CHAPTER 2

MALAYAN EMERGENCY

INTRODUCTION

It is imperative to understand the causes what motivated the CPM insurgency in Peninsular Malaya and the subsequent decision of the British to declare a state of Emergency in the Malay Peninsular from 1948-1960. Without the benefit of such an understanding, it would prove a futile attempt to ascertain what constituted military operations and what constituted Psychological Operations in the discussion of this thesis.

Furthermore, since this study is specific rather than general it becomes all the more imperative to have a perspective of the chronology of the events as it unfolded that saw the CPM gaining the upper hand in the initial stage before the tide turned against them when the British initiated affirmative measures to deal with the threat. There are definite reasons as to why the British response was not immediate. The early CPM gains proved to be only fleeting once the British acknowledged that affirmative action was needed in order to contain the threat.

That it took the British 12 long years to defeat the CPM in Malaya was testimony of the resilience of the CPM that they were not a force or a threat be taken lightly. Similar to other conflicts, the Malayan Emergency offers invaluable lesson applications to present and future wars. It is one of the few examples of a low-intensity conflict that was won by the government in power and thus is a relevant subject of case studies in insurgency, especially in the present global war on terror.

In addition, it stands as one of the best illustrations of a coordinated political-military effort that actually defeated a guerrilla force. (Simpson, 1999). Malaya is located in South-East Asia, bordered on the north by Thailand and to the south by the small city-state of Singapore. Malaya itself is a peninsula of over 50,000 square miles, with some of the world's most rugged terrain, mountainous and heavily forested with thick jungle. Originally occupied by the British during the mid-1800s, Malaya came under Japanese occupation during WW2. (http://www.britains-smallwars.com/malaya/def.html. Viewed on the 15 Jul 07).

Figure 2: Malaya is bordered on the north by Thailand and to the south by state of Singapore

Malayan guerrilla forces were organized to fight the Japanese, and many were trained & armed by the British. After the war and the defeat of Japan, the British moved to re-occupy Malaya and to establish a neo-colonial regime. In response, former guerrillas renewed their military Operation, now under the Malayan People's Anti-British Army. This movement was led by the CPM, with its primary base of support among disaffected & impoverished Malayan Chinese, many of whom were landless peasants in rural areas. (Simpson, 1999)

The insurgents began attacking British & Malayan government forces, as well as colonial businesses such as rubber plantations & tin mines (the main export commodities). As the Malayan Emergency was officially declared, the Malayan Security Service, the main intelligence branch of the British, was disbanded after failing to provide advance warning of the insurgency. It was replaced by Malayan police Special Branches (Simpson, 1999).

Overall, the government was slow to respond, and not until 1950 did serious effort begin to put into counter-insurgency Operations. In 1951, the British High commissioner to Malaya was assassinated by insurgents, and only then did the counter-insurgency campaign began to intensify. Given to the introduction of this chapter, now it provides potential useful study on Insurgency, Counter Insurgency and Malayan Emergency.

Figure 3: Counter-insurgency campaign began

THE CONFLICT OF CPM - DISRUPTION OF SETTLED INSTITUTIONAL PATTERNS

The withdrawal of Japan at the end of World War II drastically disrupted the Malayan economy. Problems included unemployment, low wages as well as scarce and expensive food. There was considerable labour unrest, and a large number of strikes occurred in 1946 through 1948. At the same time, the British administration was attempting to repair Malaya's war-damaged economy quickly, especially as income from Malaya's tin and rubber industries was important to Britain's own post-war recovery (Clutterbuck 1984:44). As a result, strikes were dealt with harshly, by measures including arrests and deportations. The strikers became increasingly militant, and witnessed violent incidents.

The actual conflict began when the CPM disagreed with the British post-war policy of a Malayan Federation, mainly because the plan was part of a wider strategy of anti-communism. The party's new leader, Chin Peng, decided that an armed conflict would be the only way to bring the CPM revolution to Malaya and to dispel the threat to its CPM ideals. When, on June 16, 1948, three European plantation managers were killed at Sungai Siput, Perak, the British legislated emergency measure first in Perak and then nationwide in July. Under the measures, the CPM and other leftist parties were outlawed, and the police were given the power to imprison,

without trial CPM and those suspected of assisting CPM. The CPM, led by Chin Peng, retreated to rural areas, and formed the MNLA, also known as the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), or the Malayan People's Liberation Army (MPLA) (Clutterbuck 1984:51). The MNLA began a guerrilla campaign, targeting mainly the colonial resource extraction industries, which in Malaya were the tin mines and rubber plantations.

