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MILITARY FORCES (ARMY) IN COLOMBIA DURING CONFLICT STAGE OF INSURGENCY

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8 March 1971

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ABSTRACT

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This is a study of Colombia during the conflict stage of insurgency which is considered to have started in April 1948 after the assassination of Liberal Party leader Jorge Eleicer Gaitan. Presented is a discussion of the action and/or inaction of the Colombian Government during this period with a detailed discussion on how the Army was employed. The role and mission of the Colombian Army after 1948 proved quite effective, particularly after 1961. During this period the Army, with US Military aid, reorganized and trained itself to fight a guerrilla war, developing a comprehensive and coordinated plan of battle against the causes of insurgency as well as against the insurgents themselves. Coordination and emphasis on counterinsurgency throughout the Army and Government from top to bottom added greatly to the positive results Colombia achieved in her counterinsurgency struggle.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research paper is to study the actions that have occurred or are occurring in the Republic of Colombia with regards to insurgency/counterinsurgency[1] during the conflict stage. The conflict stage of insurgency, for the purposes of this paper, is taken as starting in 1948[2] when wholesale violence erupted with the assassination of a popular political figure of the Liberal Party.

The study will present general background information concerning Colombian geographic, social, political, and military situations considered pertinent to an understanding of the actions or inactions of Colombian leaders prior to and during the conflict stage. However, the main thrust of the paper will be to present the role played by the Army from the period 1948 to the present. For the purposes of the discussion in this research paper, the Army is defined as being composed of those forces actually inducted into the Army as opposed to any paramilitary and/or national police forces.

Fundamental to an understanding of the role being played by the Army in Colombia is an appreciation and understanding of the environment and problems confronting the underdeveloped world and Colombia in particular. This paper is written on the premise that this background information is already known or readily available to anyone interested in pursuing this study of the Colombian

insurgency situation. Therefore, only a brief synopsis of background information on Colombia is given in Chapter II.

Closely allied with the background information on Colombia, but more germane to this particular paper is information on "La Violencia" (The Violence), which is the name given to the 10-year period 1948 to 1958. Basic information on the background of this period is given in Chapter III.

The direction that insurgency has taken in Colombia starting from "La Violencia" period (1948-1958) on through to the present is discussed in Chapter IV.

The Communist situation in Colombia is discussed in Chapter V and particular emphasis is placed on the part it has played on the insurgency.

In Chapter VI are discussed the actions taken by Colombia in counterinsurgency with specific emphasis and detailed presentation of the Army's role, mission and function since 1948. The Army's actions since 1948 have been diverse and far reaching and quite different from those normally associated with the military in Latin America.

Chapter VII presents the conclusions derived from studying the specific actions taken in Colombia and shows how the combination of these actions affected the counterinsurgency struggle during the conflict stage of insurgency.

CHAPTER I FOOTNOTES

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage (1 August 1968), p. 59.

2. US Army Combat Development Command Institute of Advance Studies, Army Roles, Missions and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC) Preconflict Case Study 2 Colombia (November 1969), p. 1.

CHAPTER II

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Colombia is a land of diversity. Geographically two-thirds of the country is very flat, while the remaining third is more vertical than horizontal. The climate depends on the altitude rather than the latitude, and ranges from the steaming tropical heat of the jungle to the permanent frost in the lofty peaks.

Three-fifths of the people live in rural areas. Agriculture is the predominant pursuit of the people, although some food must be imported.

While Colombia has produced some eminent novelists, poets, and philologists, literacy is still less than 50 percent.

Like most Latin American countries, socially the country is made up of the very rich and the miserably poor people.

Colombia is a nation of some 456,000 square miles and over 20,000,000[1] in population. The average population density is about 30 per square mile, but about 90 percent of the people live in the Andean and Atlantic coast departments (states) having 300 to 500 population density in those areas. The plains and Amazon basins comprise about 59 percent of the nation's area but are of little economic importance. The bulk of the population, industry and agriculture is concentrated in the remaining 41 percent of the country.

The result of the regionalism has been that there is less feeling of national identity and unity than has developed in other countries.

A man has a stronger feeling for his particular area than he does for Colombia as a country. On the other hand, this regionalism has developed many large urban centers. There are 15 cities with populations over 100,000, so that the stresses of urbanization are not concentrated in only one or two cities as is the case in many of the Latin American republics.

The racial composition of the Colombian population is estimated to be 20 percent White, 1% Indian, 4% Negro, 14 percent Mulatto (mixture of Negro and White), 3 percent Zambo (mixture of Negro and Indian), 57 percent Mestizo (mixture of Spanish and American Indian).[2]

While the characteristic of all of the above are different due to their heritage and local living areas, one characteristic has come through and is shared by all Colombians: an intense individualism which might be termed self-centeredness. Ties with family and friends are very strong, but there is little concern for others. Volunteer work is practically nonexistent, and gifts for charitable purposes are a mere trickle. Politically, this individualism can convert democracy to anarchy and liberty to license, and it can divide and splinter political parties. On the opposite side it can lead a strong personality to impose his will on the people, by force if necessary.

CHAPTER II FOOTNOTES

1. John Paxton, ed, The Stateman's Year Book 1970/71, p. 82.

2. James M. Daniel, Rural Violence in Colombia Since 1946 (May 1965), p. 3.

CHAPTER III

BACKGROUND FOR VIOLENCE (1948)

GENERAL

The background of violence has had a major, or at least a significant role in Colombian life for many years; however, the essence of this paper is to discuss the particularly large-scale violence from 1948 onward. Given the general social, geographic, and economic situations presented in Chapter II, one may tend to consider them the basis for the violence that developed in Colombia in 1948. However, the conflict that started in 1948, which many have called a civil war because of its scale and because of the involvement of the two great national parties, has distant and present origins in the political area. This political area is considered particularly germane to this study and therefore will be discussed in some detail in this chapter. While 1948 onward is the period of this paper, to place the violence in proper perspective, some discussion of the preliminary political period is necessary.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND FOR VIOLENCE

The two traditional Colombian political parties were established in 1848. The dominant party at that time called itself the Conservative party, and the opposition party chose the Liberal label. The Conservative party brought together all those who favored a strong central government, close ties between church and state, church control of education, limited suffrage, and protective tariffs. The

Liberal party attracted those who desired a federal system, separation of church and state, free secular education, broader suffrage, and free trade. Thus the Conservatives tended to be traditionalists while the Liberals have tended to be reformists.

There is a powerful influence, however, which has run counter to this tendency. From the beginning of the republic the political leadership of both parties has generally come from the best families of the nation. The outstanding characteristic of Colombian politics almost continuously was the isolation of the politicians from the people. The politicians formed an elite in Bogota and called on the electorate only when they were required at the polls or on the battlefields.

There are no close ties between the national leadership of the parties and the electorate. The parties are organized quite loosely, with a national directorate and departmental (state) and municipal directorates. Candidates and platforms are chosen by departmental and national conventions and there are no grassroots organizations beyond the municipal directorates. In the countryside there is little party activity (that is, indoctrinations, rallies, and so on) between elections, and it is only as these approach that there is a flurry of activity on the part of local leaders to organize the peasants and get out the vote.

Because the campesino's only contact with the party is the gamonal (boss), he follows the instruction of the boss as being those of the party. The interests of the party and those of the local

leaders may diverge, however, and in this case the national party leadership is helpless to influence the rank and file. This was demonstrated repeatedly during the "violencia," particularly during the early stages (1948-53) when many local party leaders urged their followers into the hills to organize guerrilla units. Neither the local leaders nor the rank and file heeded appeals by the national directorates to lay down their arms.

