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THESIS

**A COUNTER INSURGENCY STUDY: AN ANALYSIS OF
LOCAL DEFENSES**

by

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September 2004

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ABSTRACT

Local Defenses are view by many counterinsurgency strategists as an essential element in defeating an insurgency. Providing a population with a local defense organization will strongly support the government's strategy of extending its security and control over the rural areas affected by insurgent organizations. However every insurgency is unique and demands a unique counterinsurgency strategy to be defeated. There always will be an important commonality: insurgent organizations need popular support to subsist. The final success of the government or the insurgents will be determined by the capacity of either both to win and retain the support among the rural population.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	PURPOSE.....	1
B.	METHODOLOGY.....	1
C.	ORGANIZATION OF THESIS.....	2
D.	DEFINITIONS.....	2
1.	Popular Support.....	2
2.	Local Defense.....	3
3.	Effectiveness.....	3
E.	CASE STUDIES.....	4
II.	THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY.....	7
A.	PRECONDITIONS.....	8
B.	INSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	9
C.	THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	11
1.	The Briggs Plan.....	11
2.	Templer's Plan.....	13
3.	The Home Guard Security.....	13
III.	EL SALVADOR'S CIVIL WAR.....	17
A.	PRECONDITIONS.....	18
B.	INSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	20
C.	THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	22
D.	CIVIL DEFENSES IN EL SALVADOR.....	25
IV.	THE VIETNAM WAR.....	29
A.	PRECONDITIONS.....	30
B.	THE INSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	33
C.	THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	34
D.	THE CIVILIAN IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP.....	37
V.	THE PERUVIAN TERROR EPOCH.....	41
A.	PRECONDITIONS.....	42
B.	INSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	46
C.	THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	48
D.	RONDAS CAMPESINAS (NIGHT WATCH PATROLS).....	51
VI.	ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES.....	55
A.	GEOGRAPHY.....	55
B.	TIMING.....	59
C.	CULTURE AND TRADITIONS.....	61
D.	COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY.....	63
E.	ECONOMIC RESOURCES.....	65
F.	GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT.....	66

VII. CONCLUSION.....	69
APPENDIX	73
1. SITUATION	74
2. MISSION.....	76
3. EXECUTION.....	76
4. SERVICE SUPPORT.....	80
5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL	81
LIST OF REFERENCES.....	83
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	91

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Malaysia, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia/malaysia	7
Figure 2.	El Salvador, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/america/elsalvador	17
Figure 3.	Vietnam, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia/vietnam	29
Figure 4.	Peru, from World Wide Web; Retrieved on 15 July 2004, from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/peru_pol91.jpg	41

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

Separating the rebels from a local population is a key factor in negating the supply, support, and concealment that insurgencies seek to exploit in order to survive in their early stages. In cases where the state has been able to defeat the insurgents, the focus of the state has been on isolating the insurgency from its popular base of support. Under this scheme, a mix of non-military programs properly integrated with military action, has allowed the state to gradually shift the balance from passive and non-support, to active popular support for the government against the insurgents. Though no real framework can be drawn about how to negate insurgent organizations which enjoy popular support; in this thesis we will argue that, despite the approach of each particular state, a strategy of organizing the population in local defenses needs to be included as an essential element for gaining the hearts and minds of the population, as well as extending the government's control over the country. The contribution of this thesis will be to provide the reader with a set of variables to be considered when planning the implementation of local defense organizations.

B. METHODOLOGY

Case Study analysis is used in this thesis. The cases used are Malaya from 1948 to 1960, El Salvador from 1979 to 1990, Vietnam from 1961 to 1973, and Peru from 1980 to 1997. In each case, a brief description of both the preconditions in the country and the build-up phase of the insurgency is presented. Then the insurgency as well as counterinsurgency strategies will be addressed. Particular emphasis will be given to the study of the local defense units organized by the state in these four cases as part of the counterinsurgency strategy. In the following chapters, an in depth analysis and comparison of the local defense units will be made as to determine the critical variables involved in the implementation of these programs. Finally, we will draw conclusions in order to present a frame of reference and considerations upon which to improve the

effectiveness of these organizations when needed to support a new counterinsurgency challenge.

The case selection was based on three criteria: 1) Whether or not the states, affected by an insurgency, introduced the concept of local defenses as part of a strategy to separating the insurgency from its base of popular support. In two of the four cases selected – Vietnam and El Salvador - a strategy of local defenses did not play a key role in the resolution of the conflict; however, in each case it did prove its effectiveness in negating the insurgents of popular support in some areas and, to some degree, during the time period in which it was implemented; 2) Whether or not the insurgent organizations were politically and militarily organized and presented a real threat of overthrowing the established government; and 3) Whether or not the conflict was a protracted war between the state and the insurgents, extending for more than a decade, and inflicting a great number of casualties and causing important economic losses.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The Thesis is organized in VII Chapters. Chapters II to V analyze insurgencies in Malaya, Vietnam, El Salvador, and Peru, as well as the counterinsurgency strategy applied by the government in each of these countries; the main focus will be on the organization of local defense units. Chapter VI identifies and explains the variables involved in the success or failure of the local defense organizations in these four countries including geographic, timing, military, political, economic, and cultural considerations. Chapter VII will address the lessons learned in the organization of local defense units. This Chapter will also establish a set of general considerations to be observed when planning the use of local defenses to disrupt the relationship between an insurgency and population in the future.

D. DEFINITIONS

1. Popular Support

The counterinsurgency experience of the last century has demonstrated that terrorist and guerrilla organizations, cannot subsist without popular support. Despite

their ideological motivations, at one point in time and according to their goals and strategy, they will need to establish a close relationship with the local population. The need to obtain food, medical attention, and weapons, as well as concealment and new cadres, demands innovation in their approach in order to influence the population to their benefit. Mao Tse Tung, referring to the communist cause, observed; “because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them, it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation” (Stubbs, 1989, p. 2). In all of the cases presented in this study, the insurgents either by persuasive or coercive methods have tried to attain this goal. The state, however, has countered the threat in some measures and not always with the same effectiveness, by appealing to psychological operations, civic-actions, resettlements, and the use of local defenses.

2. Local Defense

Local defenses refers to community organizations specifically organized in rural areas where the control of the state is scarce to none. The organization of local defenses has not always been a strategy of the state to extend its control over the population. In many cases the local defenses have been the early initiative of indigenous communities in order to confront criminal acts and to establish order and control in their villages. Nevertheless, in the cases presented, the reorientation of these organizations on a territorial basis has been the initiative of each government to help the isolated populations provide their own protection against insurgent attacks and influence. In each of the four cases presented, the local defense organizations have been identified by different names; however, the intent of the counterinsurgency strategists has been very similar. In Malaya they were called ‘Home-Defenses’, in El Salvador ‘Civil-Defenses’, in Vietnam ‘Civilian Irregular Defense Groups’, and in Peru ‘Rondas Campesinas, Autodefensas or Civil Defense Committees’.

3. Effectiveness

When analyzing the effectiveness of the local defense organizations, we will not necessarily assume that their effectiveness at some point contributed to the final success

of the counterinsurgency effort. For instance, in the cases of Vietnam and El Salvador, the local-defenses had a momentum with which they proved their effectiveness; unfortunately this success did not last for long. On the contrary, in cases like Malaya and Peru, despite some initial setbacks, the programs proved their effectiveness over time and deserved consideration by experts in the field, as an important contribution to the success of the applied counterinsurgency program. The effectiveness of the local defense program in any particular country will be determined by the following measures: 1) The degree to which the local-defenses protected villages affected by the insurgents and cleared areas of insurgent influence; 2) The degree to which they facilitated the reallocation of government security forces to more needed areas in order to directly confront the insurgents.

E. CASE STUDIES

Negating the support of the population has proved to be a key element in defeating insurgencies; namely terrorist and guerrilla organizations. In the last century, as terrorist organizations and guerrilla bands have found popular support to breed and become robust by appealing to social disfranchisement and internal grievances, meticulously calculated and orchestrated counterinsurgency strategies applied by governments and foreign allies have restored the relationship between the state and the population. A mixed strategy encompassing civil, military, intelligence, and psychological warfare programs, all within the context of a firm rule of law and steady progress towards self-government and independence, has robbed the insurgency of political appeal (Komer, 1972, p. v).

In the next four Chapters, we will analyze four cases of insurgencies – Malaya, El Salvador, Vietnam, and Peru – in which the organization of local defenses, either as part of the overall counterinsurgency strategy or as an isolated effort, proved their effectiveness – at least during some time period for the cases of Vietnam and El Salvador – in denying the insurgents the rural support bases they needed to subsist. Following a review of the preconditions affecting each country, the organization and *modus operandi* of the insurgency, and the strategy of the state to counter the insurgency's advance, we

will focus the analysis on the local defense organizations. The following cases will address the specific use of the local defenses, either as an essential element of the resettlement program or as part of the counterinsurgency programs to secure existing indigenous villages.

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II. THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY



Figure 1. Malaysia, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia/malasya>

The final victory of the Malayan government over the Malayan Communist Party (MPC) in July 1960 was by no means an exclusive military effort. Though during the first two years of the struggle the Malayan government was “flying blind” and the very emphasis of the state was to counter the insurgency with military means, in the following years, a set of measures recommended by the British government and implemented by the Malayan colonial government proved to be effective in countering the MCP’s advance. As Komer (1972) observed, it was not primarily a military effort but rather one in which the military played only a limited though indispensable role (p. 11).

A. PRECONDITIONS

Located in East Asia, Malaya is a small tropical country of about 500 miles long and no more than 100 miles wide at any point. With a central mountain range rising over 12,000 feet, the country is subject to heavy and persistent rainfall throughout the year. As a consequence, the jungle and the mountains are characterized by thick vegetation that makes them almost impenetrable – 80% of the country is jungle. The main economic activities in Malaya are agriculture and mining – especially rubber, tin, and iron, being the world's largest producer of both natural rubber and tin. The populated areas are developed with good roads and communications, a good administrative system and trained local officials. Half of the rural population is made up of peasants and the other half is composed of state and mine workers, mainly Chinese and Indians. Except for a 150-mile land frontier with Thailand on the north and a small land frontier with Singapore on the South, Malaya is surrounded by a 1000-mile coast line. With a population of about seven million, Malaya is composed by 44% of Malay, 38.5% Chinese, 10.5 % Indian, 5.5% aborigines, and 1.5% other races. The official language is the Bahasa Melayu; however, English, Chinese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai, and other indigenous languages and dialects are spoken (Thompson, 1966, pp 17-20).

After the Japanese surrendered on August 1945, the communist guerrillas emerged from the Malayan jungle. Composed of Chinese left-wing groups expelled from the Kuomintang in the 1920's, the Chinese immigrants introduced communism into the developing Southeast Asian colonies. However, even after the creation of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in 1930, communism was not a real threat to the security of the Colonial governments in Southeast Asia until World War II. The Japanese occupation of French Indochina and the defeat of the British in Malaya and Singapore in 1942, gave the Chinese communists enough reason to organize popular resistance under the flag of an Anti-Japanese movement. By 1934, a constitution for the MCP was recognized and the party reorganized, establishing ties with the labor unions (Stubbs, 1989, p.42). After the defeat of Japan and before the arrival of allied troops in Malaya, the MCP, with its guerrilla arm – the Malayan Peoples Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA) – were in total

control of the territory, having enough time to reorganize and prepare to eliminate their opposition. According to Thompson (1966), there were three effects of the war favoring the communist party: first, the strong position in which the communist parties emerged from the war, due to their constant resistance against the Japanese, which allowed the MCP to capitalize on the after effects of the war; second, the post-war era was the awakening of the Asian rural population to the modern world, for they were exposed to new needs and demands; and third, with the end of the war there was a growing awareness that there could be no return to the conditions of the pre-war colonial era (p. 15).

With the British re-occupation of Malaya, the MCP changed its theme from anti-colonialism to anti-imperialism. Aware of its military weakness in comparison with the British and commonwealth troops, the MCP agreed to give certain concessions and opted for recognition as a legal political party. However, as the country recovered organizationally and economically from the war, the MCP lost appeal and turned to violent means to formulate its demands for a new government. On June 1948, the communist insurrection broke out in Malaya. The “State of Emergency” would last for twelve years. For a country with a population of 5 million, the outcome of this long struggle had significant consequences: 4,668 civilian, 4,425 security forces and 6,710 insurgents killed, as well as 1,287 insurgents captured and 2,702 who capitulated to British-Malayan forces. By 1960 the insurgency’s strength and activity had declined so much that the “Emergency” was officially declared over (Komer, 1972, pp. 9- 10).

B. INSURGENCY STRATEGY

The instructions for the violent uprising of the MCP in 1948 were received from Moscow through a communist conference held in Calcutta. The Communist movement in Malaya was mainly composed of the ethnic Chinese minority, which constituted a 38.5% of the total population, many of whom were students (Stubbs, 1989, p. 12). There was not much support from the Malay and Indian populace. Furthermore, in accordance with the Chinese Maoist precepts, their initial activities began on the rural areas of the country, looking forward to encircle the cities from the countryside by gaining support of the

Chinese population, and by establishing bases of support among Chinese squatters located near jungle areas. The lack of preparation of the Malayan government, as well as the initial failure of the Police and military forces to recognize the signals and warnings of an oncoming insurgency, allowed the MCP to grow and avoid the characteristic vulnerabilities present on the subversive build-up phase (Thompson, 1966, p. 50).

After the British surrender in Singapore, and with the increasing threat of Japan in the region, the MPC formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), which later would be supported and recognized by the United States and the United Kingdom as the most important resistance organization against the Japanese. This wartime alliance to fight the Japanese not only linked the MPAJA with British special operations units, but it provided the guerrillas with weapons and equipment, which were airdropped by the British Royal Air Force to support the resistance in Japanese held territory.

Following the Japanese defeat and the end of the war, the MPAJA were numerous and well armed, as well as expert in guerrilla tactics. By the return of the first British troops to Malaya, the MPAJA was in *de facto* control in most of the country (Newsinger, 2002, p. 35). Later on, however, the MPAJA was officially disbanded by the British military as part of the negotiations. The MCP then covered its armed branch with a number of traditional communist fronts. In addition, the large amount of weapons introduced into the country during the war provided them a sizeable arsenal with which to overthrow the Malayan government.

The MCP was now legalized and planning to bring down the regime. The party appealed to the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions to increase the frequency and intensity of their labor strikes, as well as their terrorist actions. Taking advantage of the thick and deep jungle, which covered 80% of Malaya, isolated Chinese rural populations became the main source of recruitment and logistic support for the Maoist insurgency. The dense jungle also offered the guerrillas the required protection and concealment to fight and survive, as well the necessary conditions to reorganize and plan. Beginning in 1949, the number of incidents fell dramatically and the British authorities were confident that the insurgency was under control. However, this apparent retreat to the jungle was a deliberate maneuver to reorganize and train, as well as to extend the network of

supporters – the Min Yuen - among the Chinese squatters to an estimated 60,000 people (Newsinger, 2002, p. 45). By the end of the same year, the number of violent incidents started to increase exponentially, reaching a peak in July 1951, with more than 500 incidents in this month alone (Sunderland, 1964, p. 56). Ambushes to armed forces units, killings of Chinese government supporters and governmental authorities, attacks on local police posts, selection of rural liberated areas, organization of strikes and revolts, as well as coercion and extortion was all executed by the insurgency.

C. THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

As mentioned, during the first two years of the struggle, the British-Malayan government underestimated the MCP, and confused the violent actions with riots and social disorder. The lack of coordinated operations and shared intelligence between Malayan Colonial police and other military branches allowed the MCP to grow and organize freely during the build-up stage of the insurgency. The decree of the “Emergency” in Malaya on June 1948, not only proved at first to be ineffective in stopping the violent actions of the MCP and in negating the support of the population for the guerrillas, it polarized the Chinese population to support the guerrillas, increasing dramatically the number of incidents perpetrated as well as the number of supporters and militants for the party. As became obvious, conventional operations to confront the MCP proved to be futile, producing major casualties for the armed forces and police as well as to the civilian population. Nevertheless, in the following years, though a process of trial and error, the Malayan government with the advice of the British government gradually produced a long-term, relatively low-cost strategy, which proved successful over time (Komer, 1972, p. 11).

1. The Briggs Plan

In the spirit, of a patient approach in April 1950, General Sir Harold Briggs, Director of Operations in Malaya, with the support of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, planned a long-term integrated strategy to defeat the MCP. Briggs was a former commanding general in Burma during World War II and had significant anti-guerrilla

experience. The Briggs Plan was basically composed of four programs in different fields, but its main purpose was to separate the insurgency from the population.

The first step of the plan was to reorganize the structure of the government. By creating the Federal War Council, all plans and campaigns in the state and district level were coordinated with a centralized direction and decentralized execution. Programs in the civil, military, political and economic fields were integrated in the anti-guerrilla cause. As a result, a higher level of coordination between the police, the armed forces, and local authorities was achieved.

The second step was the resettlement of Chinese squatters. Launched in June 1950, this program by 1952 had resettled over 400,000 people into some 400 new villages. However, this program produced some negative effects on the Chinese squatters due to the forced abandonment of their lands and crops, as well as some of their belongings. However, the final outcome of this program proved to be positive for the overall counterinsurgency strategy. On the one hand, the resettlement program isolated the insurgents from their primary source of support and resources. On the other hand, the Chinese peasants were later compensated by the government with new land, medical support, new infrastructure systems, and money.

The third step of Briggs' Plan was to reorganize the intelligence system. By establishing a special intelligence branch in August 1950, all information related to the Emergency collected by one entity. This entity was in charge of processing and disseminating intelligence accordingly to the units in the field (Newsinger, 2001, p. 50-51). The previous approach of assessing the insurgency by its reported activities was replaced by a new approach of studying the organization and its key personnel, and predicting its likely course of action (Komer, 1972, p. 42).

The fourth step, of no less importance, was to reorganize the security forces, as well as to reinvent the combat strategy. Mimicking the territorial organization of the MCP, the Malayan armed forces and police were reorganized on a territorial basis. Small-unit operations replaced the large-unit approach; which had proved to be inadequate to fight guerrillas and caused friendly casualties in the early years of the struggle. An

important aspect of the British-Malayan effort to reorganize security forces and to negate MCP's influence over the resettled populations was the implementation of the Home Guard Security, which were built up to protect the Malay Kampongs and Chinese new squatters. This will be analyzed in depth deep later in this section.

2. Templer's Plan

After the assassination of High Commissioner Gurney by a guerrilla platoon of the MCP, and the retirement of General Briggs on November 1951, General Sir Gerald Templer was appointed by the British government as both High Commissioner and Director of Operations in Malaya. Empowered by this new degree of authority, Templer, working with the plan left by Briggs, energized the program and reduced the bureaucracy. His main concerns were: 1) to maintain unified control of civil and military forces; 2) to reorganize and train the police; 3) to increase the educational effort, especially in the primary schools, in order to win the war of ideas; 4) to improve the protection of the resettled areas; 5) to ensure that the best men were recruited for the civil service; 6) to bolster the security forces; 7) to give higher priority to the intelligence effort; 8) to tighten the control over food and supplies in order to isolate the guerrillas; 9) to develop effective psychological operations campaigns in order to improve civil-military relations and encourage desertion from the MCP's ranks, files and; 10) to enlarge, arm, and train the Home Guards in order disrupt the relation between the insurgents and the population (Stubbs, 1989, Ch. 6).

3. The Home Guard Security

The Home Guard was not an invention of the Emergency; these organizations had a long history in the Malay villages, where they were first created to protect the local population from crime and robbery. However, they were first addressed as part of the counterinsurgency effort by General Briggs in September 1950 (Komer, 1972, p. 40). At the time Templer was appointed, the Home Guards were already supporting police defensive operations in the resettled areas or Strategic Hamlets; however, these organizations were very limited in their scope due to the government's inability to arm

them properly. To rectify the problem, Templer's new Inspector-General, Major-General E. B. de Fonblanque, in April 1952, started building up an organization independent from the police and capable of defending the rural population against guerrilla attacks (Stubbs, 1989, p. 158). Templer also insisted on the need to recruit, train, and arm with shotguns local Chinese to help protect their villages: eventually some 50,000 Chinese were recruited in total (Newsinger, 2002, p. 54). If by the end of 1948 the Home Guards numbered about 17,000, by the end of 1949 they were about 47,000, and by the end of 1951 they included 99,000 men (Komer, 1972, p.40).

Another important adjunct to the police were the aboriginal forces created within the hill tribes whom inhabited the jungles. Thus the initial attempts to resettle these tribes failed dramatically, producing a high mortality among the aborigines due to the effects of diseases and despair. The establishment of jungle forts in the interior of the jungle improved the relations with the aborigines, providing them with medical and other facilities. The Special Air Service (SAS) played an important role in this endeavor by organizing and training these tribes to confront the insurgency (Newsinger, 2002, p. 56). A small aboriginal force, the Senoi Pra'ak, numbering not more than 300, accounted for more terrorists killed in the last two years of the Emergency than all the rest of the security forces put together (Thompson, 1966, p.153). The creation of the Kinta Valley Home Guard (KVHG) was another important asset on this part of the overall strategy. Under this scheme proposed by a leading Chinese politician, Leong Yew Koh, the miners in the sensitive areas would pay full-time armed Home Guards to provide security for the area (Stubbs, 1989, p. 158).

By the end of 1953 more than 2000 hamlets through all the country were well organized with Home Guard security. The organization within each hamlet consisted of Static and Operational Home Guard. One third of the static Home Guards was armed and had a more defensive duty. The group was normally composed of 35 people who were distributed, on daily basis, into groups of five to take the night shift in the perimeters of the village. The Operational Home Guards, on the other hand, were uniformed and organize into a 12 man armed section, and had a more active role in supporting some military and police operations in the surrounding areas. To establish a clear chain of

command, each state had its Home Guard Officer, each district had its District Officer, and subordinate to the District Officer was an Inspector. The Home Guard Officer was responsible of recruiting, training, and administrating the Home Guards.

Since the real intention behind the establishment of Home Defenses was to isolate the insurgency both physically and politically from the population, in order to negate the necessary support and resources for the insurgency to survive, the contribution of the Home Guards to the effort of the British-Malayan government was invaluable. The progressive lack of support and cooperation of the population with the MCP guerrillas pushed the guerrillas to the jungle, where military saturation operations and the lack of resources threatened the MCP's survivability and finally led to their defeat. The Home Guards also played an important role in providing reliable information about the position and constitution of the guerrillas. At the same time, the Home Guard policy in Malaya, allowed the release of thousands of armed forces and police personnel for other assignments, extending the control of the government to more sensitive areas of the country; particularly in the jungle (Stubbs, 1989, p. 159). In 1955, as the guerrilla strength decreased from 7,000-10,000 to 3,000, the security establishment also began to be reduced.

By the end of 1959, as the situation began to improve and the Emergency was about to end, the Home Guard was gradually demobilized. Despite the fact that there is not much evidence related to the Home Guard's demobilization process, it appears that the government had a tight control over the weapons provided to these organizations. For example, according to the High Commissioner's Press Conference (1954), after two years since the organization of the Home Defenses, only nine weapons were lost (Stubbs, 1989, p. 158).

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III. EL SALVADOR'S CIVIL WAR



Figure 2. El Salvador, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/america/elsalvador>

Despite the different motivations, composition, support, and approach of the Malayan insurgency, the explosion of the insurgency in El Salvador, was inspired by the same communist ideology. The successful revolution of the Sandinistas against the powerful and oppressive regime of Somoza in Nicaragua in 1979, as well as the chaotic situation of a country controlled by a small oligarchy, the failure of the first military Junta, and the illegitimate perception of the government by a disfranchised population acted as a catalyst to exploit in the violent insurrection of the Frente de Liberacion

Nacional Marxista Farabundo Marti (FMLN) in El Salvador, which aimed to overthrow the existing political system.

A. PRECONDITIONS

El Salvador, with a population of five million, is the smallest country in Central American. The tropical weather and the volcanic soil make of it a fertile ground for the cultivation of crops such as coffee. The country has a 120 miles border with Guatemala on the northwest, a 213 miles border with Honduras on the Southwest, and a sea cost line on the Pacific Ocean of 190 miles. El Salvador is separated by only 16 miles from the Nicaragua Sandinista, through the Gulf of Fonseca. The terrain is mostly mountainous with a narrow coastal belt and central plateau. The highest elevation of the mountain range is Mount El Pital at 8,190 feet above sea level. Other elevations include Santa Ana with 7095 feet, San Vicente with 6546 feet, and San Salvador with 5829 feet. The population is composed by 90% Mestizo, 9% White, and 1% Amerindian. The country is one of the most densely populated in the world and no striking cultural differences can be observed between the people from one end of the country to the other. There are few remote areas like Chalatenango, Morazan, and San Vicente. As a reference, by 1997 of the 6,268 miles of roads in the whole country 5,026 were unpaved. Although the official language is Spanish, some Amerindians speak Nahua (Salvador, 2000, p.1).

In 1979, after the fall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua, the Salvadoran military and the US government became concerned that something similar may occur in El Salvador. Dissatisfied with the bad economic situation in the country, the popular disenchantment, the ineptitude of successive military governments, and the formation of guerrilla forces in the countryside, a group of Salvadoran Colonels overthrew the dictatorship of General Carlos Humberto Romero and established a civil-military coalition or “*junta de revolucionaria*”. The junta, aware that there was a necessity to diminish the grievances affecting the peasants in order to negate the FMLN’s insurgency of popular support, offered a reform program, which included guarantees of human, and civil rights, land reform, and economic development (Johnson, 2001, p. 116). Until that

point, over 70% of the land was owned by only 1% of the population, while over 40% of the rural population owned no land at all (Schwarz, 1991, p. 44).

Beginning in 1979, as a way to secure economic and military aid from the US, the *Junta Revolucionaria* appointed as President of the new *Junta de Gobierno*, Jose Napoleon Duarte, a center-left politician who had been taken the elections by the ruling class and the military in 1972. Concerned by the triumph of the revolution in Nicaragua and the potential threat posed by the Sandinistas in Central America, on December 1980, a first package of economic aid at \$20 millions was authorized by the Carter administration to support the counterinsurgency effort in El Salvador.

Following the election of Ronald Reagan on January 1981, and fearing a massive infusion of military aid to suffocate the insurgency, the FMLN launched what they called the “final offensive” against the Salvadoran regime (Johnson 2001, p. 117); however, a miscalculation on the expected support of the Salvadoran population to seize the government prevented the FMLN from achieving its objectives and gave a temporary victory to the government. Despite this failure at the beginning of 1981, the FMLN’s alliance maintained the initiative during the first three years of the war. The lack of a clear policy to defeat the insurgency would lead to more military repression against the population, consequently increasing popular support for the FMLN. By then, the FMLN had control of great portions of the territory, while fourteen provinces of El Salvador were occupied by the guerrillas (Corum, nd. p.3).

Between 1981 and 1984, the two sides fought largely separate wars; on the one hand, the FMLN consolidated its base of support in the countryside and moved closer to defeating the Salvadoran armed forces; on the other hand, the United States advisors and the Salvadoran government were focused on legitimizing the Salvadoran system and in engineering a winning strategy to defeat the enemy (Byrne, 1996, p. 123).

By 1984, both sides were fighting the same war; a war to win the hearts and minds of the population. At this point, both the Salvadoran armed forces and the FMLN had accepted the fact that a decisive outcome to the war was more achievable politically, than militarily. From then on, the control and support of the population would be the

main objective of both contenders to achieve victory. Overall, the objective of the US and the Salvadoran armed forces was to win popular support and isolate the insurgency by using a comprehensive program of civic action, psychological operations and civil defense, combined with small-unit tactics and constant military patrolling (Byrne, 1996, pp. 131—132).

On January 1984, the Kissinger Commission released its report on Central America, which addressed the root causes of the upheavals in the region and the Soviet and Cuban support for the FMLN, and addressed recommendations in the civil-military fields to defeat the FMLN. However, strong confrontations with partial victories for the FMLN continued up to 1990. In 1991 a national cease-fire agreement between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN, followed by a peace treaty between both parties in 1992, ended this long struggle.

During this 12 year's war, an estimate of 75,000 - 100,000 individuals lost their lives, and there were considerable economic losses; considering that El Salvador is a country of only five million inhabitants. By the end of the war in 1992, El Salvador had absorbed at least \$ 4.5 billion, over \$ 1 billion of which was in military aid (Schwarz, 1991, p. 2).

B. INSURGENCY STRATEGY

In the 1970's the Frente de Liberacion Nacional Marxista Farabundo Marti (FMLN), backed by mayor rebel factions such as the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the Popular Liberation Forces (FPL), the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN), the Armed Forces of Liberation/Salvador Communist Party, and the Central American Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRTC), emerged to challenge the ruling oligarchy composed by the military government and the armed forces (Heigh, 1990, p. 125-127). In late 1979, as the guerrillas initiated a series of indirect and direct attacks throughout the country, the first junta increased the amount of state repression dramatically. In trying to conceal themselves from the constant strikes of the armed forces and police, the guerillas moved to the countryside, where they began to develop a plan to overthrow the existing political system.

By 1980, the FMLN had an estimated 12,000 fighters and logistic support from the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua through the Gulf of Fonseca. The extended land frontier with Honduras and Guatemala also facilitated the flow of light weapons and supplies from the Soviet bloc and Cuba through land, air, and sea. By then, the FMLN had created a sanctuary in the mountain range which limits the border with Honduras and had established fortifications in the surrounding areas of Monte Guazapa, only thirty miles from San Salvador (Corum, n.d, p. 4). Furthermore, it was estimate that on January of this same year, the FMLN had \$53 million collected through kidnapping and, following arms purchases, retained as much as \$ 20 million (Byrne, 1996, pp. 56). However, it was not until late 1981 that the FMLN felt strongly enough to seize the actual ruling system and launched the “final offensive”. The major factor that prevented the FMLN from taking power during this offensive was timing: The FMLN was unprepared to take advantage of the opportunity offered (pp. 66).

Between 1982 and early 1983 the FMLN had control over one third of El Salvador. As the situation in El Salvador continued to deteriorate, the FMLN felt confident that a guerrilla foco-based insurrection could succeed. Accordingly, they began large-scale field operations, leaving the strategy of ambushes and night attack, for more conventional warfare. However this strategy inflicted great casualties on the armed forces; it also proved to be futile against the Salvadoran army, which was recovering from its previous lethargy and, by 1984, had increased its strength from 12,000 to 42,000 troops (Corum, n.d. p. 4).

