AD-773 529

THE HUKBALAHAP INSURGENCY, 1948-1954: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES, MISSIONS AND DOCTRINE OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY FORCES

William C. Moore

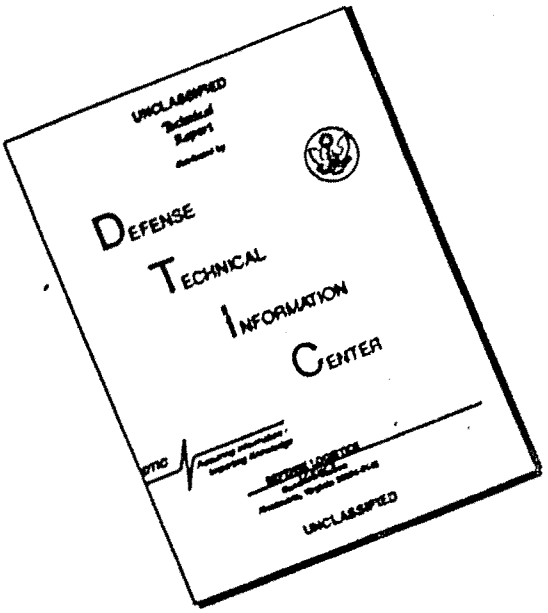
Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

1 March 1971

DISTRIBUTED BY:

NTIS
National Technical Information Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield Va. 22151

DISCLAIMER NOTICE



THIS DOCUMENT IS BEST QUALITY AVAILABLE. THE COPY FURNISHED TO DTIC CONTAINED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF PAGES WHICH DO NOT REPRODUCE LEGIBLY.

AD-773529

USAWC RESEARCH PAPER

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the Department of Defense.

THE HUKBALAHAP INSURGENCY, 1948-1954: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLES, MISSIONS AND DOCTRINE OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY FORCES

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT REPORT

by

Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore
Infantry

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
1 March 1971

Reproduced by
NATIONAL TECHNICAL
INFORMATION SERVICE
U S Department of Commerce
Springfield VA 22151

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: William C. Moore, LTC, INF
TITLE: The Hukbalahap Insurgency 1948-1954: An Analysis of the Roles, Missions and Doctrine of the Philippine Military Forces
FORMAT: Individual Study Project Report

To understand and effectively analyze the Hukbalahap Insurgency occurring during its crucial period of 1948 to 1954, it is necessary first to examine certain historical factors and circumstances notable in the evolution of the Communist movement in the Philippines. The seeds of the revolution were sown with the establishment of the Communist Party Philippines (CPP) in 1930 and developed to fruition in the formation of the CPP's military arm, the Hukbalahap, in 1942. The advent of World War II merely submerged the insurgency, changing its character without changing the causes of disaffection, the protaginists or their objectives. Postwar events only reinforced the intent of the Communists to resolve the basic issues by direct military challenge to and overthrow of the Philippine government. This challenge occurred in 1948.

This study seeks to review and analyze the actions and counter-actions of the adversaries to determine their strategies, doctrine, policies and programs which contributed significantly to the ultimate outcome of the conflict. The Philippine Army's victory over the Huks in 1954 and the preservation of the democratic government hardly tells the whole story. In fact, the pendulum of victory made a full swing between 1950, when the Communist objectives were readily in grasp and 1954 when only decimated and fragmented bands of insurgents remained. The story is one of the revitalization of an army, the rededication of a nation and the vitality and charisma of a leader. And as it can be written as a courageous "victory" for a democratic nation, it can also be written as a Communist "failure" that could have succeeded.

PREFACE

This Individual Study Project Report was produced under the direction of the USACDC Institute of Advanced Studies at Carlisle Barracks. This and other studies are to be used in support of the USACDCIAS study entitled, Army Roles, Missions and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC). The scope and general methodology were outlined by USACDCIAS. The data in this study has been drawn from open sources, published and unpublished, available through public institutions and government agencies. Basic assumptions common to all aspects of the ARMLIC study are on file in USACDCIAS.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		ii
PREFACE		iii
CHAPTER I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	THE HUKBALAHAP	13
	A New Beginning	13
	The Strategy	21
	The High Water Mark	24
III.	GOVERNMENT COUNTERACTION	31
	Initial Inadequacies	31
	Reorganization and Revitalization	39
	Friendship or Force	47
	Land for the Landless	53
IV.	CONCLUSIONS	56
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY		61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Struggle, insurrection and rebellion is a circumstance of every era of Philippine history. The great national heroes were revolutionaries who fought for the liberation of the people from oppression and exploitation. And so it was that men seemingly so motivated gathered on the slopes of Mt. Arayat in Pampanga Province on 29 March 1942 and formed a peoples' army to stand against a Japanese oppressor.

Only these men were Communists and their fight for "liberation" was merely the translation of the old struggle to a new environment. The Hukbalahap was their army and World War II became the opportunity to change the character of their effort. Political action, strikes, and demonstrations, the devices of the prewar struggle, would now give way to armed conflict.[1]

As the reality of the war settled on the Philippines, the Communist leadership was quick to seize the opportunity to identify with nationalism and thereby increase their power and prestige. Significantly on 10 December 1941, just two days after the outbreak of the war in the Philippines, the Communists issued an Anti-Japanese manifesto pledging support of the allied war effort, urging

---

[1]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political and Military Factors (1963), p. 20.

preparation for guerrilla warfare and calling for a united front. Through the united front appeal, the Communist were able to attract to their cause many people who would not ordinarily have associated with them. At the same time, they were able to present to the public an operating organization, some definite plans, capable leadership, experience in subversive techniques and the nucleus of a mass movement of peasants and workers upon which to build an anti-Japanese movement.[2]

By January 1942 when the Japanese entered Manila, the Communists had organized the Barrio United Defense Corps (BUDC)--another program that was ultimately to serve their cause fruitfully. The announced functions of the BUDC were:

1. To be a local town and village organization to keep order and promote anti-Japanese sentiment.

2. To protect crops and keep them out of Japanese hands.

3. To supply resistance forces operating in their area.

Although the BUDC units were not necessarily Communist manned, there is ample evidence that at least in Central Luzon, they were Communist controlled. The BUDC not only represented another element or face of the united front, but also was the de facto mass base for the movement. While their overt functions were directed against the Japanese, the BUDC more directly served the Communist ends by forming their propaganda base and operating local "clandestine" or "shadow" governments.

---

[2]Robert R. Smith, Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict (1968), p. 479.

It was in such a setting and under the leadership of Luis Taruc that the Hukbalahap was born and nurtured. Taruc was the chairman of the Military Committee of the United Front and became the field commander for the Huks; he continued throughout the viable existence of the Hukbalahap to be its most dominate personality.

Between March 1942 and August 1948, the date which best fixes the start of open Communist insurrection, the Huks became a trained and experienced army well equipped for guerrilla war. Taruc's initial force numbered only 500 armed men who were organized into five squadrons, but by 1943 had grown to at least 5,000 under arms[3] and with some estimates of as many as 18-20,000 well-armed, full-time guerrillas.[4]

By March 1943, the Huks had become so formidable and successful in their overt military actions that the Japanese mounted a major effort against the Huk redoubt in northeast Pampanga where 15 squadrons were based. The Japanese offensive caught the Huks by surprise and succeeded in surrounding and overwhelming them. Most of the squadrons were forced to disperse and exfiltrate the Japanese cordon. Simultaneous Japanese operations in Tarlac Province succeeded in driving many Huks there west into the Zambales Mountains. The Huks had been seriously hurt.

---

[3]Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center, Strengths of Insurgents and Counterinsurgents in the Philippines (1965), p. 3.

[4]Colonel Napoleon D. Valeriano in an address delivered before a class at the Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, N.C. on 2 October 1964.

As a result of the Japanese successes, the Huks were forced to reappraise the whole situation facing the Communist movement. A reorganization was ordered. The Military District or Regional Command (RECO) system was instituted, reporting methods were systemized and an intensive educational campaign was launched at all echelons of the military establishment to assure that all officers and men developed a proper political attitude. Likewise, the organization again began to expand its military coverage of Luzon by recruiting new guerrilla squadrons in areas where Hukbalahap influence had previously been weak or nonexistent. It is this period that the thinking of the Huk leaders appears to have been redirected away from the united front, anti-Japanese strategy and toward longer range, postwar aims in accord with Communist doctrine.[5]

Late in 1943 while continuing their military buildup and political expansion, the Hukbalahap renewed overt operations against the Japanese. Their stepped-up operations brought the Huks into increasing conflict with US Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) sponsored guerrilla units. Huk expansion now challenged USAFFE units for jurisdiction and command authority throughout much of northern Luzon. The results were more clashes with the USAFFE guerrillas and less and less conflict with the Japanese--a situation which continued until US forces began landings in the Philippines in October 1944. At this time, the Huks ostensibly turned again to overt warfare against the Japanese.

---

[5]Robert R. Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 40.

Behind this facade, they increased their efforts to recruit both military and political strength and to secure additional arms and ammunition. As the Japanese moved out of the barrios, villages, towns and even cities, the Hukbalahap wherever possible moved in. With great publicity and propaganda, they heralded their liberations. As towns and villages were occupied, the Huks established local governments or most frequently merely surfaced their "shadow" government from the BUDC organization. They even appointed governors in Pampanga and Laguna Provinces. It was clear that the Huk leadership wanted to impress the American forces and high command with their anti-Japanese accomplishments and at the same time make quite evident to all the nature and extent of Hukbalahap strength. This coupled with their political activity was intended to present the United States and Philippine government with a fait accompli concerning Huk control over the central plains and portions of southern Luzon.[6] By the time the American forces arrived, the Hukbalahap had established "governments" at almost every level in the provinces of Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Rizal and Laguna.

Liberation of the Philippines, however, brought real crisis to the Hukbalahap. The Philippine government refused to recognize the Huk provincial administrations and appointed its own officials pending elections scheduled for April 1946. US Army forces disarmed many Huk guerrilla units and arrested Taruc and Castro Alejandrino,

---

[6] Ibid., pp. 50-53.

his second-in-command. Taruc and Alejandrino were subsequently released and then rearrested when they refused to direct further Huk disarming. Leadership of remaining Huk guerrillas passed to Mariano Balges, the Hukbalahap political commissar. Balges began rebuilding the Hukbalahap, a task that was far less difficult than many anticipated, for the liberation period produced some new "causes" for disaffection without solving any of the old ones, which had been at the root of the prewar struggle.