An important factor in the political area has been the greater interest of political leaders in reaching the peasants directly, a trend which can be dated, for practical purposes, from the first administration of the Liberal Alfonso Lopez (1934-38). The greatest success was achieved by the Liberal party leader Jorge Gaitan in the years just prior to his assassination in 1948. He tried to build a movement based on mass support of both rural and urban labor, and was well on the way to doing so at the time of his death. His successors in the party leadership were unable to hold the movement together because it depended primarily on the personal appeal Gaitan had for his followers.

Partisan feeling was heightened by violent political oratory which glorified the warriors of the rebellion and reviled the opposing party and its supporters. It was advantageous to the political leaders to make use of the peasants' lack of political sophistication in order to tie them more closely to the party. Thus, all good things flow from "our" party, while "they" are monsters to be exterminated. This type of crudely emotional oratory was brought to disgusting depths during the late 1940's and played a significant role in setting the "violencia" in motion.

Out of Colombia's political experience over the past century and a half, then, there emerged a number of factors which contributed to the rise and continuation of rural violence. The most important single political factor is undoubtedly the intense and highly emotional party loyalties which developed among the peasants. To this may be added the isolation of the national leadership of the parties from the people and the strong note of personalism in Colombian politics, particularly loyalty to the local party leader or boss. With all this as the political background, the assassination of Liberal leader Jorge Eliecer Gaitan in April 1948 set off a violent conflict heretofore believed unmatched even in Colombia.

CHAPTER IV

DIRECTION OF THE VIOLENCE/INSURGENCY

In Colombia the guerrilla situation is exceptional and dirrerent from that of other Latin American countries where only identifiably Marxist- or Castroist-type guerrilla bands operate. With violence a way of life in the Colombian backlands, it often has been difficult to separate the bandits from the guerrillas or to draw a line between plain banditry and political subversion.

The major banditry and the guerrilla fighting goes back to 1948, when the feud between Liberals and Conservatives evolved into partisan warfare which took a toll of about 300,000 [1] lives over a period of 10 years. The "reconciliation" of 1958[2] did not penetrate the backlands where the peasants continued their internal dissension under the leadership of local peasant chiefs, some of whom were members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and endowed with extraordinary military talent.

During the 10-year period, the guerrilla bands engaged in anarchical violence, lacking any apparent purpose or sense of direction. The peasant leaders never seriously considered the problems of coordination and power. This was clearly evident in the national guerrilla conference held on Boyaca in 1952, which made no progress in coordinating the 13 guerrilla commands operating in the country at the time.[3]

According to Monsignor German Guzman Campos, there are two basic types of outlaw bands: the guerrillas and the cuadrillas.[4]

THE GUERRILLAS

Well organized, the guerrillas have a more revolutionary outlook and ideological orientation--overthrow of the present form of government and a rough idea of its replacement. The guerrillas have their own laws and regulations, government structure, police force, tax-collection system, indoctrination classes for peasants (training programs), and occasionally even a species of currency. Their leadership is made up primarily of members of the middle classes such as merchants, small landowners, ex-army and police officers, students, intellectuals and the like.

During the period 1948-58, the peasant guerrillas established "self-defense zones" often called "independent republics" such as Marquetalia, Riochiquito, Sumapaz, and El Pato. The most important of these was Marquetalia, a 1400 square mile enclosure deep in the Andean highlands about 170 miles southwest of Bogota, the subject of massive army attacks in the spring of 1964.[5]

THE CUADRILLAS (BANDOLEROS--BANDITS)

The cuadrillas, on the other hand, are oriented principally towards more primitive political goals, such as revenge against a particular individual or the control of a particular village, as well as simple robbery and pillage. It appears what differentiates the Colombian bandoleros (bandits) from the guerrillas, is that the bandoleros do not care about the support of the population. Pillage, robbery, and forced contribution are enough for them.

The cuadrilla leaders are primarily peasants or small landowners who are illiterate. Of 100 bandoleros in Tolema, only five could read and write.[6] The great majority of the bandoleros are in their 20's; very few are over 30 years old. Orphaned in their childhood (often as a result of the violence), many of them became involved with gangs as runners and informers, growing up in an atmosphere of lawlessness where mutilation and murder are traditional. A Colombian writer says that the boys join because

> . . . the only hope in their miserable areas for ever attaining some measure of wealth and power is offered by clandestine warfare.[7]

GUERRILLA-CUADRILLAS ACTIVITIES

In 1962 there were 161 bandit groups with 2,760 armed men operating throughout Colombia; whereas early in 1966 reports indicated only 35 groups were still in operation. Of these, only five bands were identical with those of 1962; this means that between 1962 and 1966, 156 bands were eliminated or disbanded and 30 new bands were created.[8] The violence after 1966 appeared to be overtly political and became characterized by its almost exclusive attack on members of the security and armed forces. No longer a direct socio-economic consequence, violence had become a political phenomenon--hostilities are no longer initiated primarily by persecuted farmers.

Reports of clashes vary greatly. Cuban sources report that during the months of June, July, August, and September of 1966, a total of 26 clashes occurred between the Colombian guerrillas and the Colombian military forces.[9]

One of the reasons for the apparent inconsistencies in the reporting of the degree of insurgence activities is partially explained by the change in the character of the violence after 1966. With the violence since 1966 directed more openly toward Government forces, information is more readily available, whereas in earlier times much of the backland violence could easily go unreported.

CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES

1. The number of deaths attributed to the violence/insurgency has been given a different figure in many books varying from about 150,000 to over 300,000. The figure given here is considered reliable only in that it has been quoted along with others in many of the books on Colombia.

2. The "reconciliation" used here is the National Front discussed in detail in Chapter VI, p. 24 of this paper.

3. Dolores Martin, Principal Guerrilla Movements in Latin America (September 1967), p. 20.

4. Ibid., p. 20.

5. For detail account of numbers and locations of guerrilla or bandit units in Colombia see: Louis Mercier Vega, Guerrillas in Latin America (1969), pp. 120-121.

6. Dolores Martin, Principal Guerrilla Movements in Latin America (September 1967), p. 20.

7. Ibid., p. 21.

8. Ibid., p. 21.

9. Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNIST INFLUENCE

In the early 1950's some observers held the view that most of the guerrillas were Communist-led and were about to sweep over the country using tactics similar to those employed in China by Mao-Tse-tung. Since then, however, there has been a more careful distinction made between the out-and-out criminal bands and those with political ties.[1] Presently, the Communist-oriented guerrillas are the largest, best equipped, and most troublesome groups.

Excluding the Communist enclaves, it is estimated that until 1961, fewer than 1 percent of the active guerrillas were Communist or Castroist. Before the 1960's insurgents consisted of a large number of heterogeneous armed groupings with political origins and orientations, but largely having no specific revolutionary motivations. These were "insurgents" in the sense that they defied established legal authority and sometimes sought to oust local government leadership, but they were not by and large, dedicated to the overthrow of the political system. Communist and Castroist efforts thereafter gradually achieved a general reorientation of the guerrillas. All the members or supporters of Communist or Castroist groups are, however, not staunch idealists. The objectives of the Communist and Castroist guerrilla movements is the overthrow of the Government; but ambush of Government forces, though the major guerrilla tactical goal, constitutes only a part of the guerrilla routine. Much guerrilla activity can be explained by the need to survive outside of society's

accepted norms and to less idealistic motivation such as: 1) a means of earning a living outside the law; 2) the desire to exercise a warlord type of political power; 3) the use by interested groups of bands to terrorize or intimidate; 4) a liking for sheer brutality; 5) a means of taking revenge; and 6) the existence of underlying political antagonism.

