

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### INTRODUCTION

Internal war was commonplace in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as it is today. The many troubled spots such as Iraq, Palestine, Ceylon, Afghanistan or closer to home in Southern Thailand, is proof that internal war continues to constitute the essence and spirit of contemporary political life. Harry Eckstein (1964: 12) was of the view that internal wars belong to the realm not only of social force but also to political competition. Janos<sup>(i)</sup> argues internal war is part of the general struggle of individuals, groups, parties and movement for authority, despite rationalist conceptions that place it somehow outside the universe of political struggle (Eckstein 1964: 10-12). The focus and concentration of this thesis is in essence a study of the suppression of the CPM; viewing it from the perspective of the Psychological Operations techniques employed by the British to contain, suppress and overcome the terror threat. According to Thornton, (Thornton 1964: 72) there are generally two types of terror. Firstly, it is the activity of insurgents who wish to disrupt the existing order to achieve power. Secondly, it is the activity of the incumbents who wish to suppress the challenge to their authority. In other words it is two different sides of the same coin. One seeking to displace the existing order, whilst the other bent on keeping its position of power.

The Malayan Emergency from 1948-1960 exemplified this observation given the fact that the CPM was determined to overthrow the British, while the British were determined to

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(i) Janos, prepared a thesis on Structures of Authority for a symposium of social scientists to write and discuss internal war that convened late 1961 by the Center of International Studies at Princeton University. (Eckstein 1964: 4-12).

maintain their power and authority. The Malayan Emergency began in February 1948 with terrorist attacks by CPM guerrillas on European settlers in the Malay Peninsula necessitating a state of Emergency to be declared in July 1948. It was only when the British responded with aggressive counter-attacks as well as search and destroy tactics that the CPM were forced to retreat.

The CPM ability to regroup and retrain was due to the delay in the British mobilising the desired reinforcement to contain the terror as well as the death of its High Commissioner. Although the CPM continued their campaign of terror but failed when the British employed its campaign to engage the hearts-and-minds of the people by using helicopters to evacuate military and civilians wounded to hospital, bring in supplies and provide troop transport.

**Figure 1: British using helicopters to evacuate military It was only after twelve years of intensive jungle Operations to hunt the CPM in their jungle retreat did the CPM security threat finally declared ended in 1960.**



## **BACKGROUND**

The deployment of terror tactics as a strategy of political action is not a recent phenomenon. It has been used in the past and continues to be a characteristic trait on the world landscape today. The motivation of using the terror then and now remains the same. On the one hand, it is used as a strategy with the view to displace or dislodge the incumbent power by antagonists who seek to assume the seat of power. On the other hand, it is used by the incumbent power to maintain and entrench its hold on their existing seat of power. In short, it is two

different sides of the same coin. Terror as a strategy to pursue power or as a means to maintain power inevitably causes disruption to the established social, political and economic pattern and rhythm of the society when and where it occurs. More than that, it inevitably causes damage to personal and public property as well as the unfortunate loss of innocent lives.

In a climate and environment of terror, it does not necessarily mean that the one with heavier or superior fire power wins the war. This is evidently witnessed in the troubled spots of the world like Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine in present day conflict or in yesteryear conflict such as the Vietnam War and the Malayan Emergency.

When terror is unleashed, it is inevitable there is a state of internal war and unrest. Given that any war affect people, it is imperative for both the incumbent power as well as those bent on overthrowing them to win the hearts and minds of the people. To disregard this vital people factor or the affected targeted audience is to inevitably lose the war. In this respect, it is important for both protagonists and antagonists of war to appreciate and understand the psychological impact of deploying terror as well as that of winning the hearts and minds of the people. This serves to mean that Psychological Operations and Psychological Warfare must be conducted in tandem or synchronicity. Yet there is a distinct thrust and emphasis between the two. By and large, Psychological Warfare is based and planned on educational propaganda and action<sup>(ii)</sup> against hostile groups only, while Psychological Operations are directed at hostile as well as neutral and friendly groups.

As much as it is an articulation of the tactics and strategies employed by both the antagonists and protagonists during this period of internal war and unrest in the Malay Peninsular between the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and the British, its focus of emphasis is on the

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(ii) The word 'planned' use of propaganda and actions and its relation to planning decision implies the following: Any act to be falling within the purview of Psychological Operations the action undertaken should have been planned and must not be the result of any accidental occurrence; the conduct of Psychological Operations in any conflict requires a series of managerial decisions which must be made within the framework of national policies and objectives. In addition, it must be in conjunction with the operational plans. There are large numbers of variables affecting Psychological Operations which make planning decisions difficult. The main variables are choices of campaign purpose, target channel, message, timing and means of evaluation. Any Psychological Operations programme demand clear-cut policy, otherwise it refleCPM confusion and which may have far reaching detrimental effeCPM. Therefore, it is the obligation of policy makers to provide sound policies to the Psychological Operations planners. (PPB (MAL) 25 Psychological Operations)

Psychological Operations to engage the hearts and minds of the Malayan people that resulted in the victory of the British and the defeat of the CPM. Given that there is scant research in this area of study, it is hoped that the merit of embarking and realising this thesis would serve as a meaningful basis to address similar states of unrest and internal war in other troubled spots of the world.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This thesis will endeavour to discuss the insurgency of the Malayan Emergency in the period of 1948-1960 with the expressed purpose to seek and determine what constitutes Psychological Operations during an Internal War. The findings of this thesis would highlight the merits of deploying humane Psychological Operations as an essential necessity as in the case of the ability of the British during the Malayan Emergency.