As the 1946 elections approached, political turmoil grew and the Communists saw in this situation great possibility for exploitation. Political action replaced military action as the mode for attainment of Communist's objective. Huk guerrilla units disbanded, and their leaders began reconstituting prewar peasant and labor organizations. Their political activities soon became allied with the non-Communist liberals in the formation of the Democratic Alliance (DA). This organization became a rallying point for various elements dissatisfied with the trend of events in postwar Philippines. The DA quickly evolved into the political party in opposition to the dominate Nacionalista Party. In many ways the Alliance appeared to be a reincarnation of the United Front. Although the DA never came under complete Communist domination, many of its programs and policies bore heavy Communist influence. Further political turmoil resulted in a split among the top Nacionalista Party leadership and the formation of the Liberal Party with Roxas as its presidential candidate. This new party's name was certainly not representative of its leaning. The Liberal Party was made up of conservatives and

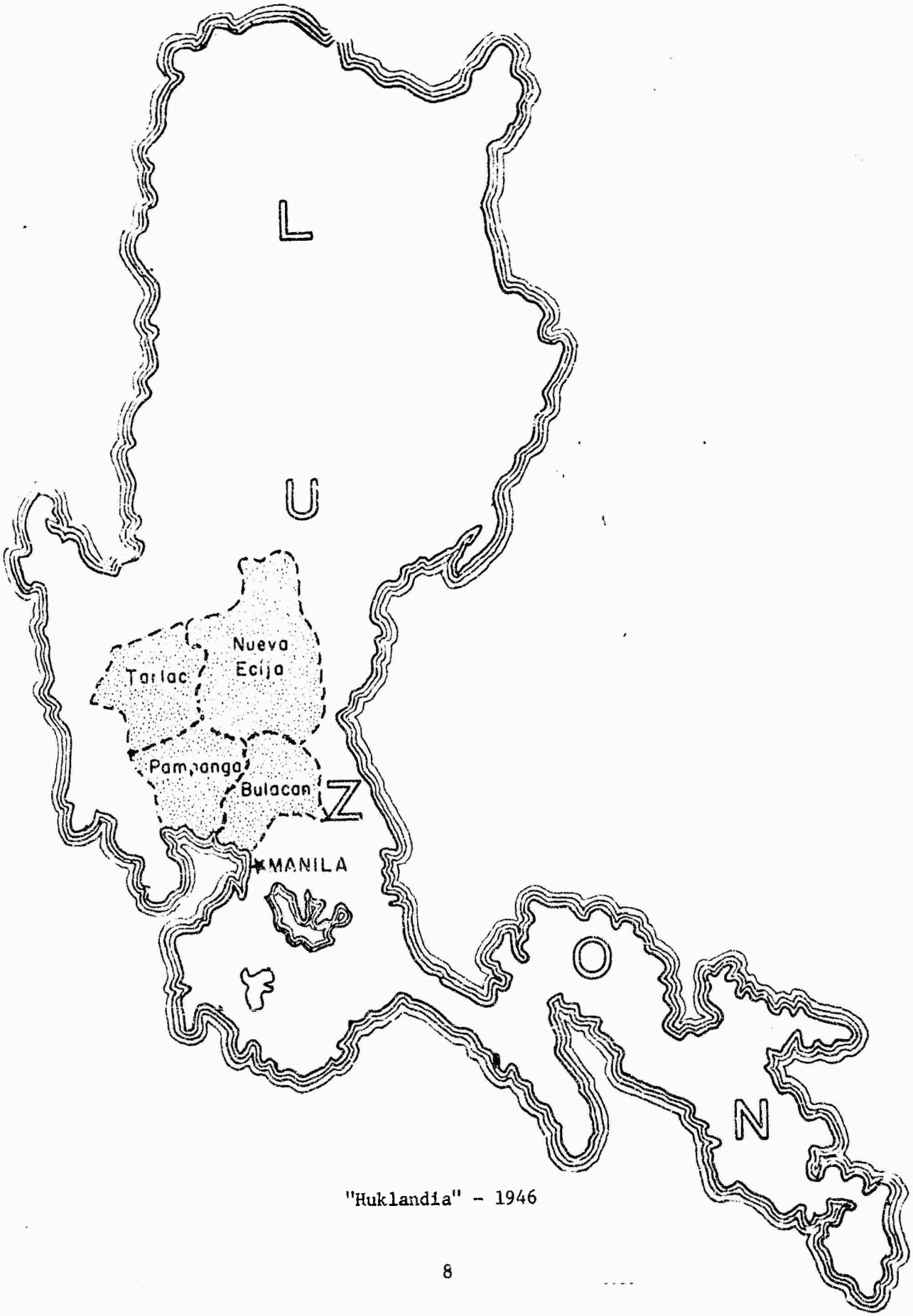
many of its prominent members had been labelled as collaborationists during the war. This new turn of political events forced the DA into an uneasy coalition with Osmena and the Nacionalista Party.[7]

When the dust of the April 1946 election settled, Roxas and the Nacionalistas had won on a national basis, but in Central Luzon Osmena and the Liberal-DA coalition emerged victorious. From the Hukbalahap stronghold provinces of Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pampanga and Bulacan were elected six DA congressional candidates including Luis Taruc and Castro Alejandrino and one Nacionalista of very liberal leanings. Roxas refused to recognize these seven congressmen and also three senators elected from the Nationalista ticket. This action by Roxas fanned into flames the smouldering coals of disaffection in Central Luzon.

Were this not enough, Roxas, who had promised in his campaign to restore law and order and to wipe out the Huks within 60 days after election, ordered new military operations into Huklandia.

---

[7] Ibid., p. 66.



"Huklandia" - 1946

By this time the Philippine military establishment had shrunk from 132,000 man strength at independence, to 37,000 of which 24,000 were assigned to the Military Police Command (MPC) under the Department of Interior. It was the MPC which was given the responsibility of dealing with the Huk problem. Additionally, provincial governors and landlords recrutied groups of Civil Guards, private and local police to join the Huk hunts. The terrorism, destruction and pillage resulting from the uncoordinated, uncontrolled and undisciplined operations by this force further alienated the people from the government. In answer, Taruc reconstituted the GHQ-Hukbalahap and began reorganizing the old Huk squadrons. Several months of armed confrontation convinced the government that police methods were insufficient to bring about any settlement of either the conflict or the issues.

The Roxas government now tried a new approach--mediation and negotiation. A three months truce was arranged during which the government hoped to persuade the dissidents to give up their arms and return to peaceful farming. To accomplish this, a new land tenancy act was proposed and to assure understanding, teams of Hukbalahap and government officials were to travel through the barrios and villages discussing terms with the peasants. This also failed; both sides violated the truce. The Huks continued their propaganda efforts and the MPC used the truce period to reorganize and reequip, raising doubts as to the governments sincerity toward mediation. As the truce period ended, the MPC reinforced Civil

Guards, local police and a substantial portion of the Philippine Army began new offensive operations in central Luzon.[8]

The "mailed fist" struck again! This time more violent and indiscriminate than before. Many peasants innocent of Hukbalahap connections or sympathies were killed or imprisoned. Property destruction was great; whole barrios and villages were burned and crops destroyed. The government's renewed effort not only increased disaffection, but also failed to decisively engage the Huk guerrilla units. As a result Roxas again changed his ploy. Military operations were scaled down and the government announced that the Hukbalahap problem was solved and peace and order had been restored. This was sheer propaganda, but served to take the pressure off the government and cool down the fighting. It may also have lulled the Huks into feeling an unwarranted security, for in March 1947 the government launched their largest and best coordinated attack on the Mt. Arayat and Candaba swamp stronghold. The Huks were caught by surprise and suffered some, though not critical, losses. Severe blows, however, were struck at Huk local infrastructure, which had been successfully infiltrated by government intelligence forces. On the balance sheet, certain damage had been inflicted on the Huks, but by and large they still existed as a viable political and military force. This became obvious when in the following year little change could be noted in Huk activities, and the basic causes for peasant disaffection continued.

---

[8] Ibid., pp. 68-69.

The failure of Roxas' social reform program, the breeched truce and the resumption of full scale military operations firmly convinced the Hukbalahap leadership that the only solution was to replace the current Philippine government with a "peoples' democracy." So in the year March 1947 to March 1948 the Hukbalahap increased their political and military expansion and preparations at all levels for a protracted conflict. The direction of these efforts was made obvious by the renaming of the Hukbalahap as the Hukbong Managpalaya Ng Balayan (HMB) or Peoples' Liberation Army. In March, perhaps out of frustration over his continuing failure to solve the problem, Roxas declared the HMB and its political arm to be illegal and seditious organizations whose sole aim was the overthrow of the lawful Philippine government. Police actions and military operations were renewed.

Roxas died in April and was succeeded by Vice President Elpidio Quirino, who immediately reversed Roxas' Huk policies. Quirino was a proponent of negotiation and believed that through a government policy of amnesty and grievance mediation the Communist movement could be defeated. A government program promising land reform, abrogation of the Philippine Trade Act of 1946, revision of the US-PI military base agreement and other points advocated by the Communists was presented. Taruc agreed to confer with the administration, but from the outset negotiations were doomed. The government quickly realized the HMB had no intention of laying down their arms until the extensive political and economic reforms were accomplished. The Communists saw the negotiations only as a forum

in which to publicly present their case. On 15 August 1948, after a final fruitless conference with Quirino and after issuing a renouncement of the government, Taruc returned to Huklandia. The HMB began to prepare for armed insurrection.[9]

This historical recital of the evolution of the violent and militant aspects of the Communist movement in the Philippines is a necessary prologue for study of period, 1948-1954, when the crescendo of the conflict rose to a point of direct, armed challenge of the legal government. The HMB, as the military arm of the Communist Party, sought during this period to establish supremacy of the movement, destroy the effectiveness of the Philippine Armed Forces, topple the government and establish a "peoples' democracy."

In developing the study, the actions and counteractions of the adversaries--the HMB and the Philippine military--will be analyzed for the purpose of identifying strategies, doctrine, policies and programs which contributed significantly to the ultimate outcome of the conflict. From these, a determination of the role, in the fullest sense and spectrum of its definition, of the Philippine Army in executing their counterinsurgency mission will be made. This must necessarily consider two views: how the Philippine Army perceived its role? While in the critical aspect, what role should the Army have played and what countermeasures, if employed, would have increased the Army's capability in this level of conflict?

---

[9] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

CHAPTER II

THE HUKBALAHAP

A NEW BEGINNING

With Taruc's renouncement of the government and a public statement issued by the Communist Party leadership calling for open, armed revolution, a new phase of the struggle was begun. Violent overthrow of the government was now the assured objective of the Huks; no longer would their intentions be disguised by attempts at reform by constitutional and parliamentary processes. The line was drawn--the revolution launched.

However, it can hardly be said that August 1948 was the beginning of the revolution--only the new beginning. The class war between the Philippine government and the old political leadership, on one side, and the organized peasants and workers under the Communist-Socialist banner had long been a historical fact. The issues were known; the organizations were formed; the leaders were identified. Only now, the catalyst for social change would come from the barrel of a gun.[1]

Although the August 1948 denouncement of the government signaled the renewal of active guerrilla warfare, there was serious doubt among the Communist Party Philippines (CPP) leadership that the proper conditions existed for initiating a direct military confrontation. First, they felt that their mass support needed further

---

[1]Alvin H. Scarf, The Philippine Answer to Communism (1955), p. 18.

expansion and they were unsure of the effectiveness of their organizational effort. Second, they had to convince the peasants and workers that armed revolt was the only solution remaining and thirdly, the HMB had to perfect and expand their military organization and secure more arms and recruits.[2]

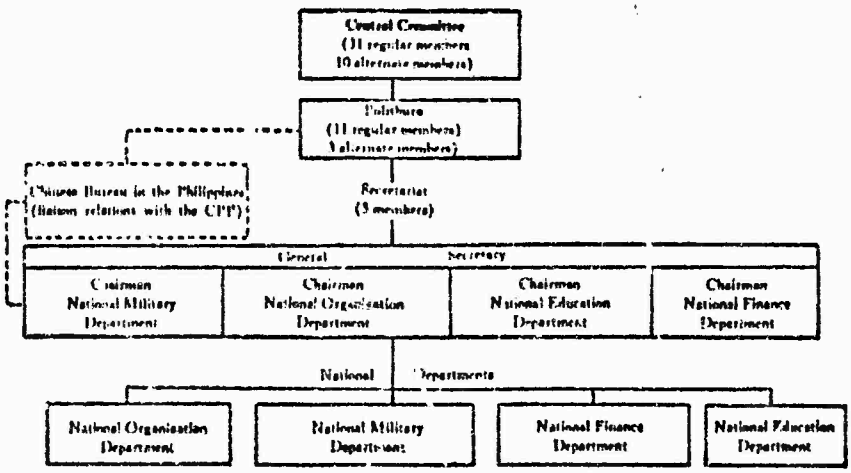
Various estimates of the Communists' strength at this time generally agree that their active strength was about 19,000 of which some 10,000 were armed. The mass base probably did not exceed 54-55,000.[3]

The organization of the Communist effort followed the normal Communist concept. At the top was, ostensibly, the National Congress of the Philippine Communist Party. This body was never formed. The actual party affairs were directed by a 31-member Central Committee under which a Politburo of 11 members formed an Executive Committee. A Secretariat of five members, consisting of the General Secretary and the Chairmen of the National Departments, conducted the basic work of the Party. The four departments were the National Military Department (the HMB lead by Taruc), the National Organization Department, the National Education Department and the National Finance Department. This organization is depicted by Chart 1.