By 1966 most of what remained of "la violencia" could be attributed to the action of guerrilla groups inspired by the far left.

It is felt that presently the Communists have no independent capability for seizing power by force, and their prospects for winning control of the government through the electoral process are negligible. Communist voting strength has never exceeded 2-3 percent of the total vote cast in any national election.

Presently there are two main Communist parties in Colombia. These two parties are representative of the worldwide Communist division. The Communist Party of Colombia (PCC), considered the older Communist Party, is a Moscow-oriented, less militant party, whose basic orientation is toward peaceful political takeover of Colombia. The Communist Party of Colombia--Marxist--Leninist (PCC-ML), a breakaway from the PCC, is Peking--Castro-oriented, whose basic orientation is toward guerrilla warfare and militant/aggressive takeover of Colombia.

In conjunction with or independent of the Communist political organizations, guerrilla units are operating in Colombia. The independent guerrilla units are leftist-oriented and may have leanings toward one of the Communist political organizations or somewhere in

between them, but have not been openly associated with either particular organization.

The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia--Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is the military guerrilla arm of the PCC. This group is made up basically of peasants, peons, agricultural workers, and small farmers between the ages of 14 and 35.[2] Though these men have lived in urban centers, they retain many rural and rustic traits and values. Many FARC men grew up during "la violencia." Dolores Martin in her study, Principal Guerrilla Movements in Latin America,[3] quotes Debracy's description of FARC men as follows:

> . . . . if there ever was "popular" violence arising "from the base" coming from the rural sector itself without any need for the presence of "petty bourgeois intellectuals from the city" and "artificial foreign incitement of the peasant sector"--to use the expressions used with reference to the Venezuelan revolution--it was certainly this explosion of terrorist peasant revolts experienced by Colombia until 1958.

The peasant FARC rank and file members, in contrast to other Latin American insurgents, is considered a guerrilla fighter first and then a political subversive. To these people the Army has always been an enemy. The political innocence of FARC rank and file has been demonstrated in the questioning of captured guerrillas. Many of these captured guerrillas indicated no knowledge of Castro or Guevara or that they ever listened to Radio Havana.[4]

The Colombian Army and other sources estimated that FARC has an effective force capability of almost 500 men.

The Ejercito Popular de Liberacion--Peoples' Liberation Army (EPL) is considered the military guerrilla arm of the PCC-ML. The party leaders formed patriotic juntas, which were groups of campesinos organized around a party nucleus. These juntas have carried out military operations using the EPL. These operations have usually been against large landowners. Almost all of the prestige and resources of the PCC-ML are tied to the rural armed struggle by EPL forces. Because of this it is felt the PCC-ML could not survive the elimination of the EPL activities since actual PCC-ML support in the urban areas is meager. Colombian counterguerrilla activities have certainly lessened the threat of the PCC-ML and its EPL forces.

The Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional--Army of National Liberation (ELN), unlike FARC, which calls itself the military arm of the PCC, maintains that it is not Communist. However, Martin,[5] based on information from leftists, has indicated the ELN is made up from guerrilla forces of the PCC-ML and the socialist revolutionary organization, Worker-Student-Peasant Movement. Other sources state that the ELN was created in Cuba in 1963 by leftist student leaders. The ELN is considered to be made up principally of students and young intellectuals. The ELN leadership has revealed an intellectual and ideological level not previously observed in armed bands in Colombia. The effectiveness of the ELN has been greatly reduced due primarily to increased government counterguerrilla tactics and internal ELN feuding.

While the FARC, EPL, and ELN are considered the major guerrilla organizations, several other pro-PCC and pro-PCC-ML factions and independent guerrilla units do exist; however, these are of somewhat lesser importance. Several attempts have been made to unite all the pro-PCC and pro-PCC-ML units together into two organizations. In addition, some attempts have been made to unite all these into one large organization for an effective unified effort against the Government. These attempts have met with extremely limited results so that a unified Communist-leftist front does not exist in Colombia at present.

CHAPTER V FOOTNOTES

1. See Chapter IV, pp. 11-12, this paper.

2. Dolores Martin, Principal Guerrilla Movements in Latin America (September 1967), p. 25.

3. Ibid., p. 25.

4. Ibid., loc. cit.

5. Ibid., p. 27.

CHAPTER VI

COUNTERING THE INSURGENCY

POLITICAL-MILITARY ACTIONS

With the assassination of Liberal party leader Gaitan, in April 1948 Conservative President Ospina Perez (1946-1950) declared a state of seige and suspended constitutional processes in the face of the rebellion that started. With the cooperation of most of the Liberal Party leaders, a bipartisan Government of national union was formed. As the armed forces brought the rebellion under control, the bipartisan Government restored political peace to the country. By December 1948 the state of seige was lifted.

The national union Government lasted only about 13 months and, with its breakup, civil strife started again. With the renewal of violence, President Ospina reinstituted a state of seige in November 1949, just prior to the presidential election. In addition, he issued decrees which suspended the legislature, established censorship of the press, forbade all public meetings, and gave wide powers to departmental and local officials. Basically the state of seige lasted until 1958.

In the 1950 presidential elections, the Liberals did not participate and Conservative Laureano Gomez was elected to succeed Ospina Perez as President. To deal with the violence Gomez strengthened both the Army and the national police and remodeled these forces, particularly the Army, into a Conservative Party arm. Liberal

Party officers were purged from both the Army and the national police. Gomez appointed Conservative Roberto Urdaneta Arbelaez as minister of war and gave him and the Army wide powers, including summary execution, to deal with the insurgency.

As one of his first counterinsurgency measures, Urdaneta sent an expedition to the essentially Liberal plains region, which had been completely out of control for many months. Before the troops arrived, planes dropped leaflets ordering residents to depart. The troops which followed burned the vacated villages. This tactic temporarily brought under control sections of the area; however, it resulted in mass migrations and vast refugee problems, which, in turn, were to encourage rebellions elsewhere.

In early 1951, President Gomez created a new post, Commanding General of the Armed Forces, and in 1952 appointed General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, one of Conservative allegiance,to fill the post. Friction soon developed between Gomez and Rojas, and in June 1953 Gomez was deposed and Rojas assumed the presidency.

GOVERNMENT COUNTERINSURGENCY ACTIONS

After the failure of the state of seige and other repressive measures taken by the Government to overcome "la violencia" during the early period (1948-53), President Rojas[1] was temporarily successful in curbing the political turmoil with an offer of amnesty. However, during his tenure as president, Rojas reverted to tough measures similar to those used by his predecessors. Sizeable military campaigns were undertaken to destroy guerrilla forces, and

large zones of military operations were placed under or subjected to martial law. Rojas also armed his own civilian followers, who were given the name of pajaros (birds). These pajaros operated like thugs and gunmen, naturally gaining an unsavory reputation, and continued to take part in the violence even after Rojas was ousted from power in 1957. During the 1953-57 Rojas reign, the Army and the police were unsuccessful in operations against the perpetrators of violence and actually committed acts of retaliation and brutality, such that the peasants in the affected areas developed a suspicion and fear of the Government in general and the so-called security forces in particular.