The MNLA was partly a re-formation of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), the CPM-led guerrilla force which had been the principal resistance in Malaya against the Japanese occupation (Clutterbuck 1984:56). The British had secretly trained and equipped the MPAJA during the later stages of World War II; it was disbanded in December, 1945. Officially, it turned all of its weapons in to the British Military Administration at that time, however it is likely that some weapons were not returned and were stashed for possible future use (Clutterbuck 1984:68). The anti-CPM referred to the MNLA as "CPM terrorists", which was often abbreviated to "terrs", "Charlie Tango" or "CPM". This term would later be used again in Rhodesia to describe ZANU or ZAPU guerrillas.

The MNLA was a guerrilla force created by the CPM and, to some extent, led and dominated by ethnic Chinese CPM. It was the chronological successor of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), guerrilla force that the British had secretly trained and equipped with arms during World War II in the fight against the Japanese Occupation. The CPM Party, which had been banned in the pre-war years, was thereafter granted legal recognition by the British after the war as a reward for its wartime effort, although it had secretly kept most of the MPAJA's weapons for future clandestine use.(Hanrahan 1979:22)

VIOLENCE - WARLIKE

In 1947, the Special Branch (Secret Police) reported the existence of secret arms dumps and training camps in the jungle. The authorities estimated that the CPM had called up about 5000 fighters and organized 250,000 Min Yuen (mass movement) supporters throughout the country. But the top officials were still sceptical. The Commissioner of Police at that time, H. Langworthy thought that such estimates of the CPM strength was exaggerated and it was possible that his opinions influenced the Governor for the Federation of Malaya more than anyone else (O'Ballance 1966:56 & 60).

Yet by May 1948, rubber planters and tin mines were at the end of their tether as violence had occurred at their rubber estates and tin mines. Some of the factories were burnt down by the labourers, labour supervisors had been killed and death notices had been served on some of the employers themselves. They believed that the people at the top, particularly the Governor, still did not appreciate the seriousness of the situation (O'Ballance 1966:61). As the police were still not given enough powers, they could not arrest anyone without a warrant.

'Subversive' organizations like the CPM and the federation of trade unions were still not banned, political agitators were still allowed to roam freely and subversives were still not banished from the country in great numbers or urgent pace (Oldfield 1953:22). The government machinery was still tied down by red tape and legal bureaucracy. On 8 June 1948, the planters who claimed that they could not maintain their normal work because of the lawlessness that was prevalent met and urged the government to declare a state of Emergency or martial law immediately to arrest the rapid deterioration of law and order (Oldfield 1953:24). The government did move in response to the situation and very quickly enacted new trade union laws on 31 May 1948, making all trade unions illegal; but it did not share the urgency felt by the employers. In a press conference on 13 June 1948, Governor Gent told employers to 'keep a sense of proportion so as not to create an impression that the position was actually worse than it was' (Oldfield 1953:26). Even when three European planters were killed in Perak and three Chinese were killed in Johore, Governor Gent's action did not conform to the employers' expectations. An Emergency was only declared in certain districts in the two states. It was only two days later that the Emergency was declared throughout the country.

Gent's departure from Malaya must have been a great relief to those who had felt that he had always exercised a restraining hand. Since a successor was not appointed immediately and the Chief Secretary of the Federation of Malaya acted as the High Commissioner, the conduct of the war against the CPM was left generally in the hands of the General Officers Commanding-the-Army in Malaya, Major General Boucher. Typical of a man with a military mentality, Boucher associated force with power and power with victory. Thus during this period, military force and repressive measures were used very freely. From June 1948 to December 1948, a total of 5097 persons were held under detention orders without any specific charges. In cases where the people refused to give information, they were jailed (Purcell 1954:68-69). The villages of Kachau

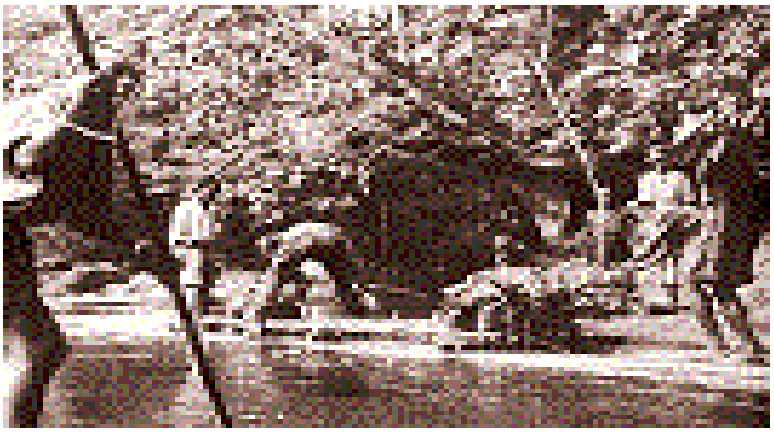
(in Selangor) and Pulai (in Kelantan) were razed to the ground when the police could not get any information on the activities of the CPM in the area. (Purcell 1954:71)