---

[2]Smith, p. 80.

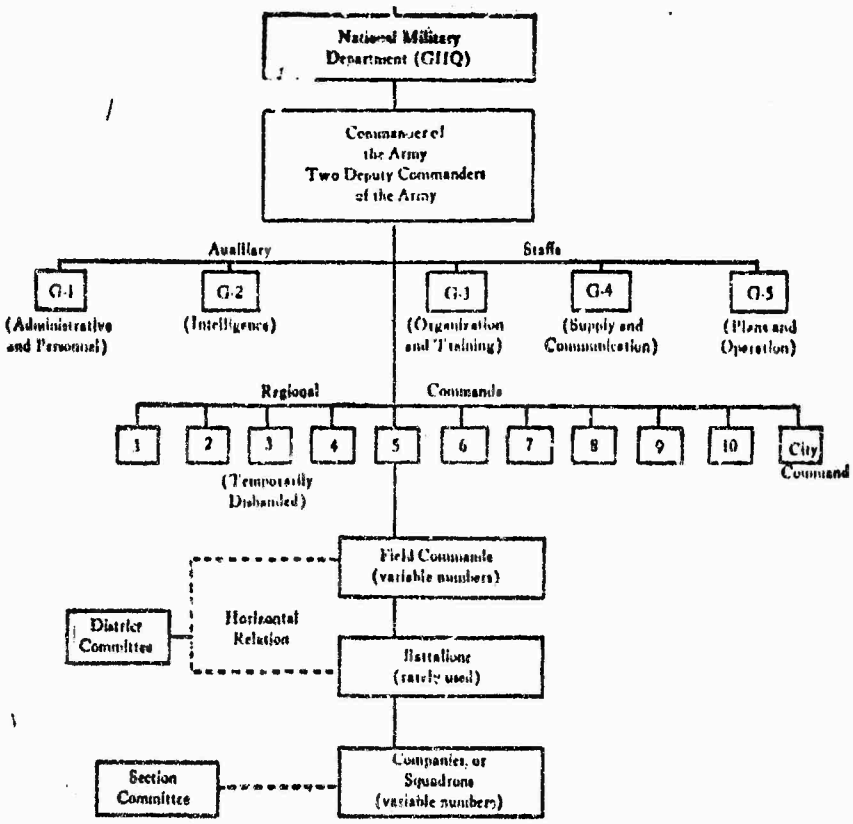
[3]Jesus Vargas, Secretary of Defense (Philippines) in an address during a SEATO seminar on countering Communist subversion held at Baguio, RP on 28 November 1957.



Source: Document captured by Task Force "GG" at Lagrimas, Twin Falls, Mount Dorst, August 12, 1951, based on "Political Resolution 12," March 1951 Central Committee Conference.

CHART 1

Chart 2 shows the military organization.

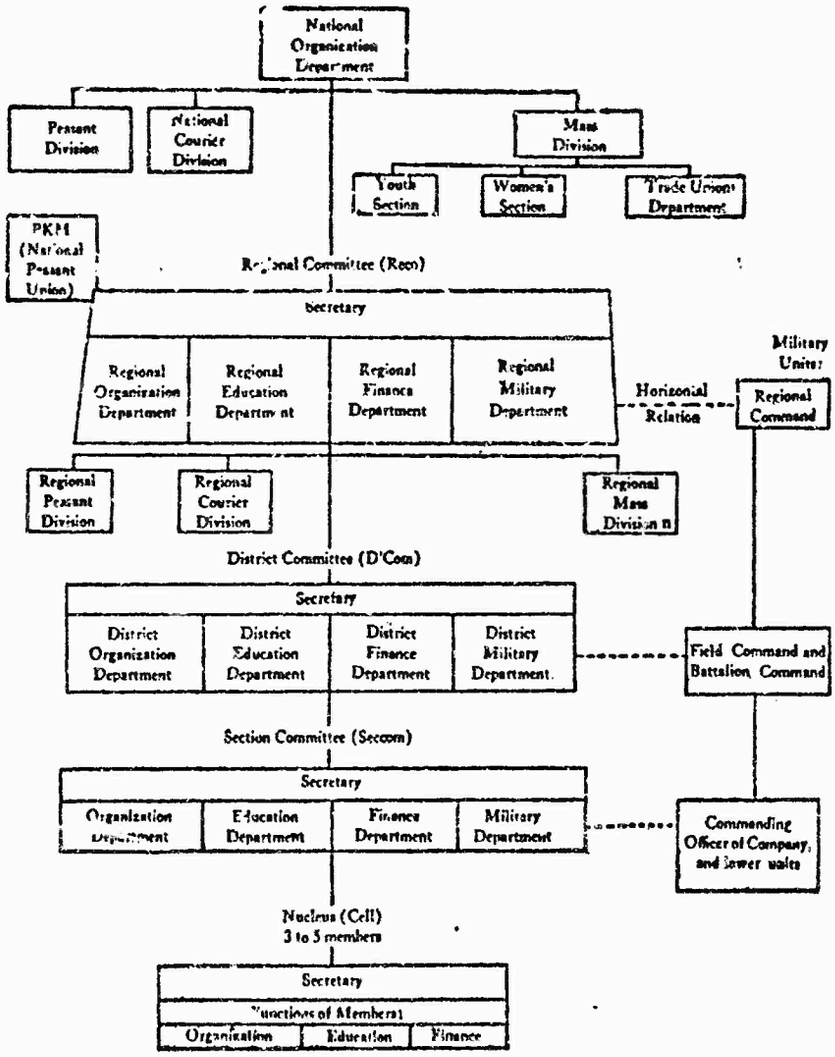


Source: "Military Resolution" issued by the Central Committee of May 15, 1951; document captured at Barrio Abo-Abo, Mauban, Quezon Province, by the 8th Battalion Combat Team on July 25, 1951.

CHART 2

Field operations came under the control of the ten numbered Regional Commands (RECO) and the Manila City Command. The basic tactical guerrilla unit remained the squadron whose optimum operating strength was about 100 men. The military organization, although fundamentally that which was instituted in the 1943 reorganization, was significantly expanded and formalized after August 1948.

The National Organization (Chart 3), Educational (Chart 4), and Finance (Chart 5) Departments were set up both in echelon and by area, much in the manner of the National Military Department. Each had its own general headquarters, regional committees, which correspond to the military regional commands; district committees, which paralleled the military field commands; and section committees, which corresponded to military squadrons. Within the National Organization Department further overlap existed, for example, the Secretariat of a District Committee consisted of the district chairmen of the Organization, Educational and Finance Departments and the field command commander from the Military Department.



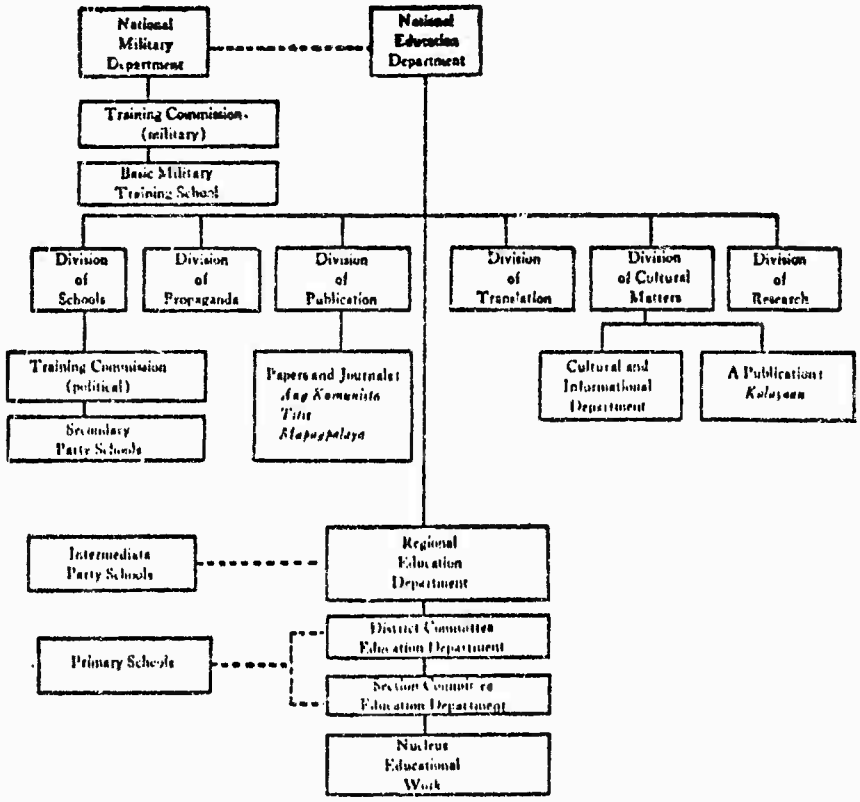
Source: Documents captured by the Philippine Armed Forces, 1951.
CHART 3

In addition to organizing the mass support base, the National Organization Department governed the activities of the PKM, CLO and similar Communist dominated groups, ran the courier service and was a principal intelligence collection apparatus.[4]

---

[4]Smith, p. 89.

The National Education Department was primarily concerned with political indoctrination.



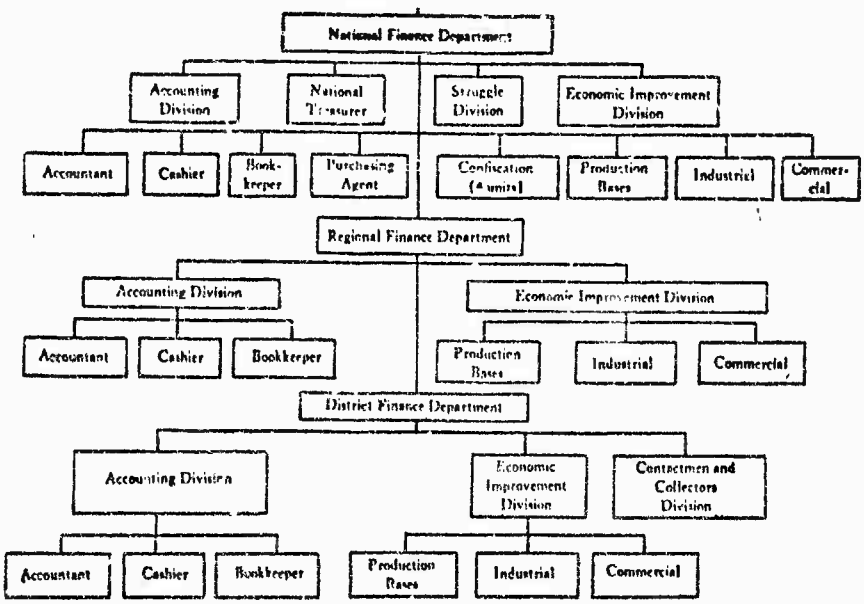
Source: "Organization Resolution 9," March 1951 Central Committee Conference.