NATIONAL FRONT COALITION GOVERNMENT

The political leaders of both parties realized that the dictatorial rule of Rojas had to be ended. Therefore, at the initiative of several Liberal Party leaders, particularly the able and distinguished Alberto Lleras Camargo, a civic front (National Front) was proposed in the spring of 1956 to unite the Conservative and Liberal parties against the Rojas regime. The political leaders of the two parties first agreed on a truce until constitutional government could be firmly established in Colombia. In July 1957 this agreement was surfaced following Rojas' fall. The agreement was a proposal for constitutional reform providing for parity between the two parties in all branches of Government. The agreement was to be viable for 12 years, the presidency alternating between the two parties during this period.

Some minor problems arose in the beginning because the Conservatives, who were to have the first 4-year presidency, could not decide on a candidate. With this it was decided that the Liberals would have the first 4-year term. The unanimous choice was Alberto L eras Camargo. At this time it was decided to extend the National Front coalition from 12 to 16 years, that is until 1974. The National Front made it clear that the insurgency no longer had partisan political basis or support; it was now considered outright banditry and started to be dealt with as such. Therefore, with the establishment of the National Front coalition and election of Alberto Lleras Camargo, a form of constitutional government returned to Colombia.

A change in policy developed with the presidency of Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958-62). During his first three years in office he pursued a policy of appeasement and was generally loath to undertake aggressive military action, in the belief that it would only magnify the problem. He expected the violence to dissipate, because the creation of the National Front presumably had removed the original reason for rural violence on the part of partisan political groups. However, by 1961 the president realized that appeasement would not root out the seemingly implacable combat and that new policies were needed to halt the endemic violence. Rural violence, at this point, was degenerating into common banditry on a large scale and actually into a Communist insurgency.

MILITARY COUNTERINSURGENCY ACTIONS

Up until this time many, even in the military, seemed to have adopted a negative attitude toward any resolving of the violence problem. Psychologically the Army personnel were unprepared to fight fellow countrymen. Also, the army itself had no training in the methods of counterguerrilla warfare. The senior commanders had no organized plan to combat the bandits, and consequently lower level commanders exhibited a tendency to improvise rather than apply any sound military principles consistently against rural banditry and insurgency.

In 1961 and 1962 General Alberto Ruiz Novoa[2], the Army commander, developed a tactical antiviolence plan: Plan Lazo (plan snare), derived from the Colombian experience in bandit fighting and from advice and training given to the army by the US Army Mission and by a US Military Mobile Training Team.

Major General Alberto Ruiz Novoa is quoted in Time as saying:

> We learned from Cyprus, Algeria and others such experiences that you cannot defeat a guerrilla by regular warfare. You have to take away the support of the population.[3]

The basis of Ruiz's campaign or plan was military civic action to make friends among the campesinos together with an aggressive military offensive built around 100 mobile 12-man killer teams. This plan, though a controversial matter initially because of the aggressive role it envisaged for the military, was adopted and was distributed to all commanders by the spring of 1962.

Plan Lazo was given firmer impetus after August 1962 when the new president, Guillermo Leon Valencia, took office and General Ruiz Novoa was appointed the Minister of Defense. A new policy came into being in which the police as well as the military troops were equipped to carry out offensive antibandit campaigns through increasing the mobility of the security troops, providing them with greater firepower, and training them in unconventional warfare. Ranger (lancero) companies, from which the 12-man killer teams came, were quickly trained, helicopters were assigned to provide greater pursuit capabilities, reconnaissance and intelligence techniques were modernized and intensified.

In some villages, the military investigated every citizen, questioned unarmed strangers, and shot on sight any armed newcomers. Many of Ruiz's patrols were disguised as civilian to invite bandit attacks. Army undercover men infiltrated bandit gangs and led them into ambush. The Colombian pilots were taught air development tactics in the United States and the Colombian military was equipped with many helicopters from the United States to make their campaign very effective.

The military, particularly the army, launched an extensive propaganda[4] campaign to convince the inhabitants of the troubled areas that the armed forces, not the bandits, were their true friends and protectors.

Large-scale civic action[5] projects were also started by the Army to win the allegiance of the rural populace. The civic action

projects include road building, the construction of health centers, and well digging. In addition, on a lesser scale, security battalions carried out jornadas (monthly field days), during which they provided such services as free haircuts, shoe repair, medical and veterinary services, and occasionally military band concerts. These propaganda and civic action efforts reduced the traditional suspicion regarding the military and facilitated the acquisition of intelligence concerning bandit movements and peasant support apparatus.

Taking the impetus from the above, additional measures were undertaken to elicit greater cooperation from the inhabitants of the afflicted areas. Former guerrillas were used as government intelligence agents in areas where they were familiar with the people and the terrain. Local governments, the army and police offered attractive rewards for information leading to the apprehension of bandit leaders. The army was authorized to distribute arms among peasants of proven character for defense against bandit raids.

One of the major causes of the reduction of violence has been an increased coordination effected between the three military services, the DAS (Department Administration - de Seguridad-Administracion--Department of Security) and the national police. In addition to the police the DAS also participated through the Rural Security Forces, known as the rurales, who are most numerous in the eastern plains. The rurales, an indigenous organization similar to the Texas Rangers, began as a vigilante group in 1954, was legalized in 1957, and in 1960 placed under the control of the DAS. Additional ranger units have been set up in such departments as Tolima, but most of them have not had comparable success.

Collaboration by the Air Force has been provided by air lift and other air support services in attacks against bandit groups, and in assorted civic action projects such as a flying medical dispensary and operations of the nonprofit airline, SATENA.

The Navy has provided water transportation to isolated areas and repair facilities for river and coastal craft.

EXAMPLES OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

While the Government forces virtually ended large-scale incidents of violence by the mid-1960's, they have been relatively ineffective in preventing the movement of bands of outlaws or guerrillas. Generally, the campaign against guerrilla insurgents consisted of piecemeal operations, highlighted by the putting together special task forces, as in the case of the military drive against the Communist Marquetalia enclave,[6] which began in 1964 and was ultimately successful. In this operation, a task force of approximately 3,000 troops were organized into three battalions and one lancero company and given the initial objective of isolating the borders of the zone and of carrying out civic action projects inside them. Strong resistance led by "Tiro Fijo" (Sure Shot) forced the withdrawal of one of the battalions, but eventually the guerrilla leader's headquarters was captured when five helicopters were assigned to support the operation. The operation continued and the military occupied most of Marquetalia after killing many guerrillas at minimal cost to Government troops. This did not completely solve the problem because guerrillas continued to execute hit and run raids, even

though military pressure eventually forced "Tiro Fijo" to move to the nearby Riochiquito area where he joined with another local guerrilla leader. The depredations of these two provoked another Government offensive, this time by four battalions, but Tiro Fijo and most of the guerrillas evaded the Government forces.

In March 1965 the Army began another operation against the El Pato area (just east of Riochiquito) which then was considered to have become more troublesome than Marquetalia. Tactical surprise was achieved with helicopters and a considerable amount of equipment was seized. Again most of the guerrillas escaped, but military pressure was maintained in El Pato and by April 1965 the area was rated secure.

In the period throughout 1967 and 1968 the military increased its pressure on the country's assorted guerrilla bands. For example, in 1967 the Government felt it had pinpointed most ELN elements and by 1968 through continued Government pressure these ELN forces had been contained by the Government. The Government forces have continued to gain victories, but as of this writing it is believed there are still guerrilla groups in existence.