Another shift of the FMLN military strategy came in 1984. After President Duarte offered a peace treaty to the United Nations, inviting the FMLN to join, many guerrillas began to defect to the government. Aware of this change, the leadership of the FMLN became convinced that the *foco* model, based on the use of a guerrilla army, had largely ignored the support of the people (Johnson 2001, p. 117). In the following years, the FMLN continued to confront the Salvadoran armed forces, trying at the same time to increase their popular base; however, their violent means to gain support alienated potential supporters abroad, hurt the democratic left in the elections, and turned off the public (125).

Nevertheless, on November 11, 1989, as the situation in El Salvador began to stabilize and the rightist party ARENA won the elections – providing an important element of popular support for the government, the FMLN launched a strong offensive against the new regime. This offensive targeted military units and governmental infrastructure in the capital, San Miguel, Santa Ana, and other departments. By the end of the offensive, on December 5, the FMLN had lost 1,773 men and had 1,717 wounded (Corum, n.d, p. 10). Nevertheless the insurgents did not accomplish their main objectives; the offensive was so violent, that the FMLN almost destroyed the most important Salvadoran air force base in Ilopango (p. 10). As the war continued in 1990, the FMLN was still capable of perpetrating a number of attacks against the armed forces; only on this year, the FMLN inflicted 2000 casualties to the armed forces and police.

C. THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

Between 1979 and 1980 the build-up phase of the civil war was complete. As confrontation between the state and important sectors of the population reached considerable levels, the failure of the reformist movement promoted by the *Junta Revolucionaria* and the rightist groups, became evident (Chavez, n.d, p. 2).

At that time, the Salvadoran armed forces were ill prepared and counted an estimated 10,000 troops and 7,000 paramilitary police forces. The Salvadoran Air Force (FAS) was composed of only 1,000 men and a total of 67 old aircrafts (Corum, n.d, p. 2--3). According to Sheehan, the Salvadoran armed forces were built up on the large-unit model and their response to the guerrilla threat was to increase numbers over that model, including a massive expansion of the Air force (Sheehan, 1989, p. 139).

By 1979, US analysts and intelligence personnel were already reporting on the bad situation in El Salvador, and on January 1980, as the first junta resigned, a second junta was establish to govern for two year. This civil-military junta was to be held together by US persuasion. Yet also by 1980 there was a high priority on the Carter administration to suffocate the insurgency. By then, the old state-terror infrastructure used on the 60's and 70's was revitalized by some former members of the government. Civil intelligence networks and vigilante organizations that were part of the rural

paramilitary groups (ORDEN) of the past were reorganized to conduct a “dirty war” program, in which known leftist members were targeted by death-squads (Byrne, 1996, p. 57). In fact, preventing the leftist from seizing power was the highest priority of the Carter administration and, the key to achieving this goal, was to provide the Salvadoran armed forces with enough military aid and training.

During this time period, US policy makers and military advisors tried in vain to convince the armed forces to employ an offensive approach to defeating the FMLN. The plan was to gain the initiative by attacking the guerrillas in their controlled territories with small-unit tactics and air support. At the same time, there was a need for the military to protect key economic areas and populated centers to deny the FMLN of popular support and resources. The use of civil actions would help in winning the war of ideas by improving the government-population relations, and the use of civil defense units would help in dealing with the security threat in isolated areas, releasing military units to confront the insurgency directly.

In practice, however, the Salvadoran armed forces had a quite different approach. Reliance on air campaigns to bomb populated areas in control of the FMLN and guerrilla bases increased the number of non-combatants casualties, alienating local populations in favor of the insurgents. The plan to protect key infrastructure became an excuse for the ESAF to stay out of the offensive and in a more secure place. At one point between 1981 and 1984, half of the troops were occupied in static defense of infrastructure. Offensive operations were conducted in conventional terms through highways and main roads; thus giving the FMLN great opportunity to attack at the place and time of their choosing. Civil and military casualties increased dramatically during this time period; the former, basically due to the repression applied by the armed forces and police, but also by the violent means of coercion used by the FMLN, the latter due to treacherous guerrilla attacks to military conventional units. According to Byrne (1996), in early 1981, 20 soldiers per day were killed by the insurgents (p. 79).

Overall, with a corrupt military local Command and the lack of compromise of the troops to defeat the insurgents, the counterinsurgency strategy on the early years of the struggle switched the balance to the side of the insurgents. Nevertheless, the most

important achievement during this time period was the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Woerner report. Under this scheme, between 1981 and 1984, the ESAF was to duplicate in number, with similar increases in equipment, fixed-wing aircrafts and helicopters. However, these efforts only maintained the *status quo* between both; neither the ESAF nor the FMLN were leading the struggle. As evaluated by the US Embassy, at that point: there was no military end in sight to the war of attrition in El Salvador (p. 82). Between 1982 and 1983, the FMLN controlled an area of more than 1,000 square miles, and had the support of at least 100,000 people, marking the Salvadoran's military lowest level of control through all the war.

By mid-1984, the balance of war shifted dramatically and the ESAF recovered the military initiative lost in the previous years. A change on the FMLN's strategy towards a "people's war", with more emphasis on the political aim of gaining popular support, made it necessary for the Salvadoran armed forces to consider a new strategy encompassing politic and military programs, giving greater importance to the former. The victory of Duran in the 1984 elections gave hope to the US government and its military advisors that the war could have an end. The concern of the Reagan administration that communism could spread through Central America was expressed in more military and economic aid for the region. The report of the Kissinger commission released on January 1984, addressed the importance of determining the root causes of the insurgency in Central America, while recommending a comprehensive and orchestrated strategy to defeat the insurgency. The specific goals established for El Salvador were: economic stabilization, growth of the economy, broadening the benefits of economic growth, promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, guaranteeing security through coordinated military and civic actions, and achieving a diplomatic settlement to the conflict (Byrne, 1996, p. 126). These goals were to be taken into practice by establishing three interdependent strategies: Politic, Economic, and Politic-Military strategies.

According to the politic strategy, five measures were to be taken: 1) building of a legitimate political system and government; 2) improving human rights and subordinating the military to civilian control; 3) continuing the system of elections in order to guarantee the overall participation of the populace; 4) maintaining the socioeconomic reforms of the

early 1980's and; 5) creating a workable system of justice. The economic strategy would focus on social programs, increasing the living standards of the majority, extending the control of the government, limiting government spending, expanding production and exports, and encouraging private investment. The political-military strategy was to be matched with the economic and politic strategy. While these two strategies operated at the macro level, the political-military strategy was to be focused on the micro level in order to separate the insurgents from their support base.

The scheme to accomplish this goal encompassed five points: 1) Separation of the FMLN from its supporters in the insurgents' rearguard areas with the use of air bombardment, artillery, and destruction of crops on rebel zones; 2) increase of the government's presence in conflicting areas by using combined civic-action programs; 3) implementation of psychological operations directed towards the civilian population and the FMLN; 4) nationwide coordinated counterinsurgency programs to recover key areas and win the local population; and 5) creation of civil-defense patrols in rural areas. By committing themselves to protect their villages, the individuals would collaborate with the existing order and reject the insurgent's proposal (Bacevich, 1988, p. 40).

Nevertheless, between 1984 and 1989, the Kissinger Commission recommendations would not be implemented to their full extent, and due to the inability of the Salvadoran government to unify the forces within the counterrevolution coalition, the inability to convince the Salvadoran armed forces to recognize the importance of ending the violations of human-rights, the failure to isolate the FLMN in the countryside and win the war of ideas, and the underestimation of the military and political strength of the FMLN, the war would continue until 1,990 with no clear victor and constant large-scale attacks on both sides (Byrne, 1996, p.162).

D. CIVIL DEFENSES IN EL SALVADOR

As mentioned earlier, the civil defense program was part of the overall US and El Salvador's government strategy to defeat the FMLN. The creation of civil defense patrols in the countryside was seen by the counterinsurgency strategists as a key element in defeating the insurgency in El Salvador. The civil defense patrols would help isolate the

guerrillas from key areas, extend the control of the state within the country, and support the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure. However, the one solution that would save the counterinsurgency program in El Salvador - as expressed by a MILGROUP commander referring to the Civil Defenses – was more an expectation than a reality (Bacevich 1988, p. 41).

Despite the fact that the Civil Defense program was part of the US policy in El Salvador, in practice, there was no clear intention to implement them. Furthermore, the controversial history of Civil Defense organizations in El Salvador, presented more obstacles for their implementation due to the rejection of important sectors of the population.

The first Civil Defense organizations in El Salvador were the Canton patrols or territorial services, which were organized with army reservists and local peasants in the early 1900's, in order to carry out police-type patrols. These organizations, along with the National Guard of the time, were involved in the 1932 massacre of an estimate of 30,000 people that ended a communist-led peasant revolt. Decades later, between 1967 and 1969, and based on the previous Canton patrols, Col. Jose Alberto Medrano, Chief of the National Guard, created a similar organization called ORDEN. The main mission of this organization was to penetrate every village and identify and eliminate communists among the rural populations. Between 1977 and 1979, ORDEN was estimated at between 50,000 and 100,000 individuals; however, the real core of the organization was calculated at around 10,000 (INS Resource Information Center, 2001, pp.1-2). In late 1979, ORDEN was dissolved on paper, although it was replaced by the Civil Defense organizations proposed by the US and the Salvadoran military junta.

Despite isolated and restricted efforts of the US advisors and some local Salvadoran Commanders to support the Civil Defense program as part of the strategy to regain and extend the control over the population, the program lacked a general commitment at the highest levels of the Salvadoran government and military. This lack of compromise would finally lead to a hollow achievement. Furthermore, another barrier to join these organizations was the lack of trust in a quick response - if at all - of the armed forces to assist an eventual attack of the FMLN. Proof of this was that by late 1987, in the

highly conflicting departments of Morazan, Chalatenango, and La Union, the numbers of Civil Defense militias had been reduced substantially (INS Resource Information Center, 2001, p. 3); Chalatenango had only seven detachments, La Union five, and Morazan only one (Byrne, 1996, p. 148).

According to one assessment, the weaknesses of the Civil Defense program also reflected the modest resources invested in its implementation. By late 1987, of the 240 Civil Defense detachments organized within the country, only 100 were “certified,” meaning that they were the elected to receive M-14 rifles or M2 carbines and perhaps a small radio transmitter. Uncertified units did not receive even that. The lack of payment, as well as the lack of air evacuation if wounded, and a proper compensation for death, limited the reasons for joining to patriotism. The constant involvement in massacres and human rights violations attributed to the Civil Defense organizations in El Salvador and the direct targeting of these organizations by the FMLN guerrillas, also limited the appeal to join. Even training and ammunition were very limited and depended on the good will of the local military commander. Nevertheless, the lack of support to the program was not the unique responsibility of the Salvadoran armed forces. A great share of the responsibility fell on the US in terms of its priorities and spending. In comparison to the US investment in the Salvadoran Air force and maneuver battalions, the investments in the implementation of local defenses were very limited (Bacevich, 1988, p. 41).

By the end of the war, despite some notable exceptions, like the Civil Defense Training Camp program developed by Master Sergeant Bruce Hazelwood at San Juan Opico, 30 miles from San Salvador, the Civil Defense program in El Salvador did not contribute much to the US-El Salvador counterinsurgency effort. Had the efforts of Hazelwood been capitalized on as a force multiplier to spread legitimate and respectful human rights Civil Defense organizations, the Salvadorian government could have had regained the support and control of the population in the rural areas. By achieving the latter goal, the struggle between the Salvadorian government and the FMLN could have finished earlier, with a lower cost in lives and money.

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IV. THE VIETNAM WAR



Figure 3. Vietnam, World Wide Web; Retrieved on August 12, 2004 from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/asia/vietnam>

A. PRECONDITIONS

Located in South East Asia, Vietnam, is a country of approximately 750 miles long and no more than 100 miles wide. The maritime borders of Vietnam are the Gulf of Thailand, the gulf of Tonkin, and the South China Sea. A long land frontier is extended with Cambodia (767 miles), with China (800 miles), and with Laos (1,331 miles). The climate in Vietnam is tropical in the South and monsoonal in the north. As a consequence of the rainy season, the jungle and the mountains are characterized by dense vegetation. The terrain is low, flat delta in the south and north, with central highlands and hilly mountains in the far north and northwest. The highest elevation is the Ngoc Linh (9,429 feet). Vietnam is a mainly agricultural country and the world's primary producer of rice (Mekong Delta area – South Vietnam). Of its population of fourteen million people, twelve million are peasants. Compared to Malaysia, many of the populated areas in Vietnam are inaccessible. As a reference, by 1996 of the 58,312 miles of roads in the whole country 43,676 were unpaved. Transport is mainly dependable on waterways. The composition of the population is 85 to 90 % Vietnamese, 3% Chinese, and the rest is composed of other minorities such as Muong, Tai, Meo, and Westerners. The official language is Vietnamese, but Chinese, English, French and other tribal languages and dialects are spoken.

As mentioned, communism in South East Asia received its main influence from China in the 1920's. At this time, the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern was established in Shanghai, and a large number of Chinese immigrants looked for better opportunities in the developed southeast colonies and protectorates. Nevertheless, only in Vietnam did they succeed in penetrating nationalist political movements, which were already formed in opposition to France's 100 years' of colonial power (Thompson, 1966, p. 14).

Since World War II, and under Ho Chi Minh's direction, the traditional opposition to the colonial power increased notoriously. Ho Chi Minh, known as the "man who remains awake when everyone else is asleep" or "the general," organized the

Vietnamese resistance movement against foreign control into a nationalistic political and military organization called the Vietminh.

By 1945, Ho Chi Minh possessed an army of some 3,000 men (Baritz, 1985, p. 59). In March of that same year, the Japanese took the administration of the country off the hands of the French, who were drying the country's economy. By the end of World War II, both France and Japan had lost influence in Vietnam, providing an opportunity for Ho Chi Minh to attempt establishing an independent and unified nation. To reinforce his campaign, and as a former OSS agent, he requested the support of the United States through a representative of the Office of Strategic Service; however, this support never came. Other issues like the Korean War and tension with the Soviet Union received top priority from the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations. After the Japanese surrendered, Ho Chi Minh founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The celebration of this event gathered 400,000 people and included the presence of US military officers who saluted the new flag of North Vietnam (p. 61).

As had been arranged in the Potsdam Conference, the British temporarily re-occupied Saigon to disarm the Japanese on the south, and the Nationalist Chinese with 150,000 troops occupied Hanoi in order to liberate the north. After robbing the country, the Anti-Communist Chinese returned the control of the north to the Vietminh. Contrary to what was expected by the Vietnamese, the British turned control of the south to the French. As a consequence, the French were faced with an immediate guerrilla war against the Vietminh. Neither the Vietminh nor the French could accept this outcome. The French wanted to recover their colonies and restore the nations in Indochina, while the Vietminh wanted a unify country, including North and South Vietnam. In February 1950, the United States formally recognized France's governor, Bao Dai, who immediately became Ho Chi Minh's enemy. In the following years, the initial economic aid of \$10 million a year provided to the French by the Truman administration was increased by President Eisenhower to \$ 400 million a year. From then on, in order to support the Truman Doctrine of containment against the Soviet Union, the French would maintain the fight against communism in South-East Asia. Despite all this support, the Vietminh's capacity to fight and to seize French positions grew dramatically to 100,000 regular army

troops, 50,000 regional troops, and 250,000 guerrillas (Baritz, 1985, p. 81). In March 1954, France fought its last battle against the Vietminh in the Area of Dien Bien Phu. Fifty-five days after this battle began, by May 7, France was defeated, having to surrender to the Vietminh army.