CHART 4

The Communists had an elaborate educational system. Schools were established to teach illiterates to read and write and at a higher level, young people were taught Communist ideas and tactics. There existed close interface with the Military Department for in many areas the military training was conducted by the Educational Department. Political commissars for all levels of military organization were supplied by the Educational Department--a further enhancement of-the horizontal relationship between these two departments.

Financial support for the revolutionary activities came from a wide variety of sources. Large donations came regularly from overseas

Chinese supporters; however, the bulk of the funds came from per capita tax levies in areas under Huk control. Gifts of food and medical supplies were supplemented by outright confiscation of goods. Raids, holdups, train robberies, kidnapping and extortion brought in large sums. In 1952, the Communist leaders drew up a budget calling for a monthly expenditure of almost ten million pesos.[5]



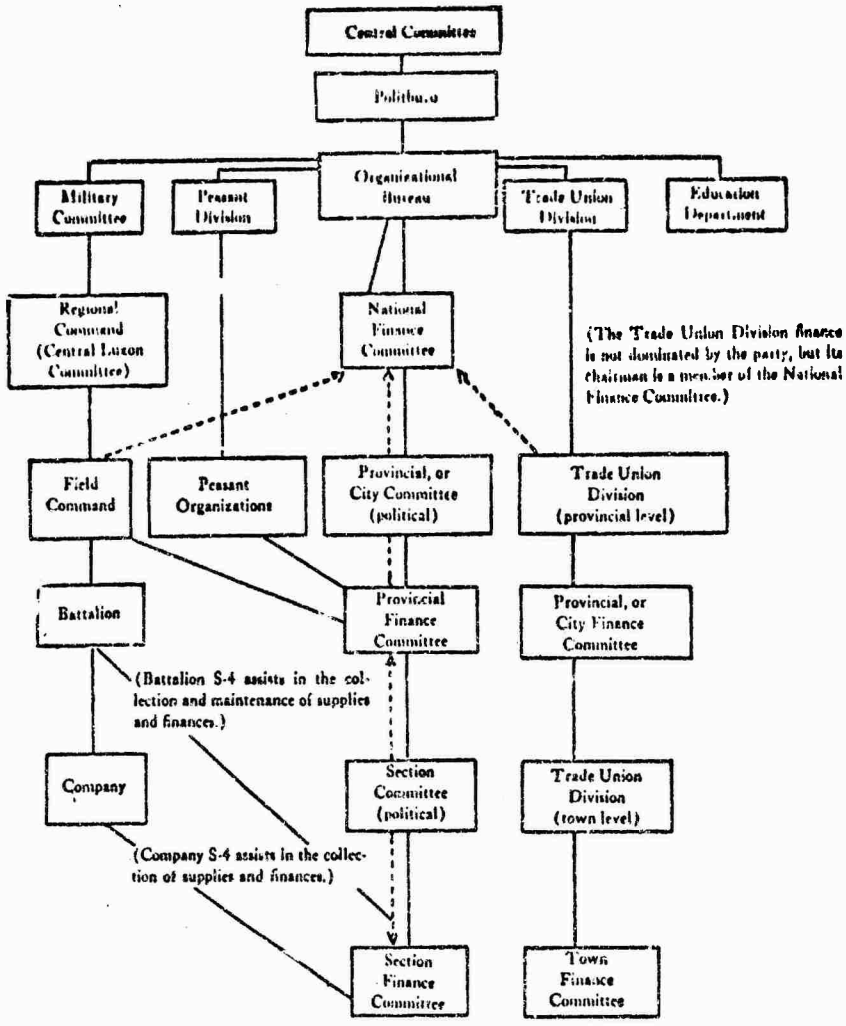
Source: "Political Resolution 10," of the March 1951 Central Committee Conference.

CHART 5

Chart 6 shows how the Party controlled the finances through interconnections between finance committees and political committees at various levels of organization.

---

[5]Scaff, op. cit., p. 34.



Source. Document originally produced by the chairman of the Finance Committee and captured by the Philippine Armed Forces, 1951.

CHART 6

The entire Communist apparatus was set up to coordinate the work of four vertically organized departments, while each maintained a close horizontal relationship with the other departments at every level. The system, as with all Communist movements, guaranteed the top leadership absolute control of all aspects of the revolution.

Another measure the Communist leadership undertook to guarantee control was to impose strict discipline throughout the organization. This was facilitated because in large part the leadership in the departments other than the military were guerrillas at one stage or

another in the development of the insurgency. The entire organization had a paramilitary character. Technically, only the members of the Military Department were HMB or Huks, but because of the paramilitary character of the whole organization, all were known as Huks.[6]

The Communist organization was indeed impressive and was effective in extensive areas of the provincial hinterlands. In these places, the Huks constituted the final source of authority. They made and enforced laws, collected taxes and organized the life of the people in support of the revolution. Even in the areas where the government troops patrolled during the day, the Huks took charge after dark. It became an axiom of the struggle that whichever side controlled peace and order after dark controlled the loyalty of the people.[7]

THE STRATEGY

The strategy for conquest adopted by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was laid out in a memorandum from the CPP Secretariat to the Central Committee. The salient points of this memorandum were:

Aim: To establish the New Democracy (Peoples' Democratic Republic) by overthrowing American imperialism.

Direction of the Main Blow: Isolation of the national bourgeoisie and other elements who compromise with imperialism and the winning over the masses.

---

[6]Smith, op. cit., p. 90.
[7]Scaff, op. cit., p. 31.

Main Forces: The proletarians and landless peasants.

Reserves: The middle class and rice peasants, the Soviet Union and the new Democracies (other Communist states).

Disposition of the Main Forces and Reserves: Alliance of the working class and peasantry.

Revolution:

1. Period of Preparation--Battle for reserves or strategic defense.

2. Seizure of National Power--Military offensive or strategic offense.[8] According to Taruc, this strategy was further enunciated in a CPP document, "1950 Politburo Resolutions," which represented decisions made at their meeting in early January of that year.

> 1. That there exists in the Philippines a revolutionary situation, which in the face of the international and national situations, would inevitably culminate in a crisis within two years (by 1951);
>
> 2. That the liberation movement must, during 1950 and 1951, complete an intensive two-year program of preparation for the seizure of power by armed struggle, and that all other tasks must be geared to this one supreme effort;
>
> 3. That we must announce and define our political objective and program as similar to that of Mao Tse-tung's New People's Democracy;
>
> 4. That the Communist Party leadership within the liberation movement must be publicized and projected at every possible opportunity;
>
> 5. That we must undertake the armed uprising on our own . . . and should expose our former political allies as having recoiled and turned traitors to the people;

---

[8]Thomas C. Tirona (LTC--Philippine Air Force), The Philippine Anti-Communist Campaign (Air University Quarterly Review, Summer, 1954). Also Uldorico S. Baclogon, Lessons from the Huk Campaign in the Philippines (Manila, M. Colcol & Co., 1960), p. 11-12.

6. That we must reorganize and rename the Huk to make it conform with the demands of the new political situation;

7. That we must impose military discipline . . . on all mass organizations led by the CPP.[9]

Although without direct Chinese Communist influence, the character of the CPP strategy follows that envisaged by Mao. However, by 1948, the requirements of Mao's first phase of insurgent war had long since been established by the Huks. Their force was organized, their movement well structured, their cause widely recognized and supported and their military experienced and capable. In fact, by the time this strategy was enunciated, the CPP was well into the second phase of the revolution--classic guerrilla warfare--and rapidly attaining the capability to engage the Philippines military forces in open conventional warfare. There is no doubt that the Mao scenario was very much the model for the Hukbalahap strategy. However, in retrospect and acknowledging that the Huks were never able to launch the strategic offensive, their concept actually coincided more with the Giap variation. Giap's scenario closely paralleled that of Mao--also recognizing three stages. However, Giap did not consider the period of planning and organizing as part of the insurgent battle. His three stages are an elaboration of Mao's stage two and three and are defined as:

Contention: Active guerrilla warfare.

Equilibrium: Preparing to operate as a conventional force.

Counteroffensive: Open warfare.

---

[9]Luis Taruc, He Who Rides the Tiger (New York, Praeger, 1967), pp. 72, 73.

Giap recognized the status of equilibrium as an intermediate phase or the period of transformation into a de facto government and facing political and military problems for which the movement may have little experience. It is during this period of equilibrium that the insurgent movement is most vulnerable.[10] This, of course, proved to be the Hukbalahap experience!

Although the Communists had decided that a military solution was now the only way to attain their revolutionary goals, they intended that their strategy consist of political as well as military actions. A protracted conflict to sap the strength and will of the nation would be their armed struggle method. While by the so-called parliamentary struggle method, they would infiltrate sensitive and key government positions and penetrate legitimate social and labor organizations destroying their vitality as political forces. From the base long established in Central Luzon, the aim of the CPP was to extend their tentacles northward and southward until all Luzon was controlled and Manila isolated and choked.[11]