In 1968 this continual Government counterguerrilla action produced a most significant victory. Through information received via an intelligence informant, Government forces succeeded in killing Ciro Trijillo Castano, a key commander of the FARC (reported to have been deputy commander of FARC itself).

Despite the considerable success of its campaigns against the troubled zones of mixed criminal banditry and Communist guerrilla

activity, the Colombian Government has acknowledge that much more is needed, and that aggressive military action can be self-defeating if it alienates the people. Government leaders have recognized that socioeconomic development and rehabilitation are necessary not only to stabilize the areas of past turmoil, but also to prevent the growth there of a new generation of troublemakers. A primary problem is that of widespread rural unemployment, which has led men and youths to turn to crime in the countryside or to migrate to the cities, where they have found employment or become involved in urban crime.[7]

The combination of all of these measures led to the waning of rural violence in the 1960's and to an increasing ratio of bandit deaths compared with deaths of civilians and security troops.[8] Many areas, even large ones, which from the beginning had experienced violence became free of it. One important factor in this process was that peasants in areas which had been hostile to the Government forces because of former military participation in partisan vendettas became neutral or even friendly to the government forces. This changing attitude of the peasants also stemmed from collateral measures which were largely begun after 1963. Such measures or actions as literacy training, construction of school facilities by the Army (in cooperation with the Minister of Education and Public Works), and Army sponsorship of rural electrification in small villages. The Church and other private groups have contributed to some efforts such as a peace crusade which, in one instance, culminated in a peace pact signed by local residents and was presided over by a parish priest.

SOCIOLOGICAL--PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIONS

Major Oscar Leonel Barrera Rueda in his article in Revista de las Fuerzas Armedas stated,[9]

> It is very different and more difficult to combat guerrillas in their own territory when your regular forces and theirs come from the same social and political background and may have family among those up in arms, than to do so in a colony or in occupied enemy countries.[10]

Prior to 1961, both public and private agencies (and particularly the Army) were reluctant to enforce active antiguerrilla policies because they feared criticism and resentment of the people and possible political repercussions which would prevent large-scale popular or national support. The principal mission, therefore, in social-psychological field consisted in demonstrating to the people that their legitimate Government had both authority and strength and that the Government forces were effective and could provide better protection than could the bandits. This type of operation was aimed at adding another dimension to the fight against the guerrillas. Major Barrera pointed out

> . . . there is a better way of eliminating guerrillas than pursuing them within the population; it consists in turning the latter against the guerrillas.[11,12]

This is one of the objectives of psychological operations, perhaps the one on which the greatest emphasis has been placed in Colombia. One of the most important elements of guerrilla warfare is the human element, which requires at least some action in the sociological/psychological field. Every discontented, bitter nonconformist

individual, wounded in whatever form by the society of which he is a part, is a potential guerrilla; if to this spiritual or mental state there is added an ideological factor sufficiently powerful to convince the nonconformist that there exists another way of life achievable by implanting a governmental system different from the existing one, from this rebel comes the revolutionary. With the above premise in mind and considering the two basically different types of guerrilla activities, banditry and Communist-backed, psychological operations were pursued.

Extensively employed in direct support of military operations in the actual zones affected by the bandits, tactical psychological action made it easier for the security forces to isolate the anti-Government groups, to attract the support of the civil population, to capture or destroy the enemy, and to consolidate the troubled areas.

Psychological operations were carefully integrated with the combat operations and were created and executed with the following purposes in mind:

1. To awaken in the Colombian populace its faith in the efficiency and effectiveness of the security forces against the bandits and guerrillas.

2. To reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's combat activities.

3. To create a state of aversion toward the bandits and guerrillas.

4. To deny to the bandits, gangs, or guerrillas the help of the civilian elements.

5. To facilitate the reorganization, reconstruction, and control of the affected areas by the Colombian government.

Fundamentally, two types of actions were taken to accomplish these purposes: propaganda and civic action. Propaganda-type actions were aimed at counteracting the peoples' fear and distrust of the Government security forces, destroy the terror inspired by the bandits and guerrillas, and inculcate in the populace a spirit of self-defense and aggression toward the anti-Government elements. Civic actions were designed to eliminate the causes of violence by bettering the standard of living of the populace.[13]

PROPAGANDA

The propaganda campaign was directed toward[14]

1. The civilian populace as a whole.

2. The civilian and ecclesiastical authorities and leaders.

3. The troops that carry out military operations and military civic action operations and was specifically directed against

   a. Anti-Government and illegal armed organizations.

   b. Political organizations that support the illegal organizations and groups.

Specific aims for the first group were to remove the aid given the gangs by illegal arms suppliers and carriers who came from the general populace, and to make the control by the Government felt; to awaken public opinion to cause the people to reject the anti-Government groups and to place the populace under such control that people will fear for their lives if they violate the imposed norms; and to make the civilians a fountain of information for the military.[15]

In the second group, the specific aims were to insure that civilian, ecclesiastical, and military authorities at all levels were

informed of Government actions, so as to provide a coordinated Government effort, and to insure that local authorities knew the reasons for transfer or movement of Government forces. These actions were also to provide for the selection of better lower-echelon civilian authorities that would be more willing to put away their partisan passions and direct their authority and efforts for the good of the region and the country as a whole.

In the third group, the specific aims were to maintain high morale, and to impress upon the soldiers the conviction that it is necessary and morally right to fight the anti-Government groups resolutely and to guarantee an individual and collective troop conduct adjusted to the moral norms of society. In Colombia today a soldier knows he will be severely punished for stealing so much as an orange from a campesino.[16]

Specific aims directed against the anti-Government and illegal armed organizations were to discredit guerrilla leaders and to create distrust among the men that make up the bands. In addition, it was to create distrust of the bandits by the civilian populace, aid desertion among the gangs, and create rivalries among the regional leaders themselves.

Actions directed against political organizations supporting subversives were aimed at bringing into disrepute the political leaders who supported these gangs and guerrillas, to break up the Communist political-military organization, to breed distrust between the political (Communist) leaders and the gang (bandit) leaders, and then expose to the populace the people who were secretly aiding the

guerrillas or bandit gangs.

The operational concept in the psychological field has consisted of the planned and phased release of information via posters, leaflets, press releases, radio transmissions, movies and speeches, using loudspeakers in the affected zones, followed by civic-action in the agricultural, sanitation, and educational fields by the Government troops (brigade and battalion size units), plus using and incorporating all existing agencies in the urban or rural areas. In the rural areas a major role has been played by Propaganda Platoons. In addition, propaganda units of appropriate size (large and small) have been organized to provide the capability of carrying out psychological (propaganda) action in whatever region of the country it is needed to support Government operations.

A most effective psychological campaign for regions that had been hard hit by gang and guerrilla violence was developed and conducted in the following manner:

A psychological campaign was undertaken to bring into disrepute the gang or guerrilla leader in the zones where they were considered great protectors by the particular rural population. The people, all too easily fooled, believed, through political indoctrination, threats, or tales, that they would die en masse at the hands of the Government forces if the gang or guerrilla leader was not there to protect them. To counter this belief, the Government would start presenting in all the towns and hamlets photographs and other irrefutable proof of the last massacres of innocent victims. This

effort would be stepped up to a high pitch at the time the capabilities of the Government security forces had increased sufficiently so that the anti-Government forces would not attack, fearing a defeat in a direct encounter with Government forces.