In this same year, with the Geneva Agreement signed between France and Vietnam, the country was divided in two; the communist North and the free and independent South where Ngo Dinh Diem became Prime Minister and, after declaring a new republic, the first President. The Geneva agreement also demanded that elections be held later on in order to define the future of Vietnam. However, elections would never be held. Believing that Ho Chi Minh would have 80% of the votes, the US supported Diem's motion to cancel the elections. As a consequence, and convinced that the only acceptable formula was a unified Vietnam; Ho Chi Minh resorted to the insurgent approach against South Vietnam. At the same time, the poor administration of the land and resources, nepotism, the systematic discrimination of the Buddhist majority, as well as the increasing repression by the Diem government of its political opponents, exacerbated the populace inside South Vietnam, creating fertile ground for the insurgency to develop.

On May 13, 1959, the 15th Plenum of the Party Central Committee took place in Hanoi. As a result of this event, communist representatives from all around the world called for revolution in South Vietnam against the Diem dictatorship. The Southern guerillas, which were trained by Hanoi since 1954, began to infiltrate into South Vietnam to organize the Communist infrastructure. The next step was the announcement of the formation of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam; a front group for the Communist effort to conquer the south (Boot, 2002, pp. 287-288). In the following years, the armed front of this movement, the People's Liberation Armed Forces, which would be later called the Vietcong (Vietnamese Communists), increased its strength and control over the South, provoking US concern and assistance, as well as its later military involvement. By 1965 the US would send the first 3,500 troops – Marines – to Vietnam. This would be the longest US conflict in history, with an involvement of almost 3 million men, and a death toll of 58,000 US soldiers.

B. THE INSURGENCY STRATEGY

After the French defeat in Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the Communist Party in the North felt more confident about its ideal of liberating the South and unifying both Vietnams. By 1960, the Vietcong was launching campaigns to assassinate and intimidate Southern officials in Saigon and they were taking control of great portions of the Mekong Delta, the highlands, and the coastal plains outside the major cities. Afraid of getting involved in another war in Asia, President Kennedy increased economic and military aid, as well as the number of military advisors in South Vietnam; however, until 1965 no military troops were sent to Vietnam.

Some three years after the assassination of both Diem in November, and President Kennedy in December 1963, the government of Saigon was again able to counter the insurgents with a strongman. Nguyen Van Thieu emerged as the new president in the South. However, this period of indecision, and to certain extent of inaction, gave the communist enough room to maneuver and for the infiltration of men and weapons to the South through the Ho Chi Minh Trail network.

As mentioned by General Vo Nguyen Giap, Commander of the North Vietnamese armed forces, it was a People's War. It was a war designed to avoid contact with the enemy, and to be consistent with this idea, the campaign had to be developed in three phases. In the first stage, loyal cadres were to be sent out to propagandize and create in the countryside a proactive belt of sympathizers willing to provide food, supplies, and information, as well as recruits. In the second stage, a protracted guerrilla struggle was to be launched in order to eliminate collaborators, government officials, and reactionary elements, as well as to attack vulnerable military and police outposts. The third stage was to be launched when the insurgents had momentum. In this stage, the formation of conventional armies, as well as the use of conventional tactics, in conjunction with a general uprising, would lead to finishing the enemy and creating a new republic (Boot, 2002, p. 294).

By 1964 the communist increased their attacks on the South Vietnam forces. The use of guerrilla hit and run tactics were the main form of attack and caused high casualties to the Southern government troops. Thus, it seemed like the North Vietnamese

were infiltrating the South in large-scale conventional units. By 1966 only 38,000 People's Army North Vietnamese troops were in the South. At this point, the Vietcong guerrillas numbered some 220,000 troops. Between 1965 and 1966, the number of Communist attacks in Battalion size or greater numbers decreased dramatically, while the number of small-scale attacks increased 150% during this time period (p. 295). The Vietcong had the initiative. They could attack at the place and times selected and were willing to accept many more casualties than their opponents, as well as to extend the war indefinitely. The infiltration of weapons and supplies, supported by Moscow and Peking through the long land frontier with Laos and Cambodia, improved their military strength to seize South Vietnam forces. Isolated police posts and military stations constituted another source of weapons, ammunition, and explosives. A great emphasis by the Vietcong was also put on the recruitment of new cadres from isolated populations and tribes. As a Maoist inspired organization, the Vietcong were totally convinced, and finally proved, that the key to their success was control of the population. Their political aim was the control of the rural areas, and the destruction of the government's prestige and authority (Thompson, 1966, p. 29). Under this scheme, the Civil Guard units organized at the strategic hamlet level to isolate the Vietminh from the population began to constitute important targets for the insurgent to attack.

The use of night attacks, ambushes, the infiltration of informers in hamlets and villages, as well as the informer's capacity to easily disappear in the jungle, made the Vietcong guerrillas an increasing threat for the security in the region. This was especially evident after the attack on the USS Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964. This attack would later unchain the involvement of US troops in Vietnam for the next 10 years.

C. THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

Looking back at the events, it is far from certain that there was a counterinsurgency strategy before the Marines landed on the beaches of Danang in 1965. Furthermore, it is arguable whether there was a coherent counterinsurgency program after

this landing and up to the US withdrawal in 1975; however, it would be unfair to say that no one effort was made in this direction.

By 1960, with the increase of the Vietcong control over South Vietnam, the first reaction of the US government on behalf of the Kennedy Administration was to increase aid and the number of US advisers. At that point, the reluctance to send combat troops were largely influenced by the latter's experience in the Korean Peninsula. By 1963 there were 12,000 US advisers in South Vietnam, and after Kennedy's death this number would increase dramatically. The US advisers, trying to duplicate their earlier experience in the Caribbean and erroneously expecting an invasion from the North, organized the South Vietnamese forces into conventional units, including heavy armor, artillery, air force, navy, marines, and rangers (Boot, 2002, p. 288); however, the enemy was fighting in a different format. The enemy was wisely using guerrilla tactics to compensate their limited capacities.

After the attack on the USS Maddox in 1964, the first reaction of the Johnson Administration did not take long. On March 1965, the US launched an air bombing campaign over Northern Vietnam. The air campaign, Rolling Thunder, lasted for three years and was intended to force Hanoi to negotiate a peaceful end to the struggle; however, it proved to be ineffective. The bombing pauses and the limitations imposed to the targets by President Johnson, created the opposite effect, allowing North Vietnam forces to reorganize and improve their air defense capabilities (p. 291). The reorganization of the guerrillas became evident in February 1965 when the Vietcong launched an attack over the US airfield in Pleiku. In this incident, 10 US aircrafts were destroyed, 100 Americans were wounded, and 8 Americans killed. As a reaction to this attack, in the next month, the first combat troops were deployed – 3,500 US Marines to secure the US airbase at Danang.

By the end of July 1965, a request from the US Military Assistance Command, General Westmoreland, was accepted by President Truman, adding 44 maneuver battalions with a total of 200,000 men for offensive operations. Despite the early enthusiasm of President Kennedy for low-intensity conflict and the recommendations made by the CIA, the Marines, and guerrilla warfare experts such as Sir Robert

Thompson, the military mindset of the time was focalized on conventional operations. At this point the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program (CORDS) was created. Headed by Robert Komer, member of the National Security Council since the Kennedy Administration, the program was to integrate the various US military and civil programs in order to pacify the South Vietnamese provinces. However, it had one significant limitation; the program competed with the “big unit” war conducted by the US Army and its South Vietnamese counterpart (Nightswonger, in Johnson, 2001, p. 71).

By 1968, the CORDS program encompassed diverse sub-programs to regain the support of the population as well as of the country. To accomplish this goal, the key element of the program was the establishment of village-defense forces – the original concept of the Regional Forces or Popular Forces, but developed as territorial security forces. However, the refusal of the US Army to entirely support this program, shaped the nature of its offensive operation. By January 1969, 278 new Regional Force companies were authorized by CORDS; however, this time for offensive action (Adams, 1998, p. 100).

Even though by 1967 CORDS had achieved significant success in negating popular support to the Vietcong, a change of strategy on the side of the insurgents, as a consequence of the enormous toll paid during the “Tet offensive” in January 1968, diminished the US previous achievements. The North Vietnamese command increasingly started to rely on main force regulars, leaving the Vietcong as a guerrilla distraction to disperse the South Vietnamese Army (Maechling, in Johnson, 2001, pp. 71--72). Under this new situation, the US approach also changed. General Abrams instituted small-unit operations in cooperation with South Vietnamese forces and local para-military units; nevertheless, this effort was too little too late. By then, the Maoist communists had shifted to the third phase of their program; the phase of conventional mobile warfare. At this point the very impact of “Tet” was felt by the United States’ audience. The apparent US defeat in Vietnam had a big effect over US policymakers and public opinion. The alternatives available for the Nixon Administration were either to escalate the war with

the risk of a Soviet or Chinese intervention, or a withdrawal the US troops from Vietnam. In March 29, 1973, the last US troops left Vietnam.

D. THE CIVILIAN IRREGULAR DEFENSE GROUP

For the communists in Vietnam, it was of great importance to turn the passive acceptance of the rural population into active support. On the other hand, the purpose of the South Vietnam government was to prevent or reverse the National Liberation Front's influence among the rural, village-dwelling farmers who made up the bulk of the South Vietnamese population (Adams, 1998, p. 81). Under these circumstances the Government of South Vietnam began to organize the countryside. The original idea to resettle a village came from a provincial chief in the Can-Tho area who faced the difficulty of retaining control of the rural population (Osborne, 1965, p. 21). With this initiative, the Saigon government envisioned two solutions; one was to relocate the threatened population into protected areas, the other was to protect the villages in their original position.

In the case of Vietnam, both solutions were intimately related with the use of Local-Defenses as an essential element to protect the new and old villages from the insurgents' attacks and influence. By 1959 the South Vietnamese government opted for the first solution and started to implement resettlement plans (Osborne, 1965, p. 21). The first initiative in the resettlement programs was the "agroville" program. Under this scheme a number of hamlets' inhabitants were forced to abandon their lands and to consolidate together in a newly constructed central village. As mentioned by a key official in the program, it was a military strategy to improve security but ignored the economic and social implications of the relocation (Adams, 1998, p.82). Ironically, the program was able to severely affect the Vietcong influence in the affected areas, in that it increased the resentment and hate of the displaced populations against the South Vietnamese government.

The US reaction to this situation, which was benefiting the Vietcong, was to persuade Saigon to cut the agroville program in favor of a CIA plan to create support among the rural population. According to this plan, the Civilian Irregular Defense Group

(CIDG) was created in 1961. The concept of the program was also to deny Vietcong influence within the countryside; however, it took a different approach. The new initiative stressed the need to arm and to train the population in order for them to act in their own defense. At the same time it stressed the need of minimizing the displacement of people away from their land.

The CIDG program, although created by the CIA, was to be implemented by the US Army Special Force. In November 1961 the first of 26 'A' teams arrived to Vietnam to execute the program (Adams, 1998, p.84). Each 12-man Special Forces 'A' team was expected to establish an area development center at the district level and train a little over a thousand people as village-defense militia. In addition, each development center was organized with Camp Strike Forces – between 300 and 400 full time CIDG soldiers, who performed as a reaction force against attacks. The CIDG units also performed intensive patrolling within the vicinity of their village, as well as developed communal projects within their villages. An important assessment of the Special Forces units was the integration of the defense forces into the intelligence network; the collection of detailed and systematic information on the National Liberation Front and the Vietcong was of great importance to identify and capture communist cadres. Other simultaneous programs provided by the Special Forces included civil affair programs to improve sanitation, water production, agriculture, and medic assistance. On an elementary level the program was supported with psychological operations.

In the early 60's, the Montagnards, a minority tribe of the South Vietnamese, who lived in the highlands and remote lowland districts of the Mekong Delta, were included as part of the CIDG program. However at the beginning of the program, these tribes were left behind by the Saigon government. Later on the need to control the highlands reinforced the idea of their inclusion and training by the Special Forces (Kelly, 1972, pp. 19 - 20). The US Special Forces liked the rugged, self-sufficient Montagnards and found that they quickly developed into effective, resourceful soldiers (Adams, 1998, p. 85).

An important example on the effectiveness of the CIDG program is under the Buon Eno experiment. Under this experiment, the Rhade, the most influential and strategically located of the Montagnards tribes was approached, organized, armed, and

trained by US Special Forces. The proposition required their unconditional support to the South Vietnamese government as well as their participation in the village self defense program. After the first approach by a representative of the US Embassy and a Special Forces Sergeant, the villagers agreed to support the government. The first actions carried out were the construction of a fence to enclose Buon Enao, the construction of shelter for women and children, the construction of housing for a training center, and the establishment of an intelligence system to control movement into the village and provide early warning of attack. By December 1961, all constructions and fortifications, as well as training and preparation, were completed by the Buon Enao villagers. At this point, the chiefs of the village publicly stated that from then on no Vietcong would enter their village or receive assistance of any kind. (Kelly, 1972, p. 25). After local security systems and a strike forces were established in Buon Enao, proving their effectiveness to isolate the guerrillas, the program was extended to forty other Rhade villages located within a radius of ten to fifteen kilometers. The Special Forces A detachments assisted in training village defenders and village medics, as well as other villagers, to support civic assistance programs such as planting, care of crops, and construction. The logistics and operational aspects of the program were initially handled by the US Army Special Forces. By August 1962, the program in Buon Enao had a major acceptance within the population. At this point, 200 villages and almost 60,000 people within the Darlac Province were organized and protected on this basis. By the end of 1962 the Darlac Province was declared secure.

Later on, despite its success, the program lost support. On the one hand, the 'big unit' mentality of the US Army began to change the original concept of village defense units into the concept of strike forces. They also began to fight as conventional infantry, seeking out enemy units for attack (Operations Report, in Adams, 1998, p. 87). On the other hand, as the US Special Forces were gradually turning over the program to the government of South Vietnam would transfer the CIDG militia - recruited with defensive purpose – to other locations with offensive missions, displacing them from their land and territory with no economic retribution. The territorial militia, empowered with the knowledge of their region and motivated with the idea of protecting their home, lost

much of their effectiveness. By April 1964, with the militarization of the program and the impossibility of the Special Forces commanders to return to their original concept, almost none of the village defenses were trained. By then, many villages had abandoned the concept and again became vulnerable to the Vietcong's attacks and influence. In 1965 almost all CIDG defense units were transformed to light conventional units. All the previous success was just an illusion.

V. THE PERUVIAN TERROR EPOCH



Figure 4. Peru, from World Wide Web; Retrieved on 15 July 2004, from http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/peru_pol91.jpg

The ultimate victory of the Peruvian government over the terrorist organization and insurgent forces of the “Sendero Luminoso” (Shining Path, SL) in the 1980-97 was not marked by a single conventional military battle between the Armed forces and the SL. It was the combination of military actions, the capture of SL leadership, and the utilization of a relatively unknown, outside Peru, grassroots peasant organization that helped turn back the tide and defeat the vicious insurgency that haunted Peru for decades.