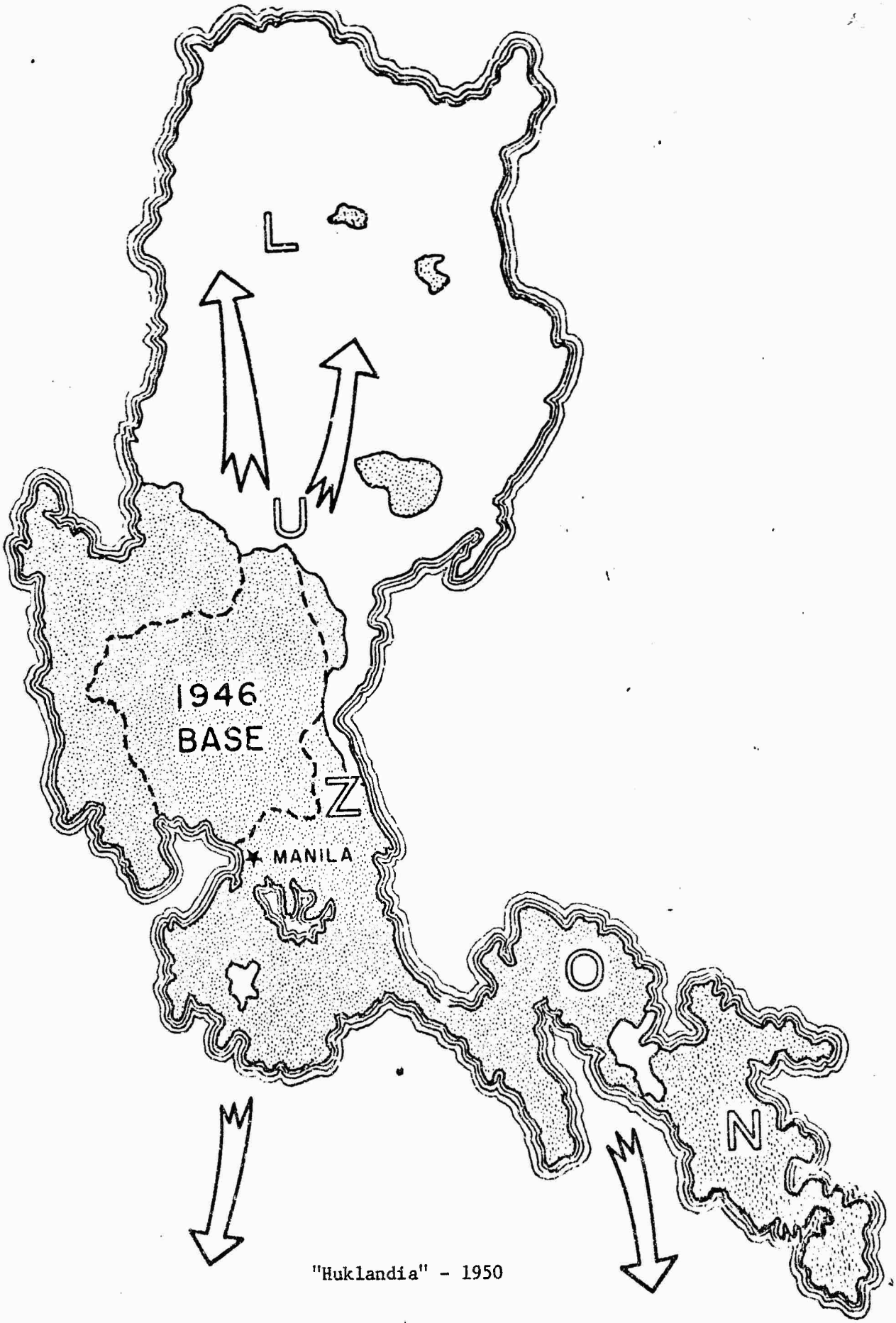
THE HIGH WATER MARK

No insurgency can stand still. The momentum, if lost, is difficult to regain; the thrust of the effort difficult to change. This was a principle well understood by Taruc and his lieutenants. However,

---

[10] James E. Cross, Conflict in the Shadows, The Nature and Politics of Guerrilla War (Garden City, Doubleday, 1963), pp. 84-94.

[11] Valeriano, op. cit.



"Huklandia" - 1950

the concern for the preparedness of the HMB and their mass support inhibited increased military activities. By Giap's definition, the insurgency was in the difficult equilibrium phase. Although the CPP continued their exploitation of the obvious and continuing failures of the Philippine government, their cause needed new impetus. This wasn't long in coming. The 1949 elections and the immediate aftermath convinced the CPP that the time to move was at hand. The election was scandalous, seen as a mockery of democracy by most, characterized by vote buying, violence and ballot box stuffing. What followed was even worse. By the end of 1949 the government was being paralyzed by greed, corruption and lethargy on the part of both civil servants and military personnel. Seeing no way out of morass, Filipinos were despairing of democratic government.[12]

The year 1949 also heralded the successes of Mao's struggle in China and Ho Chi Minh's in Indochina and by these victories the Huks were heartened. They saw distinct parallels to their own cause.

Almost overnight, the character of the warfare changed. The tactics of the classic guerrilla began to be replaced by those of a conventional force. Although the HMB was only moderately well equipped and still operated from the squadron formation, they now began to directly confront organized Philippine Army, Constabulary and civil police units. There was no doubt that the HMB was now on the offensive.

---

[12]US Army Command and General Staff College. Insurgent War, Selected Case Studies (Reference Book 31-100, Vol. II, Fort Leavenworth: 1 July 1969), p. 1[illegible].

Raids and ambushes were their principal tactical activity. In Pampanga the Huks staged raids on an increasingly larger scale. On 26 August 1949, in observance of National Heroes Day, the Huks entered the town of Arayat, disarmed the police, sacked the town hall, burned public records, carted away typewriters, office and medical supplies and looted stores and the public market. They also murdered a landlord in the presence of his wife and daughter because he permitted a civil guard detachment to be billeted on his premises. The detachment was massacred. This was not an isolated incident, for on that day throughout Central and Southern Luzon the Huks struck in force. At the Philippine Constabulary post, Camp Macabulos in Tarlac Province, a Huk raiding party marauded throughout the day and night--killing, raping, and looting. Government troops who came the next morning found a ghost town.[13]

As the months of 1949, then 1950 passed, the HMB offensive became bolder and bolder. Objectives were now the capture of district and provincial capitals and assaults on Army and Constabulary posts. Special assassination teams were employed against public officials not sympathetic to the CPP. Landowners and businessmen, because they represented exploitation of the peasants, were also targets. To complement the success of their raids, the Huks layed ambushes for reinforcing government troops--a classic guerrilla tactic, certainly not new but most effective.

---

[13]Richard M. Leighton, Ralph Sanderst and Jose N. Twio (LTC, AFT), The Huk Rebellion, A Case Study in the Social Dynamics of Insurrection (Washington, Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1964), p. 60.

Their ambushing of primary roads became commonplace. Sometimes such ambushes were aimed at the destruction of the property of the hated landowners or businessmen. Frequently they were merely road-blocks or check points employed to impress or intimidate the populace.[14]

The superior mobility of the government forces was most evident. Although their raids frequently "captured" a town or barrio, hit and run tactics most normally were employed. This tactic was more purposeful since it kept the Huk force intact to fight another day, kept the government forces off balance and dissipated in fruitless pursuit of the Huks. Further, the Huks were not yet prepared for a pitched battle.

Taruc called the period March to August 1950 as the "dress rehearsal."[15] In a secret interview with an American correspondent, Taruc proclained that their movement was not nationalistic, but Communistic and that it had international commitments with its counterparts in Red China and the Soviet Union. He further boasted that the HMB had 25,000 full time, well armed guerrillas and that his mass support numbered two million.[16] Official HMB strength estimates, however, are more modest. The Philippine Armed Forces estimated that at the height of Huk offensive activity there were 17,500 active guerrillas of which only 12,000 were armed and that their sympathizers numbered only 100,000.[17] Even Taruc . . his book written many years

---

[14]Smith, op. cit., p. 93.
[15]Taruc, op. cit., p. 89.
[16]Valeriano, op. cit.
[17]SORO CINFAC, op. cit., p. 4.

later places his 1950 strength at 15,000 armed guerrillas. He further states that he could have mobilized only 4,000 of these for an attack on Manila.[18]

Further heartened by the early successes of Communist military action in North Korea, the Huks envisaged the seizure of Manila before the end of 1950. Their squadrons successfully conducted large scale raids in the Manila suburbs and as they had planned virtually choked the city.[19] The inhabitants were fearful; in almost every part of the city the people believed the Huks were coming. Most of Luzon had also been swallowed and enclaves established on the islands of Panay and Negros. The CPP cells in Mindanao were in close liaison with the Indonesian Communists.[20]

The ascendancy of the movement now could not be denied; momentum was growing and the Party emboldened. The Secretariat now issued new instructions entitled "Strategic Political and Military Guidance." This memorandum carried detailed instructions to all RECOS on the new "victory" policy. The RECOS were told how to conduct the offensive, how to supervise liberated areas, what to expect of the enemy and how to treat the utilize enemy soldiers who would surrender or defect to the movement. This memorandum fixed the timetable through the final phase of the revolution.[21]

---

[18] Taruc, op. cit., p. 88.
[19] Boyd T. Bashore (Major, USA), Dual Strategy for Limited War (Military Review, May 1960), p.
[20] Valeriano, op. cit.
[21] Taruc, op. cit., p. 82.

But, success, in Taruc's words, became their undoing. The reality and gravity of the situation was now recognized, and both the Philippine and American governments were spurred to drastic action to counteract the rapidly spreading revolution. General Jesus Vargas (later Secretary of Defense) said:

> About the only redeeming aspect of the situation was the realization by the officials of the government and by the nation that the solution of the problem was well beyond the reach of normal police action and that a more integrated national effort had to be exerted. . . .[22]

---

[22]Vargas, op. cit., p.

CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT COUNTERACTION

INITIAL INADEQUACIES

The crescendo of Huk power which occurred between August 1948 and mid 1950 was significantly abetted by the Philippine government's failure to recognize the true and grave nature of the Huk threat; that is, until it was almost too late. This attitude of unacceptance of the Huk problem pervaded every sector of the government--the problem never really was a campaign issue; agrarian and social reform legislation, although enacted, was never satisfactorily implemented; justice and political equality were meaningless to the peasants. And with a similar attitude prevailing in the Philippine Armed Forces and Constabulary, military actions could not help but be less than effective.

To the Philippine government, the Huks were a police matter. There was ample precedent for this because this is just how the Huks had always been considered. It was apparently not evident to the government that previous countermeasures against the Huks had always been relatively unsuccessful. Military counteraction was primarily a trial and error police-style campaign fraught with failure and frustration. Vargas summed up the military's efforts by saying: "A remedy would be applied, and when it did not seem to work out it was revised or discarded for another."[1]

---

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

In this regard, the trial and error remedies employed by the military in the field only paralleled similar techniques of the Philippine politicians. To reiterate earlier discussion, Roxas in March 1948, following the unproductive 90 day truce with the Huks, declared the Huks and their supporting organization illegal and seditious. Roxas ordered the resumption of direct military action; another "mailed fist" policy was initiated. A month later Roxas died. Quirino reversed this policy and attempted concilliation and amnesty which failed and in August resulted in the irrevocable break by the Huks and subsequent open insurrection.[2]

To combat the insurrection, the Philippine Constabulary again took to the field. Their tactics were to saturate the area of maximum disturbance and quell it with force. Not only were they unequal to the task, but the abuses committed by the troops destroyed the respect and confidence of the people in their Armed Forces and the government. The security these troops offered to life and property in the rural areas was almost nil.[3] As a result, the people left their farms and moved to the relatively secure urban areas, thus creating serious additional problems. The mass abandonment of the farmlands wrecked havoc on the national economy, and migration to the cities produced a refugee problem which has yet to be fully solved.

The ineptness and depredations of the Constabulary reached unbelievable proportions by mid 1950. As the Huk attacks increased,

---

[2]Scaff, op. cit., pp. 29, 30.
[3]Vargas, op. cit., p. 81.

the military reaction became more brutal reaching a climax in an incident at Maliwalu, Pampanga in August 1950. Enraged by the belief that the Maliwalu townspeople were actively harboring and supporting the Huks and refusing information on the enemy, Constabulary troops plundered the town and summarily killed scores of men, women and children in retribution for losses previously suffered by the government troops. This incident brought public outrage from every quarter and forced the administration to act to save itself. The President toured the Constabulary posts and threatened swift court martial to soldiers accused of such acts. Maliwalu was not an isolated or unfortunate exception, perhaps at most, more ruthless than previous incidents, but characterized the starkest of failures of military countermeasures. A government intelligence estimate finally concluded that

> . . . the increase in the number of dissident elements and their sympathizers in Central Luzon during the past two years may largely be attributed to the misconduct of officers and men who have been entrusted with the enforcement of law and order.[4]

The military's failures during the first two years of the insurgency were certainly not confined to excesses against civilians, but most alarmingly occurred in every category of fundamental military skill. But worse than this, the inadequacies of the military showed that deeper and more complex problems were at the root. An analysis of this situation drives right to the heart of how the Philippines initially ill--perceived their role in countering the Huk threat.

---

[4]Scaff, op. cit., p. 35.