Following the success of the above, the next step was to improve a series of control measures[17] widely published in the particular zone or area. The people were told the reason for these controls was to allow the Government Security Forces to identify and kill the bandits or guerrillas and to protect the innocent people. However, these controls had a more far-reaching final aim, which was to take the hand of the bandit or guerrilla off the population and put the population under the hand of the Government. Great emphasis was placed on respecting the life of everyone in the civilian population and eliminating the bandits or guerrillas.

In order to counter the anti-Government forces, in areas where an unwilling populace existed, more drastic measures were taken within humanitarian principles. These measures included a massive evacuation of hamlets and the organization of strong self-defense units.

Subsequent measures would entail actions of great psychological impact on the local population, such as identification and burial of victims by the Government forces in the place in which assaults had taken place. This would be a lasting reminder for the people of the violence caused by the bandits or guerrillas.

In addition the following tactics were also used as the circumstances appeared appropriate: black propaganda, dissemination of rumors which exploited the superstitious spirit of the people,

indoctrination of captured personnel, continual distribution of leaflets, employment of loudspeakers during armed action and shortly thereafter, continual instruction of the cadre and troops until each man of the Government forces is converted into an agent of the psychological war and can be of assistance to bringing the population in his operational zone under Government control.

CIVIC ACTION

While it was in 1961, as army commander that General Ruiz Novoa started his coordinated campaign against the guerrillas, it wasn't until his appointment as War Minister in 1962, and through the actions he took during his tenure 1962-64, that the back of the 16-year guerrilla war was broken. This he did by a judicious combination of armed action, psychological actions and military civic actions. Clearly, the security aspect was the most important factor. The villagers were left in no doubt as to what might happen to them if they failed to provide the necessary information about guerrilla activities in their vicinity. Some degree of toughness was needed to outbid the extraordinary unpleasant methods of some of these guerrillas. The Army had to assert its authority with vigor and keep on attacking. By the early 1960's, in the violence areas, the Army had an extensive network of observation posts that would provide minute details about the smallest activities in the villages. These observers knew when any newcomer arrived in a village and where he was staying. If the methods sometimes were rough, the situation would seem to leave no alternative, or the tactics of the guerrillas would

frequently be horrifying.

It is against this background that civic action proved so timely and effective in Colombia. While it may have some limited effect on the economic development of the country, it is considered absolutely vital in enlisting the confidence of the campesino and in bringing order to areas cleared of the guerrillas. Civic action is considered by the Colombian Army as a new combat weapon in the campaign against the guerrillas, aimed at denying the guerrillas their previous support in the countryside. Part of this civic action is straightforward propaganda (discussed earlier). However, in addition, a considerable segment of the Colombian Army (Navy and Air Force are also active in civic action)[18], is geared to civic action in the form of health, education, and road-building programs.

In Colombia coordination and initiation of civic action is at the highest level in Government. By Presidential Decree, 1381, there was established the National Committee of Military-Civic Action.[19] The Committee's Secretary is the War Minister; other members are the Ministers of Government, Education, Health, Agriculture, and Public Works, as well as additional public officials and private individuals. The committee has its counterparts at lower levels of government, and a cooperative effort is put forth by all. Edward Bernard Glick in his book, Peaceful Conflict, quotes former Colombian War Minister General Alberto Ruiz Novoa on this type cooperation as follows:

> Military civic action requires coordination among the different government levels and is carried out by committees composed of military and civilian authorities; ecclessiastic authorities are also invited to participate, as well

> as all those individuals and groups who desire to collaborate. The task of the committees is to promote the cooperation of the civilian population through campaigns of social, educational, and communal action for the betterment of the population.
>
> The Colombian experience has shown the excellent results that are obtained through the establishment of these committees, and which are evident in the cooperation that all the citizens have offered in the actions accomplished.[20]

The civic action efforts of the three military forces (Army, Navy, and Air Force) are coordinated under a unique body in the Ministry of Defense, called Department No. 6. This body, in collaboration with other joint service departments, plans civic action for a year in advance. On the basis of this plan, the commanding general gives orders to each of the three armed forces as to what has to be done. The head of Department No. 6 is charged to coordinate with other ministries and agencies--Foreign Affairs, Public Works, Health, etc., and also the USAID--to determine what funds are available. No special budget is set up for civic action; funds are taken from the normal appropriation budget.

The civic action program of the Army is completely infused throughout the Army. Every unit in the Army receives basic training in civic action and is supposed to carry out a mission. The Engineer battalions are doing roadbuilding and well-drilling. The other arms of the service have responsibility for geographical divisions of the country, an arrangement that originally led to excessive competition, but subsequently, under fairly effective coordination and financial control from headquarters in Bogota, ineffective and excessive competition was greatly reduced.

Presently this limited competition is healthy and is instrumental in development of vigorous initiative even in areas unaffected by guerrillas. As an example; the infantry school has an area of responsibility around Bogota where no violence problem existed; however, due to t drift or bandits out of the countryside into the town (thanks to the Army's success in the countryside), the area was potentially explosive. The Army, therefore, on its own initiative conducted a survey of educational and road problems and estimated the needs of the region. One survey revealed that the land was too infertile for widespread arable agriculture. The Army therefore undertook a campaign to persuade farmers to switch to developing a pork industry, and fruit growing. Along with this they induced the Ministry of Agriculture to supply the necessary help in the form of a good strain of pigs and suitable seeds. Due to the coordinated concern and authority at the highest level (Dept. No. 6) the Army can and does borrow technicians, doctors, and other persons with other kinds of expertise from the Government and the university to give genuine professional support to this type civic-action.

This borrowing of expertise is necessary due, in part, to the calibre of the raw material recruited into the Colombian Army. As in so many countries, even though military service is theoretically universal, those of advanced education systematically manage to elude it. In practice, only about 20 percent of those of a given age-group get called up, and foremost among those who succeed in obtaining exemption are students.[21] This is recognized by the Army as one of the major deficiencies in its civic action program, and steps are being

taken to correct it. As an initial measure, some 150 students--medical, legal, dental, etc.--are being recruited on a short-term basis. They are called up for three months, receiving one month of military training and operating for two months in their own professional field in the villages.[22] This program has great possibilities but requires great effort to become politically acceptable.

For those who are conscripted, there is a basic military training period of 20 weeks, followed by antiguerrilla instruction lasting nine weeks. The second period includes education on relationships with the civilian population, how to befriend the campesino, and how to undertake simple tasks of hygiene and rural development. Officers and NCO's receive more elaborate training. The promotion course for lieutenant to captain is strongly oriented toward civic action.[23] The Army realized the needs of the country and placed emphasis on training its people for the task.

As indicated previously a crucial part of the Colombian civic action program is coordination and good working relationships by the military with the other various civilian agencies. In theory, the combination in Colombia of these agencies, which possess the necessary funds,[24] with the Army, who possesses the executive means, should be complementary and fruitful. Early experience in Colombia has proven that this relationship has not always been the best possible. The Army's initiative in selecting civic action projects has many times been guided by security consideration. This has meant frequently by-passing the civilian agencies. These civilian agencies have been

affronted by this by-passing and sometimes genuinely question the choice of the task undertaken by the military. In addition, it has been found that special allocation of funds for civic action programs are necessary within the budget of the Ministry of Defense. Total dependence of the military projects upon appropriation of funds by each civilian agency concerned sometimes hampers and frustrates the object of the program. This is because the needs for development projects, as seen by the military, usually involve tasks that have not been contemplated within the scope of the particular budgets.