A. PRECONDITIONS

Peru in the early 1990s was an impoverished, crisis-prone country trying to cope with major societal, economic, and political changes. Peru is the fourth largest country in Latin America, ranking after Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico; it has an area of about 1.28 million square km. (496,225 sq. mi.), three times larger than California (State, 2004). Peru has three distinct regions; the Costa, the Sierra and the Amazon. The Andean range runs through the country from north to south, separating the coast from the jungle, and forming the Sierra region – the most underdeveloped region in the country. The Costa constitutes only 11% of the country's territory, but has about half the population of 25 million mainly concentrated around Lima, the capitol city. It contains the most productive agricultural lands and the bulk of the industry, also mainly centered on Lima. The Peruvian population is ethnically composed by Amerindians 45%, mixed Amerindians and Whites (Mestizo) 37%, White 15%, Black, Chinese, Japanese, and others 3%. Peru has two official languages--Spanish and the foremost indigenous language, Quechua, which is mainly spoken in the Sierra region. Spanish is used by the government, and in education and commerce (State, 2004).

Peru's diverse terrain includes lifeless deserts; teeming rain forests; precipitous valleys; and high, windswept plains, resulting in large natural obstacles for movement through out the country. Peru's transportation infrastructure compared to its land size is minuscule, making most of the country isolated and secluded. Peru's road system had a total of 69,942 kilometers in 1991. Road maintenance is haphazard and substandard. A chronic lack of funds for road repair and construction has led to deterioration and, in places, disappearance of Peru's land transport infrastructure. Most of the high Sierra

roads are narrow, un-surfaced, and subject to frequent landslides. Waterways in many parts of the country, especially in the Amazon basin, which consist of 60% of the nation's territory, are a formidable barrier to penetrate. With the limited, under-maintained road and the relatively sparse river systems of Peru, movement throughout the country especially in the Sierras and Amazon region is very difficult if not impossible to the majority of the county (Peru, 2004). In addition to the lack of land and water transportation infrastructure, Peru has additional geographical challenges with its borders. Peru has five countries that border its national territory, Bolivia 900 km, Brazil 1,560 km, Chile 160 km, Colombia 1,496 km (est.), Ecuador 1,420 km each with its own challenges. In addition, the remoteness and under-manned Peruvian borders have been very accessible and permeable for the ever-growing drug-trafficking and insurgency problems across its borders, particularly with Colombia and Brazil (Land Boundary, 2004).

In addition to its geographical and ethnic diversity, Peru experienced economic disparity in the 1970-80's, especially in remote areas of the country. The most affected departments in the country were the ones located in the Sierra region; in particular the department of Ayacucho. With very little governmental assistance to mitigate the growing economical disparity this department was one of the most affected of all; Illiteracy stood at 68.5%, infant mortality rate was 12.8%, the highest in the world, and life expectancy was only 51 years, among the lowest in the country (Klarén, 2000, p. 370). Ayacucho's economical disparity spawned a strong resentment against the capital and insurgency organizations found a base of supporters that were dissatisfied with the current economic and political situation in Peru. In 1990 the Ayacucho Department was still one of the most sparsely populated (with less than 3 percent of the country's population, mostly Quechua-speaking Amerindians) and economically deprived departments in Peru.

The increase in student organizations had occurred in conjunction with the curbing of financing for universities and the shrinking of economic opportunities for university graduates, which had resulted in a radicalization of the university community in general. Thus, many universities increasingly had become havens for frustration. The

extreme manifestation of this phenomenon was the birth and growth of the SL in the University of Huamanga (Universidad de Huamanga) in Ayacucho in the 1970s. Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, a professor at the university and eventually director of personnel, was the founder and leader of the SL. The SL virtually controlled the university for several years, and students were indoctrinated in the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist philosophy. The university trained students, mainly from the Ayacucho area, primarily in education; but a degree from Huamanga was considered inferior to the Lima universities, and students had few opportunities other than returning to their hometowns to teach or driving taxis. As jobs for graduates were few and far between, becoming an active militant in the SL provided a sense of belonging and a sense of optimism for many university students and graduates (State, 2004).

The democratic election of 1980 was intended to symbolize Peru's return to civilian governance and democracy after more than a decade of military rule. But the SL, committed to armed struggle, chose the eve of the very election to initiate a rebellion against the Peruvian state by burning ballot boxes in the town of Chuschis in Ayacucho. The SL revolution began immediately following a decade of sweeping agrarian reform and nationalization of industry carried out by General Juan Velasco Alvarado and the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces, which decreed a sweeping and immediate land reform, ending serfdom and private latifundios. Velasco's reform was seriously flawed; it affected nearly 60% of the country's agricultural lands. When it was finally completed, half of all arable land had been transferred to an estimated 375,000 families (one quarter of the rural population). However, all these families did not benefited equally from the reform. Peasants on more prosperous coastal estates (10% of all peasants) benefited substantially, while their counterparts in the less-developed highlands (Sierras) gained little or nothing from the reforms. It was among the latter that support developed for the SL. Moreover, the reform left out an estimated 1 million seasonal workers (Klarén, 2000), which caused widespread disillusionment and dissatisfaction among peasants towards the official land reform and its administrators. Hence, despite the continuing problems of poverty and economic crisis, the turn of the decade was ripe for armed revolution (Fumerton, 2000).

During President Belaunde's second Government (1980-1985), severe economic problems left over from the military governments persisted; Belaunde's popularity eroded under the stress of inflation, economic hardship, and terrorism. During the 1980s, cultivation of illicit coca was established in large areas on the eastern Andean slope. Rural terrorism by the SL and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) increased during this time and derived significant financial support from their alliances with the narcotraffickers. The rate of inflation went from 59 percent in 1980 to 163 percent by 1985 (Hudson, 2004). By 1982 the SL had gained control of an estimated 85% of Ayacucho. The SL demonstrated its increasing power in March of 1982, when they made a spectacular attack on the main prison in Ayacucho and liberated dozens of *Senderistas* prisoners (Klarén, 2000, p. 380). Growing signs of the SL success finally prompted President Belaunde, in December 1982, to suspend constitutional guarantees, declare a state of emergency, and place the department of Ayacucho under complete military control. Before then President Belaunde had been slow to react to the threat of the SL, defining the guerrilla movement as simply a criminal organization. "He misdiagnosed the group for some time as petty bandits, then insisted on linking the SL to international guerrilla support networks, and finally was convinced that a military response alone would suffice" (Palmer, 1992, p. 13). After presiding over a free election, Belaunde turned the presidency over to Alan García Pérez. (Democratic Rule, 2004). By then, the SL had grown considerably and enjoyed great popular support.

Economic mismanagement by the Garcia administration (1985-90) led to hyperinflation from 1988 to 1990. Concerned about the economy, the increasing terrorist threat from SL, and allegations of official corruption, voters chose a relatively unknown mathematician-turned-politician, Alberto Fujimori, as president in 1990. Fujimori implemented drastic orthodox measures that caused inflation to drop from 7,650% in 1990 to 139% in 1991. Faced with opposition to his reform efforts, Fujimori dissolved Congress in the "*auto-coup*" of April 5, 1992. He then revised the constitution; called new congressional elections; and implemented substantial economic reform, including privatization of numerous state-owned companies, creation of a more investment-friendly climate, and much improved management of the economy (State, 2004).

B. INSURGENCY STRATEGY

The political identity presented by the Shining Path (SL) to perpetrate its violent actions against the Peruvian population in the 1980's and 90's had its roots in Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist ideology. Guzman's movement addressed the Peruvian society "as semi-feudal and semi-colonial and proclaimed that all communists had to adhere to the revolutionary violence" (Jimenez, 2000, p. 30). Guzman took the lead redefining the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP). After many debates and struggles within the PCP to define the ideological line to be taken to conduct the revolution, in 1970 the Communist Party "Sendero Luminoso" was founded in the Peruvian city of Ayacucho. The SL applied Mao Tse Tung's theory; in which the concept of popular war supported by the peasantry, and the creation of a Popular Guerrilla Army, would be the means to "*surround the cities from the countryside*" (Descro, 1989, p. 275) in order to seize power. Especially in the first years of the struggle, the new ideology adopted by the SL would mark their *modus operandi*; their way to organize, to recruit supporters, and to select their targets. Following the new Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-Pensamiento-Gonzalo ideology, in 1980, the SL left its clandestine activities of indoctrination and proselytism within universities in Ayacucho to initiate the first of three phases to challenge the government: the phase of "strategic defense". In this phase, also called "revolving the countryside," the intention of the SL was to legitimate their targets in the eyes of the peasant population in order to gain support and commitment by portraying themselves as the saviors of an archaic state.

The SL proclaimed the existence of an obsolete state; therefore, their political goal was to replace the existing state with the new "*Popular Republic of Peru*" (Jimenez, 2000, p. 80). Since their goal was to replace the "old obsolete state", their main attacks at the beginning of the offensive were directed to public infrastructures and governmental authorities; especially National Police deputies. To justify their attacks and avoid any constraints, the targets were portrayed as traitors and as part of the "bourgeois state". A secondary intention was to capture the weapons of their victims, as well as to replace the "old" authorities with their own cadres. The latter were the means to establish control and

organize the population in what they called “Popular Support Committees” or bases. A common practice in order to invoke admiration and support of the rural population was to carry out what they called “summary trials”. In these trials, the “bad authorities” as well as the “traitors” were judged and executed in front of the inhabitants of the villages visited by the SL. Sometimes the family and friend of the victims would also pay for the “offense”. However in the first years of the struggle, this methodology produced good results in gathering weapons and gaining important support of the Andean societies, latter on, the indiscriminate use of violence against the population and miscalculation would produce a negative effect on the image of the SL.

During the early 80’s the SL inaccurately failed to predict the reaction of peasants attached to their land. At the beginning, the offer of the SL seemed quite attractive to the peasants; later on, as the SL begins to extend its operations to other provinces, which required moving along with its supporters, the attractiveness to join declined considerably. The peasantry had no intentions of moving from and abandoning their lands. According to Desco (1989), “the peasantry felt like a tool to be sacrificed for the development of the urban campaign” (p. 285). To counteract the lack of support in the rural areas, the SL increases the targeting of military authorities and troops in Ayacucho in 1982. Their intention was to create contradiction by provoking military repression against the population in order to polarize the masses in their favor. Although at first this strategy proved to be positive for the terrorist movement, by 1983 the peasant communities of Ayacucho, organized by the Armed Forces into Auto Defense Organizations (CAD), strongly rejected the SL’s proposal, initiating the main reasons why the SL, without counting on an important rural support, prematurely moves to the jungle and extended its violent activities over the cities.

By 1985, the lack of support in the countryside as well as the pressure exerted by the armed forces in the rural areas divided the terrorist organization in two fronts: the terrorist columns which operated in the Andean range and jungle, and the terrorist cells operating in the cities. According to Guzman, “the second stage, called the stage of “Strategic Consolidation and Preparation for the Counter Offensive” (Strategic Equilibrium Phase) initiated on December 1990” (Guzman, 2000, p. 123). In this stage,

the SL's new legitimate targets included foreign representatives and corporations, public and private properties, military and police infrastructure, opinion leaders, military elites, as well as media infrastructure and opposition press. At this point, the frequent setbacks on the countryside became a major concern for the SL and were translated in indiscriminate violence against the urban population in order to maintain their "victors" image. Moreover, the excessive use of violence in the cities – especially in the capital of Lima – as well as the killing of non combatants, created a climate of fear and doubt in the Peruvian society, expressed by massive exodus of the population to foreign countries. Raúl González, a Senderologist, has noted that the SL began making Lima the focus of its terrorism in 1991 only after having lost in the countryside. The SL no longer fitted its original Robin Hood-like mandate and ultimately began fighting the local grassroots organizations-- such as neighborhood committees, Rondas Compesinas and Auto Defense Organizations (González & Palmer, 2004).

In 1992, after the capture of Guzman with his closest collaborators, the declining process of the organization increased exponentially. In 1993, after the letter of capitulation signed by Abimael Guzman, the conditions for the remaining militants in the field changed dramatically. The number of violent acts in Lima decreased considerably and the main operational theater for the SL returned to the jungle. At this point, alliances with the narco-traffickers operating in the Peruvian jungle became the major source of income for the terrorist group, as well as their only mean of survivability; situation that continues today with a remaining SL faction in the northeast jungle.

C. THE COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

The counterinsurgency strategy applied by the Peruvian government during the early years of the struggle was mainly limited to the military arena. Furthermore, during these years, not even the enemy had been clearly identified by the government; thus the response was misperceived and inadequate. There was no clear chain of command and unified management of the war. Since the government of Belaunde (1980-1985) and Garcia (1985-1990) did not consider the violent activities of the SL and MRTA as real threats to national security, there was no real intention of either governments to confront

the insurgency in other fields rather than the military. As expressed by the Director of the Center for Military Studies of the 80's, General Jarama: "Guzman (leader of the SL) was playing a chess game while we were playing a tennis game, with other uniforms and equipment" (Kruijt, 1996). At this point, each military institution and the police, who at the same time were trying to achieve their own goals, conducted the war individually.

By 1982, with the intervention of the Peruvian armed forces in Ayacucho and the armed forces' recognition of the insurgent threat, the military begins to shape a counterinsurgency strategy to confront the SL. Under this scheme, in 1983, the Peruvian Navy and Marine Corps begins to organize local defense organizations or *Rondas Campesinas* in Huanta – Ayacucho. The intention was to provide protection to the rural communities and to extend the government's control over the region. Other military branches, aware of the need to first pacify the rural areas in order to undertake complementary programs to regain the support of the population, followed this initiative in their areas of responsibility. Unfortunately, these programs did not receive much attention from the central government, nor there was politic decision to support them. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that between 1993 and 1989 civic action programs, psychological operations, and the *Rondas Campesinas* or Auto Defense organizations supported by the armed forces, enjoyed some success in confronting and isolating the insurgents in many rural communities of the Peruvian Sierra's.

In 1990, the new administration realizes that the only way to rule the country and improve the economic conditions was to stop terrorism by combining the efforts of all government institutions and social spheres. After a long learning process, the decision makers and politics finally realized that the military was right in defending the idea that the solution to the insurgent problem was not exclusively military, but had a strong component of non-military measures. Furthermore, the government realized that the country needed the involvement of all the population to confront the threat and a major effort in intelligence to attack the core of the SL.

In 1992, the new administration, unable to govern, dissolved the congress and was then able to organize a counterinsurgency strategy by redefining and reinforcing the previous attempts, as well as by innovating with new approaches and laws. From 1992

on, the Peruvian government developed a combined and multifaceted effort to defeat the SL. The strategy of the government can be basically addressed in six different but related fronts. 1) The unification of all military commands which allowed for a single national military strategy to be developed and implemented with the National Police subordinated to the Armed Forces in each area and the senior officer of each military detachment assumed the *Civil – Military Command* of each location. 2) Disorganization of the Popular Support Committees: Special Operations Detachments had the mission of doing field intelligence and disorganizing the “*Comites Populares*” (Popular Committees) organized by the SL in each village. Their mission was accomplished by capturing either the military, politic, or logistic command of the village and their communications system, penetrating the intelligence network, and finding and destroying the weapons and food supplies hidden for the arrival of the terrorist columns. 3) Reliance on Intelligence: the importance given to intelligence on the terrorist organizations was the major achievement of the government. A new conception of intelligence encouraged the different intelligence agencies to share information between them. The creation of the GEIN (Special intelligence Group of the National Police) – which later on would capture Abimael Guzman and other important top leaders of the SL and the MRTA, was also instrumental. 4) Antiterrorist Legislation and Psychological Operations: the Peruvian government created new antiterrorist laws increasing penalties for terrorist crimes - including the establishment of life imprisonment - and defined terrorist activities as national betrayal, which gave special powers to the Military Justice to investigate and judge accused terrorists. The measure was taken due to the incapacity of the judicial system to properly judge and convict accused terrorist, as well as to protect civilian judges from menace and assassination by the insurgents. The new anti terrorist law also included the “*repent law*” and the “*law of effective collaboration*”. Both laws had great psychological impact on the population. By the end of the struggle, the repent law had stimulated more than 5000 militants of the SL to desert and the law of effective collaboration provided important information to the government to capture other militants. Both laws benefited the defectors and collaborators with the reduction of penalties, absolution, and pardon. 5) Recovery of the Population: To improve the civil

state relations, the government developed “civil actions” campaigns in the most remote locations of the country. During these social activities, food, clothes and medicines were given to the population, as well as medical treatment and other resources such as books, construction materials, agriculture machinery, and transportation facilities. Adding to this goal was the gradual improvement of the economic situation in the country. The development of government projects financed by external investment and the improvement of public services such as electricity, roads, water, and telephonic connections - especially in the rural areas - played an important role in gaining popular support and negating the influence of the SL. 6) Reorganization of the Rondas Campesinas (Night Watch Patrols); a relatively unknown, out side Peru, grassroots peasant organization.