One of the basic axioms of war is to know your enemy. It is most probable that the Philippine military leadership knew and believed they practiced this fundamental. The fact is, however, that lack of knowledge and understanding of the Huk--who he was and how he operated, his true objectives, his announced goals and intentions and above all, how he gained his support from the people was the most significant single failing during the initial two years of the insurgency. Some of these assessments go beyond the normal product of an intelligence system and the fact that this was not realized contributed to the lack of real understanding of the Huk insurgency.

"Agrarian reformers," a label applied to Communist insurgents by their own propagandists, and adopted by well-meaning but uncritical individuals represents one aspect of the failure to know the enemy. Concealment of the true motives and objectives of the Huk movement contributed greatly to its initial success. The Philippine government appeared unable to read through the propaganda cover.[5]

Analysis of enemy propaganda is an essential factor of basic intelligence. Certainly the easiest to tap and frequently most reliable, since it must be credible to the target group. Huk propaganda was replete with statements of their aims and objectives, claims of accomplishment and outlines of future plans. Evidence shows that

---

[5]Charles T. R. Bohannan (LTC, AUS, Ret) and Napolean D. Valeriano (COL, AFP, Ret), Counter-Guerrilla Operations, The Philippine Experience (New York, Praeger 1962), p. 44.

the Philippine government failed not only to appreciate the appeal of Huk propaganda, but also did not initially treat this as a source of intelligence.[6]

Basic information and intelligence on the Huk, other than that maintained at the unit level in the field, was sparse and collection and analysis effort haphazard. The intelligence produced dealt almost exclusively with military actions, but even in this fundamental category analysis was usually incomplete. It was to be several years before the Philippine military reviewed operational scenarios and results in an effort to derive intelligence and effective combat techniques. Their intelligence likewise neglected questions concerning the political aspects of the Huk movement, its support and effect on the people.

The effect of poor intelligence impacted significantly on early assessments of Huk capabilities. His tactical capabilities and strength initially was underestimated, partially influenced by the continuing attitude that the "problem" was essentially a police matter. After a series of unanticipated Huk attacks occurred and severe government losses had been sustained, an overraction resulted and by mid 1950 the Huk strength was grossly overestimated. In retrospect, the threat to Manila at this time was more imagined than real. Nevertheless the effect was real; Manila was ringed with government troops, check points and barricades were emplaced on every

---

[6] Ibid., p. 46, 47.

road leading to that city. This inadequate appreciation of the Huk's tactical capabilities went so far as to credit the enemy with the strength to take Manila with force.[7]

Intelligence shortcomings were compounded by the lack of an effective counterintelligence effort. This only emphasizes the extent to which the national assessment of the Huk threat had failed. If the movement had in fact been within police capabilities to control, then it should be assumed that the full range of police techniques would have been applied. Not so. Little effort was made to penetrate known front organizations much less the Huk sympathetic "shadow" governments in the provinces. Likewise the development of an informant net produced no fruitful results until late in 1950--after the government had begun the reorganization and revitalization of the military and after they had decided the "problem" was more than a police matter.

Several other serious problems inhibited the military's effectiveness in counteracting the rapidly rising Huk power.

The legal system of the Philippines was designed to protect the public from the criminal activities of individuals and, at the same time, to afford its citizens the fullest protection against arbitrary or unjust treatment. A Huk captured in the field or a Huk supported picked up by the military enjoyed the same legal status as any other citizen. He must be taken before a judge or fiscal within six hours after arrest and within 24 hours must be formally charged of a crime.

---

[7] Ibid., p. 54.

If charged with any crime less than murder, he had the right to demand release on bail. A Huk, captured in a fire fight could be free and back with his unit within 72 hours or less. The only legal action that could stop the virtually automatic release of captured guerrillas and their supporters was suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. The Quirino government, which had gained office by a narrow margin, viewed such an action as political suicide. The politicians' dilemma became the soldiers'. If he took prisoners and treated them according to the law, his mission was not served. If extralegal and repressive measures were used, he played into the hands of the enemy and supplied political ammunition for propaganda against the government. This situation persisted through 1950.

The political power grab that occurred in the Philippines after their liberation in 1946 had an attitudinal effect on the Philippine military impacting on the accomplishment of their counterinsurgency mission. The military failed to appreciate that the real political power in the democratic Philippines was with the people and not the wealthy elite. This condition was abetted by the conditions prevailing during and effecting the 1949 elections. A most logical conclusion from that election was that the transfer of power, though exercised by the people, was controlled by an elite. This assessment was apparent among the military leadership and was demonstrated by a general lack of concern for the security of the people. Counter-insurgency operations during these first two years failed to accomplish the basic mission of protection of the people, their property and

institutions. Rather, they saw their mission solely that of eliminating the guerrilla soldier and liquidation of his movement.[8]

For the Philippine military, liquidation of the Huk did not in itself constitute a sufficient motive to rouse them to match the efforts of the guerrilla. They needed a countercause--something they could recognize as being worth their struggle and perhaps their lives. This had to be explained to them in terms they could understand. Basically, the long record of the government's failure to defeat the Huk movement was due to failure of men at all levels of government to understand their mission, their failure to concentrate on the main objective of government and to make their actions clearly compatible with service to the people.

There was also within the Philippine military establishment at this time a severe doctrinal problem which limited their effective employment against the Huk insurgents. The military were almost totally dedicated to an organization, tactics and training of US model for conventional war. This attitude can be clearly and logically understood. The devastation of World War II had not yet been repaired and military thinking was toward the development of forces and doctrine that would in the future better protect the nation from external aggression. It is likewise true that the Army's rebuilding program was more a plan than reality, since the bulk of the government's budget went, in the immediate postwar years, to rebuilding the nation's institutions and economy. So by a combination of very

---

[8] Ibid., p. 89.

real factors the Philippine military was not prepared to cope with an active insurgency of the proportions reached in 1950. In fact, at that time the Philippine Army had only two infantry battalions capable of sustained combat operations. The bulk of the Army's personnel were involved in administrative, service and training activities.[9]

Certainly there were other shortcomings, inadequacies and failures directly affecting the military's capabilities; an enumerated list would be lengthy. However, the foregoing sufficiently describes the atmosphere and attitude existing within the Philippine government and military at the time the Huks were making their most serious bid for control. It is to these points that increasing criticism from the press, the citizenry and elements within the government was addressed against the Quirino administration. The incident at Maliwalu, however, revealed most spectacularly the ineptness of the government to respond to the Huk problem. Quirino had to make a move. On 1 September 1950 he appointed Ramon Magsaysay, then a congressman from Zambales, to the post of Secretary of National Defense. Promising Magsaysay a virtually free hand, Quirino charged the new Secretary with complete responsibility for the reestablishment of peace and order throughout the Philippines.

REORGANIZATION AND REVITALIZATION

Once the reins of the Department of National Defense were firmly in his hands, Magsaysay began to change the thrust of military

---

[9]Vargas, op. cit., p. 82.

activity. Now, not only would the enemy be a target but also the nation and the people. His first step was to reassess the Communist problem and determine why and where the government had failed in the past. Although his field of responsibility was principally the military, he was perceptive enough to understand that any military action against the Huks must be implemented in concert with other aspects of the national internal policy. Underlying Magsaysay's policy was his belief that:

> Any democratic government is neither of necessity nor automatically better in the eyes of common man than a Communistic government. In order to stamp out communism, the local government must clean its own house. A status quo that has bred virulent communism cannot remain unchanged. Communism seldom flourishes where the people are content and prosperous basically.[10]

To implement his policy, Magsaysay foresaw as goals the compelling need for unifying the armed forces under a single command, the absolute necessity to revitalize the armed forces, to restore the confidence of the people in the military, gain civilian support for military operations and make the armed forces the friends rather than the oppressors of the people. The importance of these goals cannot be underestimated. Without their realization no military campaign, no matter how efficiently conducted, could have achieved more than temporary success.

The first move in the reorganization of the armed forces was the establishment of a unified command by the integration of the

---

[10]Bashore, op. cit., p. 195.

Philippine Constabulary with the Army. Prior to April 1950, the Constabulary operated under the jurisdiction of the Department of Interior. Magsaysay's action was to reduce the Constabulary's strength to 7,000 and transfer into the Army all over that figure. He then relegated the Constabulary to a pure police rather than combat role and reorganized them along the lines of typical US state police units. Here he met opposition, for the Constabulary represented protection for the wealth and property of the landowners and power elite within the Philippine government. With Quirino's reluctant support, Magsaysay relieved the Chief of Constabulary. A similar fate befell the incumbent Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces.

In the reordering of roles and missions, the Army was given primary responsibility for the conduct of the anti-Huk campaign, but the overall direction would be assumed by Magsaysay and exercised through the GHQ of the Armed Forces to insure a fully coordinated effort. In earlier days, the inability to focus the full capacity of the military against the Huks was a significant cause of counter-action failure. Additionally, the strength of the Army was increased to 56,000 and organized basically into 26 battalion combat teams (BCTs).

The combat elements of the BCTs consisted of three rifle companies, a field artillery battery and a reconnaissance company. The administrative and service portion consisted of a services company, a headquarters and headquarters company, an intelligence section, a psychological warfare section and a medical/dental detachment. A full strength BCT numbered 1,074 officers and men. The BCTs normally operated under a unified sector command, which geographically

was one or two provinces or encompassed a critical geographical feature such as the Mt. Arayat-Candabia area in Pampanga and Bulucan Provinces. Doctrine for the employment of the BCT was based on that of the US Army. Some changes were necessary to increase flexibility and mobility over that of a conventional battalion in order to cope with the hit and run guerrilla tactics of the Huks. Likewise little change was made in tactical training except for increased emphasis on scouting and patrolling, night operations and squad and platoon actions.[11]

The acceptance of a rather conventional organization, the BCT as the basic counterinsurgency tactical formation represented realization of two factors. The first, a compromise to assuage the fear of external aggression while still having a unit with the flexibility for diverse operations against guerrillas. Secondly, it was believed that not only were conventionally organized units capable of counter-guerrilla warfare, but also required when the level of the insurgency reaches that of open rebellion.

Lessons learned from operations during the earlier counterinsurgency efforts indicated the necessity for special purpose, commando type units to augment or complement the larger military tactical formations. Thus was born the Philippine Army's Scout Ranger teams. The Scout Rangers were the army's "strategic reserve." Each team consisted of about 15 men, armed with two Browning automatic rifles and at least

---

[11]Smith, op. cit., p. 119.

four submachine guns. They also carried a radio and a camera, which facilitated intelligence collection and provided proof of Huk kills. Long range patrolling, ambushes and raids were the forte of the Scout Rangers--mobility, their most valuable capability.

Magsaysay knew full well that reorganizations alone would not accomplish what was needed for the armed forces. He recognized that the basic requirement was a dedicated, dynamic and aggressive leadership that could bring the degree of professionalism necessary to improve morale and the fighting spirit of the troops.[12] The first step was to rid the armed forces of the incompetent and politically motivated officers who for years had been strangling the vitality of the entire officer corps. By juggling personnel assignments, cliques were broken up and the less effectives transferred to innocuous positions. Officers failing in their performance were court martialled or forced to retire. A system of spot promotions was instituted to reward those officers demonstrating efficiency and fighting ability. Magsaysay himself took personal charge of this effort to revitalize the military. He imbued the effort with his own heart and energy and in a short few months there was a new spark in the military. With fresh morale and a heartened outlook the military began to rebuild itself.