Since the majority of the civic action projects undertaken by the military are eventually runed over to civilian agencies to continue and improve upon them for national development, coordination is most important prior to and during the project operation. The experience of Colombia along this line has shown that, though developmentation and impact projects need not necessarily be compatible, very careful forethought and early coordination and agreement by all agencies concerned is required if the two concepts are not to become at loggerheads and hurt the basic objective of the combined Government program.

Many of the terrorists that took part in the violence discussed earlier in this paper were ex-servicemen. Most of those servicemen had been former campesinos who, upon release from the Army, returned to their old areas. Since part of his training was for armed conflict, if he could not find useful employment in his old area the ex-servicemen

had a tendency to turn to a life of terrorism. Realizing this problem, the Army decided to do something about it.

Colombia has started a major program of prerelease training to insure that the largest possible number of ex-servicemen are trained for meaningful civilian work before they leave the service. This is being done through SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje).[24] It is hoped that all servicemen would be put through this technical training organization. It is financed partially by a tax on private business. Every firm that employs more than 10 people must pay 2 percent of its total wage bill to SENA. The Army pays 5 percent of its total wage bill. In 1967 there were 27 SENA instructional schools in the country[25] specializing in various forms of manual skills.

SENA is industry-directed and therefore it is industry which calls the tune in respect to number of trainees and type of courses given. As far as servicemen are concerned, a principal limiting factor is not the availability of places so much as the number of servicemen sufficiently educated to benefit by this form of training. Therefore, supporting this program is a literacy training program designed to teach about 9,000 illiterate recruits annually to read, write, and do simple arithmetic.[26] This was started in 1963. Teaching laboratories have been installed in the Army recruit training centers. Recruits receive 100 hours of instruction. The program has proven very successful. Training is also continued, where necessary, after arrival at the unit by either military or civilian instructors.

The civic action operations in Colombia covers a wide spectrum of activities from road-building projects to one-shot operations known as Civic Action Field Days.

One of the most important road-building projects has been the Tolima Highway which was initiated several years ago as a joint effort of the Colombian Army and the Minister of Public Works. The project involves construction of 96 miles of a highway between Ataco in Tolima and Palmira in Valle plus about 30 miles of connecting road at the eastern end. The road bisects an area of over 2,000 square miles that had been one of the most actively violent areas in Colombia. This road is essential both to effective military movement and to the development of the region. Although a vital project in respect to military and development, it was not moving along very well. With the increased emphasis on civic action, five Army companies were put to work on the road in 1965. Through this Army effort, combined with US financial aid, the road was essentially completed for use in late 1965. In addition, two more civic action road projects were completed in 1965 by an Engineer Battalion. These roads are clearly of developmental and strategic importance to Colombia.

Another very important civic action feature has been construction of health clinics, along with the institution of additional health services. The planning for this was directed by the Colombian Army Command with assistance of US Army officers. Its objectives were to supply free medical care in areas where it was not available and to develop a health plan and a first-aid education program. In addition, it was designed to improve sanitation conditions in towns, to provide

information about the nutritional values of food, and to instruct those engaged in housebuilding to meet minimum hygiene standards. This project was started in early 1964 and was aimed at providing these health services for about 100,000 people living in 19 separate areas, over half of them living in violence areas. Up to that time, these areas had no medical facilities whatever. Near the end of 1964, 18 fixed health centers had already been established.

The chief result of this work, in addition to the obvious health benefits, has been the development of civic pride in the towns and villages concerned, which provides a spur to the formation of local community development committees for the accomplishment of other civic projects. The main problem in Colombia, as would be true in most developing countries, is the shortage of medical personnel.

Another important civic action undertaking in the health and sanitation area has been the provision of increased and improved supplies of drinking water. The work consists of drilling wells, installing chlorination equipment, building storage tanks, and treating water. The direction of the program is under the Armed Forces General Command; its administration is under the commanding officer of a battlion of support engineers.[28] The project, when started in 1964, envisioned the drilling of 19 water wells in areas where water was insufficient and often contaminated. Each well is estimated to benefit about 3,000 people. The armed forces also train local personnel to operate the system, giving theoretical and practical instructions on procedures. In the beginning the problem was shortage of equipment, but in late 1964 additional well-drilling

rigs were received from the United States. This then presented the problem of training additional personnel to operate the rigs, for which the United States also provided assistance.

Another part of civic action, slightly different from the mainly developmental part but extremely important in counterinsurgency, has been impact civic action, peculiar to Colombia, at least in the consistency and regularity with which it is employed. In Colombia monthly Civic Action Field Days are held. This is a dramatic occasion--a cross between an outside village fete and an Army maneuver--to which campesinos will come from up to 10 miles around for the various services it provides.[29] The people may have their ailments attended to, their teeth drawn, their hair cut, their shoes soled, and many other services, all provided free of charge. The Army and the government have taken these occasions very seriously, and very often they are attended by top-level generals and politicians. During these occasions these top rank military and political figures listen attentively to the needs and complaints of the local headman, judge, or leader of the communal junta or local organization, the leaders which the Government is anxious to build up in all areas. This, of course, becomes a very meaningful supplement to the specific civic action project. A report for the period between December 1963 and August 1964 shows these operations provided 53,000 medical consultations, 40,000 dental operations, 42,000 first-aid and immunization treatments, and 51,000 haircuts and shoe repairs.[30]

These occasions have proven to be extremely popular. They take place in areas where the services provided by the Army are unique and unprecedented; where there are likely to be no medical and dental facilities whatever. These proceedings, without doubt, do a great deal to improve the image of the Army. The problem has been of follow-up. It may be months before another Civic Action Field Day can be held in the same area. The Government is certainly conscious of the problem. Here the United States can provide assistance and has done so. With Colombian initiative, US Peace Corps volunteers and their Colombian counterparts are assisting in the follow-up actions in health, education and to generally stimulate local community interest.

In order to get at the youth in the violence-affected areas, the Army started a Youth Camp Program. It was felt that, with so many sinister influences at work, some effort to direct the thoughts of young people to positive ends was needed.[31] In 1964 four camps were held in violence-affected areas. Over 200 boys between ages of 9 and 15 took part for two weeks. The program consisted of a conference on Colombian history, government, instruction in patriotic songs and personal hygiene, and group athletics. The program received active support from local industry, agriculturalists, schools, and churches. The year following its initiation, an additional 16 camps were scheduled. These youth centers, which are in effect Army schools, are presently considered a vital aspect of civic action in the violence area.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES

1. The Government of Rajas is considered one of a military dictator and has been criticized for the extreme repressive measures taken during his tenure.

2. General Alberto Ruiz Novoa was Commander of the Colombian Military detachment that fought in Korea during the Korean conflict.

3. "Colombia: Stamping Out La Violencia," Time, 13 March 1964, p. 41.

4. Psychological Actions are discussed in great detail later in this chapter.

5. Civic Action is discussed in great detail later in this chapter.

6. "Colombia: The Backlands Violence is Almost Ended," Time, 26 January 1964, p. 35.

7. See section on Civic Action, discussed later in this chapter, for more details on this aspect of counterguerrilla activity.

8. John J. Finan, et al. Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict, Vol III, The Experiences in Africa and Latin America, p. 426.

9. Major Oscar Leonel Barrera Rueda, "Sociological Action in Support of Counterguerrilla Operations," Revista de las Fuerzas Armedas, January, February 1965, p. 475.

10. Major Barrera's article was written in Spanish and the quote as well as many others from that article are not official translations since no readily available translation facility is available at the USAWC. The translation was done through the gracious assistance of my wife and fellow students.