D. RONDAS CAMPESINAS (NIGHT WATCH PATROLS)

The reorganization and reshaping of the existing peasant communities into *Auto Defense Committees* or *Rondas Campesinas*, during the war against terror between 1980 and 1997, was a key element for the final success of the Peruvian counterinsurgency strategy.

The peasant communities exist in Peru from times immemorial. Some rural and isolated communities in the need to provide security and protection against common thieves and cattle rustlers were forced to organize communal organizations within their villages. However, the first documented effort in this direction dates as of December of 1976 in the hamlet of Cuyumalca, in northern Peru. In this occasion, the organization of the *Rondas Campesinas* was a response of the community to the constant robbery of the local school. (Giltlitz and Rojas, 1983, p. 178). Days after a school break in, a prosperous peasant who was also the local Teniente-Gobernador (Police Lieutenant Governor), named Oblitas, called a communal assembly and suggested the first vigilante committee. The peasants responded to the suggestion that the idea extended to the entire hamlet (Faundez, 2003, p. 24). The following day Oblitas notified the Sub-Perfect of the province of the formation of the *Rondas*. On January 6th 1977, the Sub-Perfect signed an official decree authorizing the *Nocturnal Rondas*, whose aim was to guard the

community against robberies. By 1978, the *Rondas* had largely succeeded in controlling theft in Cajamarca. Their success enhanced their legitimacy and prompted the establishment of *Rondas Campesinas* in other rural departments. Thus, *Rondas* soon emerged in the Departments of Piura, San Martín, Amazonas, Junín and Ancash. By 1991, *Rondas Campesinas* had become the most popular grassroots organization in Peru. They covered nearly 3,500 hamlets in Northern Peru, over an area of 150,000 square kilometers (Faundez, 2003, p. 24).

On 21 January 1983, an armed column of seven guerrillas entered a hamlet in Huaychao, in the highland sub-region of Huanta province known as Iquicha. The guerrillas judged and summarily executed the Huaychao's Assembly president and the lieutenant governor. After the execution grim-faced villagers encircled the guerrillas and killed the seven guerrillas with machetes and knives. It was the first time since the SL began its insurgency that peasants demonstrated their willingness to defend themselves, and their way of life, from guerrilla claims and domination (Fumerton, 2000, p. 1). Along with the other grievances, the increase in the number of executions and assassinations of common peasants and peasant leaders caused substantial, widespread resentment towards the guerrillas, particularly among the victims' relatives.

During the early years of the war, peasants' relationship with SL was characterized by a strategy of coexistence; that is, an ambiguous posture regarding the potential benefits the guerrillas offered and a willingness to wait and see if the insurgent promises consisted of more than mere words. However, this relationship deteriorated rapidly due to the authoritarian practices and lethal violence of the insurgents. Many communities institutionalized defense activities in their *Rondas Campesinas*. The trajectory of the *Rondas* varied from region to region and, frequently, from community to community. However, initially the *Rondas* were headed by existing communal authorities and within the framework of established organizational structures. Rural communities thus realized that any chance they had of survival lay in grouping together in multi communal hamlets in order to offer each other much-needed protection.

On August 1984, eight thousand peasants met with General Huamán in Vinchos to express their support for the military's counterinsurgency effort, by demonstrating that

they had organized in *Rondas Campesinas*. Five days later, twenty thousand peasants in Ocos and Concepción declared in a document that they too had organized a *Frente de Defensa Civil* (Descro, 1989, p.110). The state eventually recognized that it could never defeat the Shining Path without the willing support and assistance of the local population. President Fujimori's administration enlisted the *Rondas* in its campaign against the SL and the MRTA. The government had promoted the establishment of Self-Defense Committees (Comités de Autodefensa, CAD) in some localities, as part of its war against the SL and the MRTA. These were community organizations organized and armed by the military and aimed mainly at supporting the military campaign against terrorism. The Government and its supporters also referred to these organizations as *Rondas Campesinas*.

In 1991, the new administration authorized the distribution of large quantities of shotguns to the organized *Rondas Campesinas*. Responsibility for defending the bulk of the rural civilian population was thus passed into the hands of the peasants themselves. Moreover, the Peruvian peasantry's participation in the counterinsurgency campaign was officially acknowledged by the promulgation of Legislative Decree No.741 in 1991, which legally recognized the existence of armed rural militias: the CAD. In an ironic twist of fate, the very masses for whom the SL had superficially launched a "people's war" had turned against them. The Peruvian government had passed legislation, which explicitly placed civilian self-defense committees under the direct control of the Armed Forces. The state attempted to regulate the delegation of the legitimate use of force by the CAD's. The state wanted to limit the lethal capability of such groups. Law, Article 4, Chapter II of Decreto Legislativo 741, limited self-defense organizations to shotguns as the weapons their members were entitled to possess.

CAD commanders were obliged to report weekly to local military or police commanders to update them on all their latest activities and observations in the countryside. The military leaders would make periodic surprise inspections of the CAD's within the area of their jurisdiction. The military kept a detailed register of the quantity and types of firearms and ammunition in the possession of CAD's. In 1997, the military began to compile a record in the departments of Ayacucho and Huancavelica of every

peasant *Rondero*, which included every rural adult, male or female, between the ages of 18 and 60 (Fumerton, 2000, p. 19). The military also took a digital photograph of every *Rondero*, which was then stored in a computer database. This detailed personal data was necessary for the military to have so that it could eventually issue obligatory identification cards to every *Rondero* in the emergency zone. The identification cards had two primary purposes: to help prevent rebel infiltration of the CAD's and to have a record of each *Rondero*, so that it would become easier for the state to make indemnity payments to the families of those killed or wounded in the line of duty.

Anthropologist Carlos Iván Degregori Caso has described the *Rondas* as the Fujimori government's biggest success in the counterinsurgency war. By March 1992, more than 11,000 rifles and shotguns had been distributed among the 200,000 members of 526 officially registered *Rondas* organizations and Fujimori's government began handing out arms to newly created, ronda-like, urban self-defense groups as well (Exploitiz, 2004). On September of that same year, the government, also using the *Rondas* as a model, provided about 1,400 shotguns to the Asháninka, the biggest ethnic minority in Peru's Amazonian region and the main target of SL terrorism (Exploitiz, 2004). In 1993, all the margins of the Tambo River, which in earlier years suffered constant attacks and infiltration from the SL, were well organized and armed using the *Ronda* model in order to confront the SL. Since then the Amazonian region never was attacked by the SL. As part of the counter insurgency strategy in the region, the military patrolled the river systems and initiated civic action programs, which solidified the population's support for the government, enhanced intelligence collections, and denied the SL freedom of maneuver in the region.

VI. ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

This chapter will analyze the cases selected in the previous four chapters. The intent is to identify and summarize the most critical variables affecting the success or failure of the local defense program in the four countries. Though no single variable may be cited as the full cause for the local defense organizations' contribution to the overall counterinsurgency strategy, it has to be observed that the concept of local defenses in these four countries was not conceived by the strategists as an isolated effort of the state to counter the insurgents; in practice, however, and for some of the countries, an oversight of the variables, a conventional mindset, and a military-focus approach to the insurgent problem reduced dramatically the concept's effectiveness by trying to implement it as an isolated initiative.

Of the cases selected six critical variables have been identified as affecting the effectiveness of the program: Geography, Timing, Culture and Traditions, Counterinsurgency Strategy, Economy, and Government Commitment.

A. GEOGRAPHY

When referring to geography we will refer to terrain, accessibility, and means of communication as well. In the implementation and development of the local defense program geography played an important role on both the cause of the state and that of the insurgents. In most cases geography was one of the causes limiting the accessibility of the state to assist and support isolated rural populations, as well as to reinforce local defense organizations when attacked by guerrilla columns. At the same time, and in most of the cases, geography provided safe heavens for the insurgents to conceal, plan and reorganize, as well as to infiltrate within the rural villages. In all cases, at the beginning of the struggle, geography benefited the insurgent cause by providing them with easy access to rural populations where there was little control by the state or no control at all. The lack of means of communications such as roads, airports, navigable rivers, telephone lines, and television and radio stations limited even more the control and influence of the state and increased the advantage for the insurgents. Under these circumstances, the

insurgents were free to fill in the vacuum left by the state and to gain support of the population.

In Malaya the MCP did not have this advantage. The fact that Malaya is a small peninsula allowed better control of its borders, diminishing the strength of the guerrillas by restricting the flow of external support, which at the same time allowed a better allocation of government forces, easy access to the rural population, and a major support to the home defense program. Despite the dense vegetation and moderate mountains in the country, a good road and communications system increased the capacity of the armed forces and police to quickly assist and reinforce the local communities; thus extending the presence and authority of the state on the rural areas.

An important asset of the Malayan counterinsurgency strategy was to reorganize its armed forces and police, as well as the home defenses, by mimicking the territorial organization of the MCP. Under this scheme, civil and military officials were appointed at the district level to administrate and support civil-military relations, including the training, equipment, and control of the home defenses. Furthermore, the initial advantage that the guerrillas had, due to their easy access to Chinese squatters, was countered by the Malayan government by implementing the resettlement programs; which were intimately related to the home defense organizations as a source of protection for the new villages. Despite the negative effect that these programs had at the beginning due to the attachment of the Chinese to their land, eventually compensatory measures for the inhabitants and trustful home guard protection released security forces to be allocated in small units to confront the guerrillas in the jungle. A policy of minimum displacement and implementation of home defenses among indigenous Chinese, Malay, and Indian squatters also helped in this endeavor.

Vietnam was quite different. A country one and a half times bigger than Malaya, including a land frontier of more than 3,000 miles with Laos, Cambodia, China, and North Vietnam, as well as an extended coast line increased the strength of the Vietcong by facilitating the flow of weapons and logistics to its guerrillas. The tropical weather, characterized by rainy seasons, produced a dense jungle – less dense than the Malayan, but more homogeneously distributed throughout the country - which was difficult to

penetrate and complicated the assistance of the government to indigenous populations and civil defenses. Compared to Malaya, many populated areas in Vietnam were inaccessible and much more separated from each other. For instance, by 1996, 75% of the roads in Vietnam were unpaved, making the waterways - the Mekong Delta River - the most important mean of communications.

During the Vietnam War, the communications system was precarious and limited even more the support provided to the civil defense program. The geographical barriers and the lack of communication - necessary to permanently assist remote and isolated populations, and to increase government presence, control, and legitimacy - diminished the appeal of the civil defense organizations and shifted the support of the populace to the Vietcong. However, the success of the Buon Enao experiment proved that geography and accessibility were important but not essential in Vietnam. What started as a small-scale experiment in December 1961, turned to be, a year later, a program in which 200 indigenous villages - strategically located - were organized in civil defenses to provide their own security. Unfortunately, after this partial success the program was marginalized for other military options.

In El Salvador geography played a role for both the insurgents and the state. Despite the extended land frontiers with Guatemala and Honduras, as well as the proximity to the Gulf of Fonseca in Nicaragua - which facilitated the flow of external support to the guerrillas, the insurgents in El Salvador were limited in their scope. El Salvador, being one of the smallest and more highly dense populated countries in the world, with relatively few remote areas, did not provide the guerrillas with many locations in which to hide - except for northern Chalatenango, Morazan, and the San Vicente volcano. However, later on, this operational limitation was overcome by the guerrillas as they easily assimilated into the rural communities without drawing much attention (Sheehan, 1989, p. 130). On the other hand, the dense vegetation in the El Salvador, the difficult mountain range, and the limitations in the quality and quantity of roads and means of communication within the country, made more difficult the feeble attempts of the Salvadoran government to establish the local defense organizations. Furthermore, due to the difficulties in accessing remote and isolated rural populations

without having contact with the enemy, the armed forces and police strongly relied on military air transportation, restricting even more the possibilities of organizing the civil defenses in the country. In a war that pays a premium for being among the people, the UH-1H has made ESAF (El Salvador Armed Forces) into an army that spends too much time above the people (Bacevich, 1988, p. 33).

Peru is a country affected by a very rugged geography. The main geographical characteristic differentiating Peru from Malaya, Vietnam, and El Salvador, and the one which made more difficult the establishment of local defenses, was the size of the country and the Andean range. The latter extends through the country with mountains of more than 18,000 feet. The Andean range separates the coast – unique region of economic and social development in the country – from the jungle, consolidating an ample and mountainous terrain, sparsely populated and economically and socially underdeveloped. The extended and very dense jungle also provided safe heavens for the insurgents to operate and organize, as well as to infiltrate the rural populations. The scarce means of communication to properly integrate and assist the sparsely indigenous populations in the mountains and jungle, facilitated the recruitment of cadres, as well as the attainment of logistic support, on the build-up phase of the insurgency. The underdevelopment and lack of control on the borders – especially with Brazil, Bolivia, and Colombia - allowed the insurgents to establish connections with international drug cartels and other insurgent organizations, which provided them with economic resources and weapons to challenge the government and the population.

Similar to Malaya, a late but important strategy of the Peruvian government to counter the insurgents was to organize the armed forces and police on territorial basis by taking advantage of the territorial organization of the Shining Path and the geographic conditions. Under this configuration the armed forces were capable of organizing the local defenses in indigenous villages, providing them with training and weapons to confront the insurgents in their area. Despite the initial failure of the program, in part due to the geographical barriers which limited the assistance of the government to the local defenses, the armed forces gradually extended their control over the rural areas by relying on the bases of support provided by the local defenses or *Ronda Campesina*

organizations. Once the area was safe and protected by the local defenses, the military establishment would progress to more conflicting areas. Finally, the insurgents were pushed to isolated jungle areas where suffocation operations would be held by the armed forces, until their final defeat in 1997.

In all cases, the geographic conditions that limited the presence of the state in the rural areas of the country would be the same conditions affecting the organization and performance of the local defenses. However, despite the need to be considered when planning the creation of local defenses, geography is not the determinant factor for the success or failure of the local defense program. Other factors, analyzed below, also influence effectiveness of the program.

B. TIMING

Under this variable, we will analyze how the timing of the local defense program's inception influenced its effectiveness, as well as how it contributed to the overall counterinsurgency strategy. For instance, it must be noted, that the more time a government takes to build-up local defense organizations when confronting an insurgency, the more time the insurgents have to organize support bases on the rural populations, and the more difficult it will be for the government to regain control.

