers only a small segment of the questions affecting our security tha are left open by our major deterrent posture.

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