The research problem for this thesis seeks to analyse and identify the rationale, manner and execution of what constitutes as effective Psychological Operations initiatives employed by the British during the insurgent Malayan Emergency. In this respect, it is imperative that the thesis first take a look at the pertinent variables of who, why, what, where and how of the insurgency came into being and the ensuing the witnessed the deployment of Psychological Operations to overcome the security challenge known as the Malayan Emergency. It is the aspiration of this study, that there would be better appreciation and understanding on the Psychological Operations effected to overcome the CPM Insurgency and why the local population supported the British campaign against the CPM. Given that the insurgency took place after the Second World War, and in particular, the Japanese occupation in Malaya, it provided potential useful lesson applications to the concept of Internal War expounded by Harry Eckstein. That the causes of Insurgencies, military units engaged and involved the participation of the local population as part of the Psychological Operations, this thesis seeks to analyse the impact of recruiting the local population to add extra military muscle to fight the guerrillas.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of the research are as follows:

1.4.1 To analyze the Malayan Emergency in the context of Psychological Operations

1.4.2 To evaluate how far Psychological Operations contributed to further understanding of the Malayan Emergency.

## **SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

This thesis consist of five chapters. Chapter One gives an overview and articulates introductory discussion pertaining to the study namely the problem statement, assumptions, objective of the study, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, limitations and lastly the organization of chapters.

Chapter Two focuses on the Malayan Emergency and the counter measures used by the authorities against the insurgents. In addition, it will provide insights to the questions about pre-revolutionary conditions, causes as well as the conceptualisation of social structures rooted in the character of Psychological Operations. It also examines the image or model of a social system that descended into violent conflict as well as the ensuing peaceful integration of diverse forces. Last but not least, the potential of framing a role model module on Psychological Operations in respect to Malayan Emergency and that could be successfully employed for similar conflict situations. The chapter endeavours to provide a general frame of reference within which these causes and solutions are to be sought.

Chapter Three addresses the Psychological Operations from a perspective of politics, economy and socio-development. It provides details leading to a state of insurgency as well as during the Malayan Emergency. It encompasses of Psychological Operations during Malayan Emergency; psychological personality of the CPM; psychological impact on initiating an administration to connect with the grassroots; psychological dimension in intelligence gathering on CPM mindset and impact of Psychological Operations.

Chapter Four explores the analysis impact of Psychological Operations during the Communist Insurgency, concept of Psychological Operations, root causes of the Insurgency, the

involvement of the military units, forces to fight the guerrillas and the success of Psychological Operations. The analysis variables of Psychological Operations which consists of psychological personality of the CPM; psychological impact on initiating an administration to connect with the grassroots; psychological dimension in intelligence gathering on CPM mindset.

Chapter Five conclude the thesis and highlights the concept of Internal War as expounded by Harry Eckstein and that the Malayan Emergency contained elements of Psychological Operations and its impact still reverberates today in the Malaysian psyche as policies and laws framed during Emergency are still in use in present day Malaysia.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative research methodology. Secondary data and information were sourced from books and articles in journals found in the libraries. Besides book and articles in journals, the study also utilised the facility offered by the Internet, which is a rich minefield of information recent on views, issues and updates.

Additional information was sourced from web .sites, databases, and documentation facilities. The study includes citations and documents published by the information authorities gathered from libraries and resource centres mainly at the MAFDC, University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) and Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR). To carry out a study, one must first have a subject to study, therefore the task of delimitation is in a nutshell, to state unambiguously what that subject is (Thorton 1964:8). Many references had to be perused and evaluated to demonstrate and shed light on the subject matter (Eckstein 1964: 26).

## **LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

The limiting factor that may slightly affect this research is the reliability of its secondary source data, in particular the Psychological Operations. It is a fact that the primary source of Psychological Operations data that is available at the Ministry of Defence could not be officially revealed by the Officers to the author. This could be due to their concern in revealing sensitive facts that impact upon national security.

## **THE BENEFITS EXPECTED OF THE RESEARCH**

The benefits expected of the research have its mettle of merit to incumbent governments and policy makers as well as the academic fraternity. For incumbent governments and policy makers its merit lies in the fact that there are greater dividends to be earned by persuasion rather the use of force.

The advent of street protests in present day Malaysia as a means towards the ultimate end of achieving power is a worthy example in case. Such street protests have the volatile potential to turn ugly. It can disrupt social and economic life, damage public and personal property as well as threaten the lives of people. Such a phenomenon necessitates affirmative action by the Government and this study can prove useful in respect to how the right Psychological Operations can play a meaningful role to allay the fears and grouses of disgruntled groups. That political competition is usually the basis for internal war and insurgencies to erupt (Eckstein 1964: 11-12) is rearing its ugly head in Malaysia. This study can prove useful to the incumbent present Government in respect to the merits of employing the desired Psychological Operations to address the problem at hand.

For the academic fraternity, this thesis will spur more studies on Psychological Operations that can be meaningfully employed by policy makers to address potential conflict both on the domestic and international landscape.