Despite the long history of the Malayan home guard defenses, which were first conceived by indigenous villagers as a source of protection against crime and robbery, the new concept of the local defenses as a mean to protect rural populations from the insurgents was the initiative of the British Director of Operations in Malaya, Sir Harold Briggs in 1950. By the time Sir Gerald Templer was appointed on November 1951, the program already enjoyed complete recognition and was supporting police defensive operations in resettle areas or Strategic Hamlets. Considering that the MCP initiated its violent activities on June 1948, and despite the early futile attempts of the Malayan government to build-up a coherent response, it can be said that the local defense program in Malaya began just in time. At that point, the Malayan government was still capable of gaining the initiative in the battle for the hearts and minds of the population.

The case of Peru was somewhat similar. Built-up over the already existing concept of the peasant communities (Comunidades Campesinas), the Autodefense Committees (Comites de Autodefensa) or Rondas Campesinas had some delay in their reorientation to confront the Peruvian insurgency. Although the SL initiated its violent activities beginning 1980, the concept of local defenses did not begin, as a source of protection against insurgent organizations, until 1991 and started to materialize as part of the government's strategy to attain popular support and establish control over the country. By 1991 the Comites de Autodefensa were officially recognized by the Peruvian government. Despite the early efforts displayed by the armed forces and by isolated communities to organize and protect their villages against the attacks and influence of insurgent organizations, the lack of a national policy to extend the establishment of local defenses throughout the territory diminished the effectiveness of the concept. The insurgents could always move to influence a new audience. By the end of 1992, the *Rondas Campesinas* had gained certain reputation, and many of the areas of influence were under their direct control, requiring a minimal assistance of the armed forces.

In El Salvador and Vietnam the situations were quite different. In both cases the local defense programs came late. The insurgents had already consolidated their bases of support among the rural population and had established a net of information within the inhabitants of almost every village. Despite some late and isolated initiatives like the Buon Enao experiment in Vietnam and the Salvadoran training school for civil defense organizations at San Juan Opico, the local defense program in both countries had a hollow achievement. With no timely capacity of the state to protect its own population, the control of the country was in the hands of the insurgents.

The evidence shows that time is an important consideration when planning to implement local defense organizations; however, timing not necessarily determined the success or failure of the program in these four countries. In some cases like Malaya and Peru, the official local defense programs promoted by the government started with some delay, thus they proved their effectiveness over time by extending the government's control in the rural areas. It must be noted, however, that there is a turning point in the conflict where any initiative of the government to organize the population in local

defenses will fail. At that point, as in Vietnam and El Salvador, the insurgents will have vast control over the population and regaining the controlled territories will be an arduous if not impossible task.

Based on these observations, it can be said that timing has a direct relation to the effectiveness of the local defense program. The earlier the program begins, the more possibilities it has to succeed. For instance, in all cases, the implementation of the local defense program skipped the subversive phase of the insurgency. In two of the cases, Malaya and Peru, the program was reinforced during the guerrilla phase of the insurgency, and finally succeeded. In the cases of Vietnam and El Salvador, where the local defense programs failed to achieve their purpose, the programs only received high attention when the insurgents already had the capacity to challenge the state in conventional terms.

C. CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The cultural values and traditions of the indigenous populations also affected the organization and development of the local defenses. In some cases, the lack of consideration of race, language, customs, and religious practices of the inhabitants of an indigenous village where the local defense organizations were to be organized, diminished the effectiveness of the initiative and eventually turned active and passive government supporters into enemies.

During the Malayan Emergency, the initial lack of consideration for the Chinese minority, regarded as communist supporters and aliens by the Malay population, presented the Malay government with the challenge to attract the Chinese community to its side in order to build up home defenses among the Chinese squatters. To avoid Sino-Malay racial incidents, great efforts had to be made by the British and Malay governments to convince the bulk of the Chinese population that they had the same stakes in Malaya as nationals and not as Chinese with the communists (Thompson, 1966, p. 19 - 20). The lack of knowledge of the Chinese language, as well as the initial exclusion of Chinese from the local defense program, had negative effects of building up a trustful base of Chinese supporters; however, later on, under Sir Gerald Templer's advice, the

Chinese population loyal to the Malayan government were integrated into the home defense program, as well as employed as Chinese translators. Despite the subsequent economic compensation of the affected communities, the lack of consideration on the dietary habits of the indigenous tribes which were relocated from the jungle into the new resettle areas also produced dramatic consequences for the Indian population.

In the case of Vietnamese and the Salvadorian governments this problems did not exist. In both countries the governments were mainly dealing with their own people. To a great extent race, ethnic composition, and language in each of these countries were very homogenous. Nevertheless, in the case of Vietnam, the advantage of having a culturally and linguistically homogeneous population was diminished by the religious differences between the Diem government (Catholic) and a great number of Buddhists in South Vietnam. Furthermore, the discriminatory practices promoted by the Diem government against the Buddhists population had a strong negative effect on the counterinsurgency effort and limited even more the capacity of the Saigon government to organize the civil defense organizations on rural areas.

In Peru, at the beginning of the struggle, the culture and traditions of the indigenous inhabitants of the mountains and jungle, presented a series of obstacles to properly organize local defense organization. The armed forces sent by the Peruvian government to suffocate the insurgency in the mountains of Ayacucho became trapped in a region where they lacked the proper knowledge of the language and the cultural traditions of the indigenous society. The lack of knowledge of the indigenous Quechua language, and the difficulty in understanding the peasants' customs and traditions, strongly increased repression by the armed forces. As stated by Palmer (1992), "Given the regional ethnic and linguistic differences...It is possible that many of the human rights violations which have occurred stemmed from the military's lack of knowledge and understanding of local situations" (p.25). In the following years, the earlier experience of the rural populations with the government and their consequent distrust of the armed forces and police inhibited them, the rural population, from supporting the government's cause.

The lack of knowledge of the local grievances and rivalry between communities also had a negative effect at the beginning of the program. Cases related to abuse practices and assassinations perpetrated by armed militias in neighboring villages were reported during the struggle (Comision de la Verdad y Reconciliacion, 2003). The government's response, which finally proved to be effective, was to combine the local defense programs in rural communities with civic action programs and psychological operations; however, the creation of trustful local defenses took several years to consolidate.

The culture and traditions variable cannot be overlooked when organizing local defenses. The first approach of the government to implement these programs will require an early planning, a complete knowledge of the cultural values and traditions in the region, and sensitivity. The armed forces and police, in order to organize the rural areas with local defense organizations will first need to establish a close and trustful relation with the rural population; a complete knowledge of their customs and beliefs will help on this endeavor. In this case it must be noted that an erroneous approach to the community will indicate a weakness in the relationship between the government and the rural. The insurgents will be observing in order to capitalize on the mistakes of the government. As bad news travels fast, an erroneous approach by the government will easily spread over other communities creating a negative image of the local defense program.

D. COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

When planning the implementation of local defense organizations, it is not enough to consider this program as part of the counterinsurgency strategy. As noted by analyzing the implementation of local defense organizations in Malaya, Vietnam, El Salvador, and Peru, the local defense program can only be effective and contribute to the overall counterinsurgency effort if it is encompassed and integrated with the other programs considered in the strategy.

In Malaya and Peru, despite the early difficulty of both governments to shape a coherent and comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy, and despite the initial failure in organizing the local defense programs, both governments were able to build-up effective

local defense organizations in the rural areas. The initial coercive methods and isolated efforts applied by both governments in trying to gain the support of the population were replaced by a consistent mix of military as well as non-military programs such as civic actions, psychological operations, and selective military operations. Establishing security in the rural communities and strategic hamlets through the use of local defense units was considered the backbone of the strategy to regain popular support. As stated by the Peruvian Truth Commission (2003), “thru the years, the *Rondas Campesinas* have converted into fearful opponents of the SL...The defeat of the SL starts when the peasants lost fear for the SL’s violent actions and began to organize in local defenses” (p. 450). The effectiveness and continuance of all the other programs depended on the security provided by the local defenses. At the same time, the effectiveness and continuance of the local defense organizations also depended on the support and coherent application of all other programs, creating an interdependent relationship between them.

The cases of Vietnam and El Salvador were somehow different. In both countries, despite permanent and isolated efforts of some advisors, politics, and military officials on the field who visualized the insurgent problem in its real magnitude, including the necessity of reestablishing the control over the population and of winning the war of ideas, the “big unit” mentality and miscalculation on the enemy’s approach prevailed up to the turning point when the guerrillas had established a solid base of supporters among the rural population and controlled great portions of the country. With some notable exceptions in both countries, at this point, any effort to establish a local defense organization proved to be temporary, and in most cases worthless. In Vietnam and El Salvador, the conflicting character of some programs – such as the bombing campaigns over civilian populations with the implementation of civil defense programs in these same locations - and the lack of implementation of other complementary measures, made the local defense programs fail in winning the hearts and mind of the population.

Considering that the aim of the insurgents is to win the support of the population in order to overthrow the existing government; the local defense organizations constitute an invaluable tool for the government to physically and politically isolate the insurgents from the population. Nevertheless, these community organizations cannot subsist and be

effective by themselves; they will need complementary and mutually reinforcing programs, united under a coherent and clearly articulated counterinsurgency strategy.

E. ECONOMIC RESOURCES

As well as geography, timing, culture and traditions, and the counterinsurgency strategy, economic resources are an important consideration when implementing local defense organizations as part of the counterinsurgency effort. The availability of economic assets will affect the training, maintenance, reinforcement, equipment, and demobilization of the local defense units, as well as the accomplishment of complementary and subsidiary measures necessary for the sustainability of the local defense program. However the attainability of economic asset does not assure the success of the local defense program - as was proven in Vietnam and El Salvador. Economic resources will increase the possibilities of success for the state. This is not to say that the lack of economic resources will lead to failure. Malaya and Peru are two countries in which the economic limitations were effectively overcome with innovative ideas, which finally succeeded in supporting the local defense organizations on the rural areas. However, major economic resources properly managed and directed accordingly to the local defense programs could have reduced the conflict in cost, lives, and time.

Economy became an important limitation in the build-up phase of the local defense organizations in Peru. At this point, the limited resources to train, equip, and arm the local defenses, as well as the lack of means to assist and reinforce the local defense units when attacked by the terrorists, had a contrary effect on the population. Under these conditions, some local defense members shifted to the side of the insurgents, while others established alliances with drug trafficking organizations.

Despite the importance to innovate and avoid an exclusive reliance on economic assets - which at the same time normally brings to bear unnecessary technology for the kind of war that is being fought - the attainability of economic resources becomes important when organizing, equipping, training, assisting and demobilizing local defense organizations. In cases like Vietnam and El Salvador where economic assets were abundant, the problem was not the lack of resources, but the allocation of them. In

Vietnam there was no US interest in allocating money toward the pacification effort. All the economic assets were directed to the “big unit” war. El Salvador proved a similar trend. In this case, in comparison to the money allocated in the air campaign and in conventional forces operations, the local defense program was taken out of the formula to defeat the MCP. Furthermore, according to Bacevich (1988), the United States did not make a concerted effort to persuade the Salvadorian armed forces to treat the civil defense seriously. In both cases, the problem was not the lack of economic resources, but the lack of government commitment, which will be discussed in the following section.

F. GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT

No counterinsurgency program will work if the government is not completely committed to wage the kind of war according to the enemy at hand. A government can prove its capability to overcome the geographic limitations, to attend the economic requirements, to perceive the early warnings of an incoming insurgency, to build-up a coherent counterinsurgency strategy, and to learn from the cultural values and beliefs of its target audience; however, if there is no clear policy, politic decision, and a strong commitment by decision makers at all levels, half of the battle will be lost. In counterinsurgency, particularly in the implementation of the local defense program, the lack of government commitment and risk aversion will do more harm than good. The incomplete implementation of a local defense program, as well as the partial compromise of the government to assist and reinforce local defense organizations, will only provide the insurgents with new armed and trained cadres, as well as with an important intelligence network.

In Malaya, for instance, the lack of compromise of the government during the first two years of the struggle, gave the MCP enough room for maneuver to build-up its guerrilla front and to organize its support bases by taking advantage of the isolated Chinese Squatters. The situation in Peru had a similar trend; only that this time the Peruvian government took 10 years, after the first open action of the Shining Path, to show its commitment in confronting the insurgent organizations in both the military and non-military arenas. In 1991, the local defense program was the most popular program of

the new administration to reestablish control over the rural areas, as well as to diminish the influence and attacks of the insurgents over the rural population. However, it must be noted, that by the time the government finally decides to support pacification programs in the rural areas, including the reinforcement of the concept and strength of the local defenses, the SL had entered the phase of Strategic Equilibrium. At that point, the subsistence of the local defenses program in these areas required an extra effort of the state to be implemented.

In Vietnam, despite the initial misperception on the enemy's approach, the erroneous relegation of the task of pacification to the South Vietnamese government, and the subsequent and understandable conventional response of the US, by 1966 there were important counterinsurgency experts - such as Sir Robert Thompson, the CIA, and Marine Major General Victor H. Krulak, between others - urging Washington to adopt unconventional tactics from the "Small Wars Manual" (NAVMC 2890, 1940), as to isolate the guerrillas from their base of support among the rural population. The key to winning the war, as it was stated by Krulak on a memo to Washington, was to provide security for the villagers by training the local people to defend themselves (Boot, 2002, pp. 293 -298). At that time, there was a clear understanding that an exclusive military approach was worthless, that the casualties to the guerrillas could be easily replaced from the rural population, and that the US was losing the war with a conventional approach; however, there was no intention of the US-South Vietnamese government to commit time and resources on "the other war". There was no conviction on the effectiveness of the program to regain the support of the population and to extend government control on the rural areas. Despite isolated efforts to organize local defense organizations - like in the Buon Enao experiment - without the commitment of key personnel at the decision making level the program failed.

The organization of civil defenses in El Salvador also lacked politic commitment. However, in this case, the decision making process was strongly influenced by the memories of the Organizacion Democratica Nacionalista (ORDEN) - a village-based paramilitary organization dating back to the early 1960, which was involved in extortions, violations to human rights, and intimidation of the population (Bacevich,

1998, p. 40). Furthermore, the fear of the Salvadoran decision makers of being involved in new scandals and the concern of Salvadoran military for a reduction of US economic aid were responsible for the limited resources invested in the civil defense program.

In general, the government's commitment to organize local defense organizations in rural areas has always been restricted by a number of factors. In all cases, there have been personal and collective interests limiting the organization of local defenses and a strong concern about the local defenses becoming guerrilla sympathizers and turning against the government which provided them with weapons. The lack of knowledge of decision makers about previous experiences in countering insurgencies, as well as the conviction - for political reasons - on a short term response to a long term problem, has also limited the capacity of the state to properly confront the enemy at hand. Another concern has been that of the politicians and military leaders, which have been worried about the vulnerability of the local defenses, as an easy source of weapons for the insurgents. Overall, there was no real commitment – at least for some time with Peru and Malaya – to assume responsibility of the local defense program; for it must be noted that without commitment overcoming the difficulties imposed by all other variables was a futile cause.

VII. CONCLUSION

In guerrilla warfare, both the government and the insurgents are in a struggle to gain the support of the population within this struggle. There is not necessarily or exclusively a need for the physical attachment of the population, but there is a need for their political attachment. For the insurgents, the provision of food, shelter, and information are even more valuable than the physical involvement. "The successful commitment of the population to one side or the other, especially in the rural areas, will be of vital importance to the resolution of the struggle" (Osborne, 1965, p. 2). The support and protection of the rural populations must be the main objective of the government to isolate the guerrillas and to weaken their strength.