11. Major Oscar Leonel Barrera Rueda, "Sociological Action in Support of Counterguerrilla Operations," Revista de las Fuerzas Armedas, January, February, 1965, p. 476.

12. General Ruiz made reference to this type operation as given on p. 26 of this paper.

13. Due to the importance of civic action it is discussed in great detail later in this chapter.

14. Major Oscar Leonel Barrera Rueda, "Sociological Action in Support of Counterguerrilla Operations," Revista de las Fuerzas Armedas, January, February 1965, p. 476.

15. These actions tie in closely with the military operations discussed earlier in this chapter, pp. 27 and 31, and later in this chapter, p. 36.

16. Hugh Hanning, The Peaceful Uses of Military Forces, 1967, p. 10.

17. Control measures such as: curfew, carrying of identification cards, limited travel, etc.

18. This paper is aimed at a study of the Army's activity; therefore very little is discussed in detail on the Air Force and Navy other than the general information given earlier in this chapter, p. 29.

19. Edward Bernard Glick, Peaceful Conflict, 1967, p. 105.

20. Ibid., pp. 104-105.

21. Hugh Hanning, The Peaceful Uses of Military Forces, 1967, p. 75.

22. Ibid., p. 75.

23. Ibid., p. 76.

24. The funding for civic action is discussed earlier in this paper, p. 38.

25. Hugh Hanning, The Peaceful Uses of Military Forces, 1967, p. 77.

26. Ibid., p. 77.

27. Ibid., p. 78.

28. Ibid., p. 79.

29. Ibid., p. 80.

30. Ibid., p. 80.

31. This problem was discussed earlier in this chapter, p. 31.

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

ANALYSIS

Colombia has been a land of violence for most of its years; however the violence that erupted in 1948 is believed by many to be the most sustained and severe in the country's history. This violence which began in 1948 is considered by most to have started due to political actions but basically not as being Communist-controlled. The two traditional political parties of Colombia, Liberal and Conservative, battled each other covertly and openly. This battle actually resulted in massive killings. The total number of deaths resulting from this has been given as between 150,000 and 300,000. The Government's actions during this period varied from extreme suppression to declarations of amnesty.

One of the problems that has caused some difficulty for the Colombian Government has been that of distinguishing between banditry and insurgency-guerrilla activities. A number of the insurgents have operated as bandits for years and many are believed to be more interested in personal gains than in furthering any political goals.

While Communist parties had been present in Colombia for years prior to 1948, communism was not considered to be the prime influence of the violence that erupted in 1948. The Communist movement has, however, gained some increased influence in Colombia in recent years, particularly since the early 1960's when some of the bandit gangs became incorporated in the Communist organizations. The split in

the world Communist movement has, as in other countries, had its dividing influence among Communists in Colombia. The split in ideology is such that there appears to be no immediate consolidated and coordinated threat to the Colombian Government, particularly in light of the counterinsurgency actions taken by the Colombian Government since 1961.

The political rivalry which contributed greatly to the violence and insurgency was finally ended in 1958 by the institution of the National Front. The traditional political parties (Liberal and Conservative) realized that, unless they did something, the political institutions in Colombia were doomed. The realization came to the forefront during the military government of Rojas (1953-57). With the assistance of the military junta that overthrew Rojas, the two political parties formed a coalition (National Front) which restored some form of constitutional political government to Colombia in 1958. The National Front coalition is scheduled to continue until 1974 under a constitutional amendment, approved by a plebiscite, which provides for alternating the presidency between Liberals and Conservatives every four years.

In 1961 the Government realized a change in policy was needed to counter the insurgency situation, and the Army provided the nucleus for a coordinated plan and intensified counterinsurgency operations. The Army therefore was used extensively. Its role included fighting the insurgent to provide security and pacification for the people and conducting large-scale propaganda campaigns and a comprehensive and far-reaching civic action program. The key to the Army's efforts

has been high-level initiation and coordination with push and active participation by top officials, political, civilian, and military, from the president on down.

In the propaganda efforts the Army organized units of appropriate size to operate at all levels. The propaganda campaigns were well coordinated with all actions taken by the Army in the counter-insurgency struggle. The specific aims of the propaganda efforts were to convince the populace of the effectiveness of the Government forces against the guerrillas, and to eliminate the former animosity of the people toward the Government military forces. In addition it was planned to darken the image of the guerrillas, particularly their leaders, and thus cut off the assistance they received from the civilians.

All efforts--military and civic-action--were coordinated prior to or during the propaganda campaigns or were used as follow-up operations. These actions were aimed at convincing the populace that the Government was definitely interested in them and was a better resort than the guerrillas.

Starting in 1961 the Army reorganized, set up a comprehensive plan, undertook extensive training, and began an earnest aggressive military offensive against the guerrillas. The Army utilized lessons learned by others in similar situations, received aid and training from the United States, and organized their antiguerrilla combat forces into small 12-man mobile killer teams. These teams, combined with larger army units when necessary, were effective in bringing extreme pressure to bear on the enemy forces.

Along with the revised military offensive, the Army initiated extensive civic action programs in road building, well drilling, education for the populace, literacy training for the soldiers, and provision of assistance and training for servicemen who would be returning to civilian status.

Colombia's success, with its Presidential Decree No.1381, creating the National Committee on Military-Civic Action and its subsequent enforcement of coordination, cooperation, and top-level emphasis on military-civic action is best summarized in the following quote from Mr. Hugh Hanning's book on Peaceful Uses of Military Forces.

> The first prerequisite (for a successful civic-action program) is amicable military civilian relations. These are most likely to be achieved when the head of state has taken a personal interest in the programme. . . . Where this happens and a programme is personally sponsored from the very top, cooperation between the various ministries is enhanced.[1]

In addition to the civic-action program, Colombia's entire counter-insurgency program has been exemplified by coordination, cooperation, and top-level emphasis given to counterinsurgency and counterguerrilla training and operations.

CONCLUSIONS

The Army has played an important part in Colombia's counter-insurgency struggle. The roles and missions of the Colombian Army since 1948 have been diverse and in many cases unique for an Army, particularly one in Latin America. The specific actions and activities in which the Army has taken part have been discussed in detail.

From this detailed discussion it is concluded that the following changes and actions undertaken by the Army lie at the heart of their program and produced a large degree of success:

1. The Army was reorganized and trained to fight a guerrilla war.

2. A comprehensive plan was developed for all units to follow in fighting the guerrillas.

3. Considerable emphasis was placed on disciplining the soldiers to end their abusive acts against the civilians and to provide a better image of the soldiers to the populace.

4. The Army was given a mission for civic action, and was employed extensively in that capacity.

5. The Army initiated and employed a comprehensive propaganda campaign well coordinated with the entire Army's counterinsurgency plan so as to receive maximum benefit, physically, sociologically, and psychologically.

6. The Army coordinated all their counterinsurgency activities both throughout its own organization and with all Government agencies, to provide a complete action program, attacking the guerrilla militarily, while also attacking the social problems of the people and gaining their confidence.

In addition to the specific changes and actions noted above, certain other changes and/or actions, not completely the Army's, are concluded to have made a major contribution to the Army's success. These are:

1. The coordination and emphasis given to counterinsurgency at the top-level of Government, particularly in the civic-action program.

2. The aid provided by the United States in military and engineering equipment and training, nonmilitary training, and economic assistance.

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CHAPTER VII FOOTNOTES

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