Another great task requiring immediate attention was that of restoring the peoples' confidence in the government and the armed forces. Without formality, Magsaysay initiated a series of actions and a new policy which subsequently became known as the "Army

---

[12] Ibid., p. 102.

Attraction Program."[13] The purpose of this program was to win acceptance of the soldier as a worthy supporter of a government that deserved the support of the governed. Thus, in practice, the Attraction Program was an enlargement of the basic mission of the armed forces.

To formalize this program, the Civil Affairs Office (CAO) of the Secretary of National Defense was organized. Civil Affairs officers were assigned to each echelon of command down to battalion level and functioned as special staff officers. Their specific job was to interpret the army to the people, gain the peoples' good will, and help solve peasants problems. Further, they were to insure that Magsaysay's order that all units would act as friends to the people was strictly enforced.

Also the CAO organized special units to operate with the military to serve the functions of psychological operations, public affairs and information. A major mission of the CAO was to secure the widest publicity for all laudable accomplishments of the armed forces. Their success was immediately evident by the abrupt change in the news media's attitude toward achievements of the armed forces. This likewise had a significant impact on the Huks who heretofore had read only of their successes in the daily papers.

Developing national programs, like furnishing material to the national mass communications media, was largely implemented at CAO headquarters in Manila. Actual accomplishments of the Attraction

---

[13]Bohannan and Valeriano, op. cit., p. 209.

Program came primarily from the lower echelons and were reflected in civic action operations. Each military area headquarters conducted civic action programs generally within their own resources, but supplemented with special CAO funds for necessary support. Troop units were encouraged to assist in solving local problems. Medical teams accompanied most Army patrols in populated areas to treat illness and instruct the civilians in sanitation and hygiene. Of course, rudimentary construction projects were one of the most significant civic action activities; the number of wells existing in Central Luzon literally doubled within the first year of the Army's civic action program. But the real significance of the program was its influence on the thinking and behavior of all concerned, from the troops who dug the wells and built the schoolhouses to the Huk whose son was thence given a chance to go to school.

A recitation of the civic action aspects of the Army Attraction Program could itself be expanded into a study of its effectiveness in counterinsurgency warfare. However, the point has here been made concerning vital role civic action played in the revitalization of the Philippine Armed Forces and it need not be belabored. Civic action had a tremendous reciprocal effect on the Philippine Army.

One other facet of the Army Attraction Program warrants comment. This was the function of the Civil Affairs Officers at all levels to insure the creation and maintenance of the image of the troops as friends of the people. This was not easy. It meant first indoctrinating the troops themselves with the concept, making them realize what it implied in terms of their actions and behavior, and making

them understand the consequences of actions that harmed this image. This image concept was in actuality the recognition that the fundamental mission of the Philippine Army in its counterinsurgency role was the security of the people. The government would no longer tolerate depredations by the military against the people. Military personnel who committed crimes against the people were tried on the spot, if possible, by court martial or civilian court. Further, it became policy of the Army to make available to the people the offices of the Judge Advocate General's Department to help the peasants pursue court cases.[14] The faith of the Army in its new image was well proved.

And finally, credit must be given to the assistance provided by the United States to the Philippine government and its armed forces during this crucial period. Perhaps it was the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 or the simple realization that the "showplace of democracy" was about to fall that revived the United States interest in the Philippines. By mid 1950, the Huk threat and their anti-American propaganda had reach such proportions that the US bases and national security interests were endangered. In one of the first acts of assistance, a $10 million emergency loan was provided by the US to pay the Philippine Armed Forces. This was followed by the establishment of a Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG). Through the JUSMAG came not only advice, but also immediate deliveries of equipment for the modernization of the Philippine Armed Forces. This, in itself, provided a significant boost to their effectiveness

---

[14]Smith, op. cit., p. 104

against the Huks and hence to enhancement of morale. In fact, US aid was contingent upon reform and revitalization of the Philippine military establishment.

By early 1951--indeed a short time--the Army had gained sufficient stature, morale and strength to carry the fight to the Huks in the implementation of the government's new policy of "all out force or all out friendship."

FRIENDSHIP OR FORCE

As soon as capability improvements were recognized within the Army, the government initiated a new national antidissident program popularly labeled All out Friendship or All out Force. The new program grew from Magsaysay's pronouncement that to those dissidents who would renounce communism and return in peace to the government, he would offer his left hand in friendship, but to those who continued to defy the government he vowed to strike down with his right hand. Thus friendship or force became the new theme and by the magnitude of Magsaysay's charisma, this theme became the rallying cry of the government--the countercause necessary to renew the nation's sagging spirit. For the Army it was rededication to their mission; the Army was not only the strong right arm, but also, would show the left hand of friendship to the people.

The government's offer of friendship drew immediate results when a Huk assassin defected and revealed to the Army the organization and location of the CPP Politburo. In a mass intelligence roundup, almost every important Communist in Manila was seized. In addition to

exposing the whole Communist apparatus, this action forced a shift in the party leadership to the field to personnel who were mainly qualified in only the military phase of the insurgency. This was a blow from which the movement never recovered. The publicity attendant to the Politburo's capture very starkly revealed to the nation the insidiousness of the Communists' effort and removed any remaining doubt that the Huks were merely agrarian reformers. It is generally conceded that this fact was instrumental in influencing President Quirino to suspend the writ of habeas corpus for all persons accused of rebellion against the government. This allowed the Army to hold known or suspected insurgent leaders for indefinite periods while intelligence leads were checked. The uncertainty of the suspects' fate caused demoralization among the Huk ranks and tended to undermine their intelligence system.[15]

Another friendship program initiated by Magsaysay which proved extremely effective in eroding Huk power and solidarity was a system of rewards. The rewards were offered for weapons, operational information and information leading to the capture of key Communist leaders. The appeal of substantial sums of money became so tempting that by mid 1951 the Huks themselves had a serious internal security problem.

One of the early problems of the Army's intelligence program was the failure to obtain and exploit information gained from Huk prisoners. Interrogation methods were crude and brutal and offered the prisoner little hope beyond prolonged imprisonment. In implementation of the new government policy of friendship or force, a prisoner rehabilitation

---

[15]Smith, op. cit., p. 107.

program was initiated and widely publicized. The improvement in the treatment of prisoners had a definite psychological effect. When word spread that torture, starvation and abuse were no longer suffered by prisoners, surrenders increased. This was especially true among peasants who had been impressed into the Huk ranks. Many rehabilitated prisoners became Army intelligence agents and subsequently infiltrated the organizations of their former Huk comrades.

To translate the friendship or force policy to the soldier in the field, the Army developed the "Three-in-One Plan." This emphasized that every unit and every soldier had three missions: operations, intelligence and psychological warfare. This principle was incorporated in every field activity of the Army.[16] This fostered increased psywar activities at every level and made every soldier mindful of his responsibility as the symbol of the government to the governed. Psychological operations without doubt enhanced the credibility of the friendship program. But, as Magsaysay recognized the offer of friendship would only impact on a small segment of Huks and their sympathizers. The demonstrated military prowess of the HMB dictated that a military victory for the government by an all out application of force must have top priority.[17]

Initially counterinsurgency operations by the Army were generally limited to area sweeps in regions where there were known Huk units. This was prompted first by the necessity of self protection of Army

---

[16]Bohannan and Valeriano, op. cit., p. 219.
[17]Bashore, op. cit., p. 196.

units and secondly because this type of operation was in conformance with Magsaysay's early intention to exterminate every Communist in the Philippines. In fact, his original military plan was to conduct massive sweeps of each of the Huk regional commands, taking them one at a time and applying all available forces to crush the insurgents. Many area sweeps were conducted prior to early 1951 and it would be incorrect to assume such tactics accomplished little or nothing. They did inflict considerable damage on the Huks; but they weren't the final answer. Large unit sweeps frequently gave themselves away, allowing the Huks to avoid contact. Moreover, the sweeps did not immobilize the Huks, nor provide the Army the degree of offensive initiative essential for a successful counterguerrilla campaign.[18]

It was this realization by the Army that only by pressing the battle--a continuous offensive--would they ever be able to reduce the Huk military threat to manageable proportions. However, it was well into 1951 before the Army began to emphasize small unit actions. Additionally new organizations and tactical innovations were utilized to increase the flexibility of the Army. Liberal experiments were conducted with a variety of military units such as scout dogs and horse cavalry as a means of translating conventional military force to the guerrilla environment. A statement often credited to Magsaysay, " . . . it takes a guerrilla to catch a guerrilla" appears to have had strong influence at this time on the Army's change from large unit sweeps to a concept of small unit actions. Here was an army composed to a large

---

[18]Smith, op. cit., p. 117.

degree of officers and men who themselves fought as guerrillas against the Japanese and it was, therefore, a bewilderment why they did not turn earlier to more unorthodox tactics and maximize the value of their previous experience.

As training and conceptual evolution permitted, small unit actions by Philippine Army units increased. Long range reconnaissance patrols, raids and ambushes by squad and platoon size units became the principal tactical modus operandi of the Army. This capability was extended by the employment of the Army's newly organized Scout Ranger teams and other ad hoc special mission units. These latter units enjoyed their greatest success in disguised or infiltration operations. It was common for them to remain in Huk controlled areas for extended periods of time, successfully covering their real purpose by devoting only a part of their time to the assigned mission. Such disguised operations were dangerous and required meticulous planning and coordination to insure success.

In the friendly barrios and villages "civilian commando" units were formed from able bodied men of the community. These units were trained and led by regular Philippine Army personnel and their mission was defense of the local area. This proved invaluable not only by freeing regular army units for offensive operations, but also by increasing the peasants' awareness of the struggle and by giving him a responsibility in its resolution. To provide an interface with the people of the villages, the Army established in almost every province Civilian Advisory Committees.[19] These committees were composed of

---

[19]Vargas, op. cit., p. 83.

local businessmen, farmers, professionals and representatives of the Army unit of that area and met periodically to solve the community problems relative to peace and order. These Civilian Advisory Committees greatly facilitated presentation of the position of the government and the Army to the local area leaders and were an effective adjunct of the friendship or force policy.

It is difficult to quantitatively measure the impact of the government's new policy. Manila hadn't fallen to the Huks, but neither could it be assumed that a Huk menace no longer existed. However, by the Spring 1952 there was no doubt that the combined military and civic action programs initiated by Magsaysay had succeeded in reducing the Huk threat to manageable proportions and giving new heart to the advocates of democracy.

More specifically, however, between April 1950 and the end of 1951, the Philippine Army acquired by capture or surrender 4,500 Huk weapons of all types. While in the period January to March 1952, about 4,000 more were seized. This statistical comparison substantiates the increased effectiveness of the Army's counterinsurgency effort. It is estimated that by March 1952 the Huks had lost about 50 percent of the weapons they had during their high point. Also by this time, Huk casualties reached 35 to 40 percent of the 1950 strength.[20]

---

[20]Smith, op. cit., p. 124

LAND FOR THE LANDLESS

The strength of the Hukbalahap was the landless peasant whose grievances and demands for land ownership and crop sharing had not been met by the government. Their very real plight was so effectively exploited by the Communists' battle cry of "land for the landless" that government efforts for resolution were completely frustrated from the outset. So emotional was this issue that it could not really be countered, but must be captured by dramatic government action.[21] Magsaysay early recognized that a land resettlement program had to be made to work and if other agencies of the government couldn't do it, perhaps the Army could.