From the cases selected, the use of local defense units as a means to protect the population from the insurgent's influence and attacks, to extend the intelligence network among the rural population, and to extend government control over the rural areas proved to be an effective measure - - at least during the time period in which they were properly implemented - - to isolate the insurgents from their popular base of support. Despite the permanent lack of governmental commitment to support the local defense programs in countries like Vietnam and El Salvador, the program demonstrated its effectiveness on a small scale basis.

A different mix of factors influencing the strategic and tactical levels - - both greatly interdependent - - such as Geography, Timing, Culture and Traditions, as well as the Counterinsurgency Strategy applied, the Economic Resources available, and the Government's Commitment affected the implementation and development of the local defenses in each of the four cases presented. Although, the lack of knowledge of the Culture and Traditions of the local population, as well as a partial commitment of the state confronting the insurgents, were the most influential elements determining the effectiveness of the program.

While limitations in all other factors can be overcome by the state and its allies, an overlook of the values and beliefs, the local customs, the ethnic problems, the local

grievances between neighboring communities, and the image of the state from the eyes of the population, have to be closely analyzed when planning the implementation of armed local defense organizations. The culture and traditions, language, and any other unique aspect considered influential in dealing with the local population when confronting an insurgency will require and in depth study at the first sign of a subversive phase. Initiating the battle without proper knowledge of the enemy and the local population at hand will only extend the conflict in time, money, and lives.

A complete commitment of the government when implementing local defense organizations is instrumental. The state has to be convinced of the effectiveness of the program without expecting a quick solution for a long term problem. Furthermore, the program has to be implemented in the entire country and must enjoy the major support of the governmental officials and policymakers. “The greater security provided by organized and armed communities should begin in the safer area and spread outward to the less secure area like ink on a blotter” (Colby, 1989, p. 91). The partial commitment of the government, and a focalized implementation for the local defense organizations, will only provide new armed cadres for the guerrillas and safe heavens for the insurgents to hide, organize, and recruit. Under this same token, a complete commitment will require sufficient economic assets to train, arm and equip, maintain, support, assist, and properly demobilize local defense organizations after the conflict. Off course innovation will be important in order to avoid exclusive reliance on economic assets; nevertheless, money and resources to support the program will be required.

The Economic assets should not only be considered as to directly support the local defense program, but they will need to be acquired in order to develop complementary programs - - such as developmental programs, medical programs, civic action programs, crop counseling, and psychological operations programs. The government must create the mindset that the local defense program, far from being an isolated effort, is part of the package to support the population. Encompassing and integrating all these programs with the military campaign, under a coherent and early counterinsurgency strategy, will be critical to gradually defeat the insurgents. For the government, and particularly for the military, the mindset must be that this war is not a

war to militarily defeat the insurgents, but to a great extent, to regain the support of the population; by accomplishing the latter, the insurgents will be defeated.

Differing from the way conventional conflicts are handled, it must be noted that, at the tactical level, an erroneous approach of the government over the population in order to implement local defenses, will easily spread throughout the region and could have strategic consequences. The main challenges of the military units implementing the local defense programs will be to understand the local culture, to establish a reliable channel of communication with the local population, to implement an intelligence network within the villages, as well as to properly organize, train, equip, and assist the local defense units whenever needed. However, one of the most demanding challenges will be to permanently maintain contact with the local population. A way to accomplish this goal will be to avoid reliance on air mobility for maintenance visits and the strategic location of military bases on rural areas.

Taking into account the past experiences of the cases presented, a reference to assist the tactical commander to implement local defenses at the tactical level, is provided in the final section of this thesis. The military order annex is a quick reference or guide if one is required to complete an operations order, annex or fragmentary order for planning a local defense operation. The annex only highlight in general terms the key variables needed to be address at the tactical level and war-gamed in mission analysis.

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APPENDIX

This Annex is a quick reference or guide if one is required to complete an operations order, annex or fragmentary order for planning a local defense operation. This annex will only highlight in general terms the key variables needed to be address at the tactical level and war-gamed in mission analysis. The format will be as per Field Manuel 101-5, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 31 May 1997.

OPERATION ORDER- Number (Name)

References:

Time Zone Used Throughout the Order: (Local)

Task Organization: When assigning military or police units, it is critical to assign units that have the capability to work in remote areas with little logistical support. Specialty units need to be attached in support of the program. These units are Civil Affairs, Psychological operations and medical assets. In addition translators or interpreters and guides must be assigned to the units.

1. Weather and Light Data and General Forecast:

High	Moonrise	Sunrise
Low	Moonset	Sunset
Wind Speed	Moon phase	BMNT
Wind Direction	% Illumination	EENT

2. Terrain: In addition to the terrain analysis, one should keep in mind that the insurgents would always try to take advantage of the terrain conditions. The variable of terrain and geography limits the state to exercise control over remote populations. The state will have to overcome the barriers imposed by the terrain accessibility limitations.

1. SITUATION

Enemy Forces: Intelligence on strength and locations of insurgent or guerrilla units are difficult to determine, especially in the phase of subversion and the guerrilla phase of the insurgency. The situation on the enemy forces should consider the remote local populations and their composition to determine the potential resources the insurgents or guerrilla forces can gather from the population, which is critical for the insurgents' growth and survivability. The insurgent's freedom of movement is determined by the insurgent's ability to grow in strength and legitimacy where the state has little or no control.

(1) Composition, disposition, strength: When determining the size and strength of an insurgency, the ability of the insurgents to recruit from local populations would determine the growth rate of the insurgency. Little time and training is necessary to recruit the local population to rapidly increase the size of an insurgent force. The insurgents to recruit their new cadres from the local population will apply persuasive and then coercive methods. The insurgency will grow from nothing to a strength position where it can challenge the government.

(2) Recent activities: Initially the insurgents are determined to grow in size and legitimacy. The insurgents will not confront the state in direct action unless the insurgents are confronted. The actions of ambushes, bombings, and selective targeting are what the insurgents desire to employ to attrit the state's forces and increase their legitimacy with the population. When analyzing the recent events, what is not known is critical. Every action the insurgents accomplish is desired to generate more resources, legitimacy, or manpower from the population.

(3) Known/suspected locations and capabilities: The insurgent's lifelines in remote regions are the resources the local populations can provide, or what the insurgents can take. The insurgents will stage in either the countryside or very remote areas and establish a relationship with the local population in which they can blend in and operate. The resources capability of the local populations can determine the locations of the guerrilla influence or locations. Border regions with other countries or regions can be,

especially in isolated undermanned borders, a favorable location for staging and resource channels to the guerrillas.

(4) Describe the enemy's most likely and most dangerous course of action:

The insurgent's main concern is to initially grow in strength and resources to enlarge its organizations. At first the insurgency will develop in the subversive phase. In this phase it will be difficult for the state to identify their location and composition. The second phase is the guerrilla phase. The most likely course of action during the guerrilla phase is fanatic-like operations and terrorist attacks mainly on government forces, state authority facilities, and local supporters of the state. The insurgents will conduct ambushes and bombing on known state forces locations in order to capture equipment and weapons and increase their legitimacy with the population. The third phase will commence when the insurgents have grown and organized in numbers and resources to mount conventional operations. The insurgents will not mount a large direct action against the state unless it has mustered enough combat forces and has the logistical base to mass overwhelming force over the state and confront the forces in conventional combat operations.

Friendly forces: In addition to identifying the mission of units that will be operating in the adjacent areas of the local defense operation, the strength and weakness of the local population should be addressed. The potential strength of the local population, referring to population locations and the numbers of men that can participate, will determine the possible course of actions relative to the establishment of a local defense program. The social and customary organization within the region will differ some from area to area and village to village. Every local population from the hamlet to the village has an existing internal social organization with hierarchies and rules. The ability to identify those social controls or structures will be the rudimentary base for the local defense organization. In addition, the livelihood the local population depends on from agriculture, livestock, mining etc. will determine the amount of labor and manpower which is needed by the local population to be dedicated in producing the basic amount of substance for the local population and the amount of labor, manpower, which can be dedicated to the local defense program. The customs, traditions, and language must be

analyzed and understood. This is a variable that the insurgents exploit in favor for acquiring support from the local population towards their cause. In understanding, respecting, and accepting the customs, traditions and language of the local population will enhance and transition the support of the local population to the state.

2. MISSION

The mission of the ground commander is to establish and maintain local defense units in order to extend government control in isolated areas or regions, by negating the support of the population to the insurgents.

3. EXECUTION

1. Concept of the Operations. The following should be considered when writing the concept of the operation.

- Address the goal of denying the enemy the ability to recruit and hinder the enemy's to move freely with in the region.
- To deny the insurgent force the resources of the local population and hinder the organization's ability to grow.
- Local defense operations should take into consideration the ability of the state's units to capitalize on the local social structures of the local population and develop and organize the population with existing social structures and controls into a system or organization to defend the villages or hamlets with the assistance of the state.
- Maintaining local population support by conducting humanitarian operations and civic actions, while establishing a governmental infrastructure and system to help alleviate the strain the population will incur when drawing on local resources to the local defense program and establishing governmental control.
- Psychological operations themes and messages should reinforce the "state's" legitimacy and goals.

Local defense programs or operations have several stages or phases depending on the region or conflict. The four stages listed below should be considered when planning and developing a local defense program.

Phase one- Assessment-

- An in-depth assessment should be conducted on the geography and political-military aspects of the region.
- This assessment should take into consideration the ability of the state to rapidly reinforce a local defense if confronted with an overwhelming guerilla force. Reinforcement by air should be the least preferred because air might not be available due to maintenance, weather, or lack of resources.
- A security study in each village must be conducted to determine the internal and external strengths and weaknesses of the location and the local population.
- The state needs to identify what assets and routes are available to reinforce each local defense in a time of crisis or attack.
- The distance from communities organized with local defense units to a military support base must be calculated according to terrain and the capability to establish maintenance operations either by foot or vehicles.
- The ability to reinforce the local defense will determine the type of weapons and amount of class V the local defense will be issued. On the type of weapon, it must be considered that every armed person is a potential insurgent recruit or a source of arms if the insurgents can kill or capture the villager.
- A determination must be made of the locations of state forces in the region: The two missions the units will perform should determine the strategic locations of the state's units in the region. The first is reinforcement or quick reactionary forces, the second, and most important, is maintaining support and governmental control through out the area the state forces will operate in.

- The routes of the reinforcement and maintenance operations will differ since the reinforcement mission will be a more direct route, which must be calculated, and the maintenance mission can be longer but must be connected to every population center in the area. In both cases, military units must not fall on routine.
- Determine what kind of communication system will be used or needed for communicating with local defenses by the state units.
- Identifying the local social structure in the region in order enhance the local defenses' chain of command by utilizing the existing local hierarchy social structures.

Phase two- Training and Arming: Local defenses are a defensive operation and should not be used as an offensive tool. Their main intent is to establish and maintain government control through out a region.

- The amount and type of weapons will depend on the area to cover, strength of the guerrillas, terrain, and capabilities of the local population.
- Local defenses must be sufficiently armed as to defend their villages, but not as much as to constitute a potential threat for the state in the future.
- The training of the local defense force should be conducted in an isolated area of the village.
- The training should coincide with the growth of the local defense program in the region. Once the state has identified the area or region where the local defense will be established, the nearest village closest to the state's base will receive the equipment and training first. Then gradually the state will train the next farther local defense in either a circular or star method.
- Villagers will be issued a photo identification card in order to identify who has been trained, to determine if the insurgents have recruited a villager; and

to pay any salary or benefits to the villagers if wounded or killed, such payment is a benefit of the program.

- The establishment of the local defense's leadership should be identified and given the assets and training to control its defense.

Phase three- Contact and maintain: During this phase the ability of the state to maintain governmental control through out the region and mass forces when insurgent forces engage the local defenses is critical.

- Continuous contact of the military and the local population must be constant and reinforcing. Prevent the “bunker mentality” of staying with in the military compound.
- Conduct Civil Action operations to include humanitarian projects in order portray to the local population that the state is committed to the populations' needs in order to support governmental control and legitimacy in the region.
- Establish an intelligence network through out the region by utilizing the local defense to collect intelligences in order to identify insurgent activities.
- Even though each local defense is defensive in nature, it should conduct limited patrols from its village. Each village will be responsible for a certain area around its village and each village should be interlocked so the entire region has local defenders patrolling routinely within the entire region.
- Payments and benefits for local defense members must be publicized; any compensation for deaths or injuries must be completed timely.
- A technique to measure or gauge the level of security in a particular area is the observation of the percentage of children attending schools (HA projects) or children playing in the local playgrounds in close vicinity to government facilities. The amount of the local children population attending school or playing in the playgrounds can be indicative of the local population sense of the security level in the area.

- The ability to identify and gauge the amount of children that are potential recruits for the insurgents is to identify if there is an influx of student attendance in schools to see if there is an increase in insurgent recruiting.

Phase four- Demobilization: During this phase the state will withdraw its forces from the area and turn over the region to the state civil authority. The local population might feel that they are capable of governing themselves and need to be involved in, if not solely part of, the state's civil authority that will be established in the region.

- Conduct a recognition ceremony for the members of the local defenders where they would receive benefits and payments and where they will turn in their weapons and ammunition. In addition the ceremony would officially transfer authority from the local defenders to the new state's civil authority.
- The issue of recollecting the arms and equipment needs to be considered. If there is a plan to recollect the arms, then the villagers might feel betrayed and might feel vulnerable to reprisal from any potential insurgents in the regions.
- New Identification cards need to be issued throughout the region from a local defender ID card to a state civil authority ID card.
- State civil authority needs to take in to account local customs of the region to maintain authority and justice in the region and to continue with the humanitarian and construction programs started by the military.

4. SERVICE SUPPORT.

- It is critical to logistically support the state units in remote areas. This can be mitigated if the units are provided with operational funds in which they can purchase supplies and necessities from the local population. An attempt to purchase or acquire many supplies from the local population would enhance the mission success and enhance local population support for the state.

- The commercial communication system that is identified in the assessment stage needs to be acquired or purchased and a dedicated frequency needs to be established. Encrypted radios are not recommended.
- The weapons, class V (ammunition) and equipment that will be issued to the local population should be established before the state forces arrive in the region or early in the assessment stage. Depending on the terrain, shotguns could be used as a standard weapon of the local defenders. Long-range rifles are not recommended due to the possible confrontation between the state and local defense forces when it comes time to demobilize the local defenses.
- Early alarms and booby traps may be considered in the surrounding areas of a village.
- The state must plan for and establish additional stocks of ammunition to re-supply and train both the local defenses and the state forces.
- The state forces must be able to produce a unique identification card in the field and have a database to track and issue the ID cards. Every person in the region must be issued an ID card in order for the state to identify any new person in the region and to statically identify the composition of the local population.

5. COMMAND AND SIGNAL

- The command of each local defense organization should be established according to local customs without undermining their traditions. The use of the local leadership will enhance the capability and provide some legitimacy to the organization to the local population.
- The leader of each local defense needs to understand his requirements and mission and be responsive to the state units and chain of command. The leaders of the local defense forces will be held accountable for all actions of his local defense forces.

- The functions and standards of conduct of the members of the local defense must be clearly established.
- A security/defense plan must be implemented within each village to organize drills, alarms, evacuations, crisis management, emergency communications, rehearsals, training, security zones, and functions and responsibilities of the inhabitants in general; and the local defenses in particular.
- There must be a clear chain of command established from each local defense to the military forces, to include a clear chain of command within the state units conducting the local defense program.

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