In December 1950, President Quirino authorized the Department of National Defense to organize the Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR) and assume the national responsibility of resettlement. The basic objectives of EDCOR were:

> 1. To assume responsibility for surrendered or captured Huks and Communists who, neither indicted by nor convicted by civil courts were willing to undertake resettlement in new lands.
>
> 2. To reeducate such participants in democratic, peaceful and productive ways of life.
>
> 3. To resettle, in addition, exservicemen, ex-guerrillas and other selected citizens on EDCOR farms as stabilizing influence in the rehabilitation of former dissidents.
>
> 4. To train surrendered or captured Communists and Huks in various trades and skills that they could pursue gainful occupations.[22]

---

[21] Bohannan and Valeriano, op. cit., p. 105.
[22] Smith, op. cit., p. 108.

EDCOR thus became the major civic action endeavor of the Philippine Army. Between February 1951 and January 1954, three settlement areas were established. The first two on the island of Mindanao; the third in Isabela Province of northern Luzon. What made EDCOR different from earlier government attempts at resettlement? Quite basically because the Army provided substantial help to the settlers; they were not left to fend for themselves on the undeveloped lands.

Each family was provided a home plot, 15 to 20 acres for farming and considerable aid in clearing and starting cultivation. In addition, the Army sold on credit the work animals, tools and materials the settler required to start his farm. Troops and settlers worked together to construct family housing, community buildings, schools, chapels and dispensaries, to operate sawmills and dig wells. Security was provided by the Army, as well as other community services such as medical care and electricity. The settler in turn, guaranteed to farm his land, repay the loans extended to him and pledge his allegiance to the government.[23] It was not a government charity, but a contractual obligation that allowed them to take pride in their accomplishments. Likewise, the Army gained, "for in a new spirit of cooperation the armed forces were serving the people in a constructive manner that went far beyond the demands of actual warfare."[24] A foreign newspaper correspondent reporting on his visit to an EDCOR farm said, "I have

---

[23]Edward G. Lansdale, Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia (Washington: Memorandum to the Draper Committee, March 1959).
[24]Smith, op. cit., p. 110.

seen many armies, but this one beats them all. This is an army with a social conscience."[25] The Philippine Army had not always acted with a conscience, but through painful experience learned that unless the application of their force serves the people, it cannot redeem the nation.

A quantitative measurement of EDCOR's success is deceiving. The amount of public land distributed and the number of beneficiaries of the EDCOR programs were, in fact, small. Estimates indicate that only about 1,000 families were actually resettled. EDCOR's worth must be measured as the most valuable counterpropaganda weapon against the Communists developed by the government. EDCOR was new, dynamic and heralded as the government's principal agrarian reform program. Its publicity coverage was extensive and its effect on the people was apparent. Communist reaction was sharp and soon they became trapped into denouncing a principle--land for the landless--which had once been their battle cry.

---

[25] Scaff, op. cit., p. 38.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

By 1952 the effects of the government's "friendship or force" policy became markedly apparent. The Philippine Army had successfully wrested the initiative from the enemy; Manila no longer lay within Huk grasp and a situation of relative security existed in the countryside. The Huk squadrons had been driven back to their redoubts and no longer dared challenge the Army in open battle. The Hukbalahap insurgency no longer possessed the momentum to achieve the ultimate goal of establishing a "peoples' democratic government" in the Philippines, but it would be several years more before the Huk threat would be considered under control. Those years were to see a now confident and effective Philippine Army relentlessly harass the Huk guerrillas until in May 1954, in desperation, their leader Luis Taruc surrendered. In Taruc's words this was the "long and bitter struggle" in which the objective of their movement was reduced to one of survival.[1]

Clearly the government's victory was the product of the cummulative results of the countermeasures initiated after September 1950. The revitalization of the Army and its dramatic change of character was only short of a miracle. But such is not the whole story. Perhaps the factor or event most contributing to the government's ultimate "victory" lay in the Huk "failure" in August 1950 to press their very significant tactical and psychological advantage. It is most probable

---

[1]Taruc, op. cit., p. 158.

that had a Huk general offensive been launched the government would have fallen. The advantages held by the Communists at this time were overwhelming--their cause was widely recognized and supported, their organization well established and extremely influential in central and northern Luzon, their military arm experienced and capable and most significantly, the Communists' strategy was one of victory. While in contrast the Philippine government and nation were not even able to properly assess and appreciate the Huk threat or the gravity of the situation. Within the armed forces, the situation at this time could only be described as one of bewildered concern, while maintaining that the Huk problem, as before, was a police matter. Thus it must be concluded that had the Communists recognized the significance of their advantages and had applied with greater resolve their own theory and strategy, the Philippine government would have fallen before the end of 1950. No insurgency can stand still; there are limits to the protraction of the conflict.

With Taruc's surrender in 1954, the government concluded they had "won the war" and although subsequent events to include a persistent and incipient insurgency exists even today, the magnitude of the victory should not be discounted. Statistical results alone are impressive. By 1954, the Huks had sustained heavy losses: 9,695 killed in action; 1,635 wounded; 4,269 captured; and 15,866 surrendered. Additionally 43,000 assorted firearms and 15 million rounds of ammunition had been seized by the Philippine armed forces. While in contrast only 1,578 Philippine military personnel were killed and 1,416 wounded.[2] It is estimated that by the end of 1954 the Huks could

---

[2]Bashore, op. cit., p. 198.

muster no more than 2,000 armed men. Their military organization was broken and the forces that remained were in remnant bands, seeking only to sustain themselves.

The translation from a circumstance of near failure to one of ultimate victory occurred when the government and the military began to perceive their mission in terms of people, their property and institutions. Certainly in the early years of the insurgency there existed quantitative difference between the adversaries, but the significant difference was in the appreciation that the real target was the people, not an opposing military formation. When Magsaysay demanded that this understanding be fundamental in every government counteraction, a program toward success was launched. Heretofore the Army had failed to recognize that the real political power of their democratic nation was with the people. When service and protection of these people began to motivate military action, eventual victory could be predicted.

A new role for the Army easily evolved. No longer would a purely military solution be sought; it was realized that no matter how effectively military action was conducted, it could not provide a permanent solution to the basic causes of disaffection. Even when the application of military force was the appropriate response, it would be measured, judiciously applied and combined with civic action. Every soldier had to understand that he was the symbol of the government to the governed and only as he is accepted will the voice of the government be credible. This precept was the foundation of the Philippine Army's Attraction Program which in implementation of its many aspects

changed the image of the Army and was instrumental in restoring the peoples' confidence in their government.

Literally, a massive campaign of words and deeds in combination vividly demonstrated the Army's new attitude. Civic action represented the deeds; psychological operations, the words. Incorporation of these functions as part of the new role of the Army was a major contributing factor toward the ultimate counterinsurgency success.

Further, the sensitivity to success of initiative, momentum and the offensive is most critical. As the loss of momentum, for whatever reasons, no doubt stole victory from the Huks, the ability to mount the offensive was the other major factor in the Army's ultimate success. The application of initiative and offense are not restricted to tactical operations, but it is in this context that the offensive is of greatest significance. The advantage of the tactical offensive belonged to the Huks until early 1951 when the Philippine Army drastically increased their small unit operations. As soon as Army units began to proliferate in areas of Huk control the effect was immediately evident. The Huks were forced to fight in response or relinquish control. The employment of disguised and infiltration operations assisted in wresting the initiative from the enemy. The conclusion to be reached is that success is dependent on retention of the continuous offensive--fully applicable to either adversary.

As a final conclusion, the Hukbalahap insurgency lent further support to the circumstance of revolutionary war that regardless of the trend toward the resulting outcome of the insurgency, terror, torture and coercion will become the primary means of controlling

the people. In the early period, Philippine military countermeasures relied heavily on repression and personal depredation of the people to insure their control. While at the same time the Huk attitude was largely one of benevolence toward the people. As the tide of the insurgency swelled against the Huks, intimidation through terrorism became their primary means of insuring mass support. Those who previously had sympathized with the Huks and their cause now found themselves the target; and so it will always be.

William C. Moore

WILLIAM C. MOORE
LTC, Infantry

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. American University. A Summary of the US Role in Insurgency Situations in the Philippine Islands. Washington: Counter-Insurgency Information Analysis Center, 1964. (SORO CINFAC 25-64)

2. _____. Strengths of Insurgents and Counterinsurgents in the Philippines from 1946. Washington: Counterinsurgency Information Analysis Center, 1965. (SORO CINFAC R-0152-65)

3. Baclagon, Uldarico S. Lessons from the Huk Campaign in the Philippines. Manila: M. Colcol and Co., 1960. (DS 686.5 B3)

4. Bohannan, Charles T. R. (LTC, AUD, Ret) and Valeriano, Napoleon D. (COL, AFP, Ret). Counter-Guerrilla Operations, The Philippines Experience. New York: Praeger, 1962. (U240 V3)

5. Bashore, Boyd T. (MAJ, USA). "Dual Strategy for Limited War." Military Review, Vol. XL, May 1960.

6. Cross, James E. Conflict in the Shadows, The Nature and Politics of Guerrilla War. Garden City: Doubleday, 1963. (U240 C71)

7. Farinas, Jose R. (LT, AFP). "AFP's Scout Rangers." Philippine Armed Forces Journal, Vol. IX, No. 1, November 1955. (Reprint file)

8. Lansdale, Edward G. (COL, USAF). Memorandum to the Draper Committee; subject, Civic Activities of the Military, Southeast Asia. Washington: US Department of Defense, March 1959. (UA 12 L3)

9. LeGro, William E. (LTC, USA). Communism and Insurrection in the Philippines; Causes of Disaffection, Organization for Rebellion and Government. Thesis. Carlisle Barracks: US Army War College. (AWC Z-L4)

10. Leighton, Richard M. and others. The Huk Rebellion: A Case Study in the Social Dynamics of Insurrection. Washington: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1961. (ICAF R-231)

11. McGhee, George C. Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy, subject: Decisive Factors of the Counter-Guerrilla Campaign in Greece Malaya and the Philippines. Washington: US Department of State, 21 November 1961. (U240 M2)

12. Scaff, Alvin H. The Philippine Answer to Communism. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955. (DS 686.5 S35)

13. Smith, Robert A. Philippine Freedom, 1946-1958. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958. (DS 686.5 S55)

14. Smith, Robert Ross. The Hukbalahap Insurgency; Economic, Political and Military Factors. Washington: US Department of Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963. (DS 686.5 S57)

15. Taruc, Luis. Born of the People. New York: International Publishers, 1953. (DS 686.2 T3A3)

16. _____. He Who Rides the Tiger. New York: Praeger, 1967. (DS 686.2 T3A31)

17. Tirona, Tomas C. (LTC, PAF). "The Philippine Anti-Communist Campaign." Air University Quarterly Review, Vol. VII, No. 2, Summer 1954.

18. US Army Command and General Staff College. Insurgent War, Selected Case Studies. Reference Book 31-100, Vol II. Fort Leavenworth: 1 July 1969. (CGSC RB 31-100)

19. Vargas, Jesus M. Communism in Decline, The Huk Campaign. Bangkok, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, 1966. (HX63 P6V3)

20. _____. "Countermeasures." Speech during SEATO Seminar on Countering Communist Subversion (Baguio, RP: November 1957), pp. 79-88. (HX 59 S38)

21. Villa-Real, Luis A. (LTC, AFP). "Huk Hunting." The Army Combat Forces Journal, Vol. V, No. 4, November 1954.