The British had expected to defeat the armed revolution 'in a couple of weeks'. The General Officer Commanding the Armed Forces in Malaya even stated that the trouble in Malaya was 'by far the easiest problem (he) had ever tackled' But such observations were certainly vainglorious folly. Despite the fact that the government was spending M$250,000 per day over and above the expenditure on the already enlarged police and defence forces, British victory was nowhere in sight even six months after the Emergency began. (Purcell 1954:73-74). On the contrary, the CPM guerrillas were safe in their hideouts in the jungle from where they launched occasional forays against police stations, rubber estates and tin mines in the countryside. Their supporters living on the fringes of the jungle and in the towns supplied the vitally needed food and intelligence. Despite the force, the British did not succeed immediately in defeating the guerrilla army. While fire power might have been extremely effective in conventional Operation where battles were fought in the open and in positions, its effectiveness was limited against the 'invisible' guerrillas (O'Ballance 1966:60). Neither did the intimidation that was exercised help the British in the objective of frightening the active CPM supporters and gaining control over the general population. Those who were not helping the CPM refused to go over to the side of the British and become mere 'running dogs of the Imperialists'.

A STATE OF EMERGENCY

Some perceived that the Malayan Emergency was an insurrection and guerrilla war of the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA) against the British and Malayan administration. The guerrilla war, which is also known as the Malayan War, was part of the ongoing conflict between the CPM and other leftists against the colonial establishment, starting shortly after the Japanese withdrawal in 1945 and extending at least to the signing of the peace treaty between the CPM and the government of Malaya in 1959 (Cloake 1985:74). The Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) was the military arm of the CPM; it was formed shortly after the Emergency was declared in 1948.

Figure 4: The guerrilla war, which is also known as the Malayan War



Internet viewed on the 25 Aug 07

Others see the Malayan Emergency as a reaction, through legal regulations, to counter the guerrilla war initiated by the CPM, led by Chin Peng, the party's secretary general, against the British Commonwealth administration and Malay forces (Jackson 1991:41). The decision to undertake a guerrilla war was made by the CPM in response to British proposals for the Malayan Union Constitution and the 1948 Federation of Malaya agreement, which the CPM feared would put in place a strong anti central government.

Political events elsewhere, such as Mao Zedong's guerrilla tactics against Chiang Kai-shek's forces in China, Indonesia's war with the Dutch government to gain independence, and the beginning of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, prompted the CPM to openly revolt against the British in order to achieve independence and establish a CPM Malaya (Jackson 1991:62). The CPM began attacking and terrorizing plantation workers and isolated estates, derailing trains, and burning workers' houses and buses. The CPM were jungle based and supported by the Chinese population, who lived mainly in cities and at the fringes of jungles. An underground organization called Min Yuen acted as a spy network and provided supplies, food, and information to the CPM.

Figure 5: CPM were jungle based

INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY

Although, counter-insurgency is perceived as a straight up combat, helicopters with special forces troopers and other Operation but in reality it is a multi-faceted program designed to destroy insurgent movements, in which combat Operation is but one aspect (Nagl 2002:42). In fact, military action may be severely limited due to an inability to locate insurgents and/or the need to not further alienate a domestic population (Short 2000:45). For these reasons, it is also referred to as low-intensity conflict (in many cases, however, this has involved widespread state terror against domestic populations, more accurately termed counter-insurgency wars) (Short 2000:48). In a broader social sense, the ruling class saw the domestic population as a hostile & threatening force, which must be constantly watched in case subversive elements within it begin to organize and spread. For this reason, intelligence agencies are maintained whose purpose is to identify & monitor subversive persons & elements within the domestic population. Current examples include the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as intelligence & national security sections within police & military forces.

Regular police & military forces were quickly found to be incapable of engaging in successful counter-insurgency Operation. The police lacked training & equipment, while regular soldiers trained to fight conventional mechanized wars were unable to adapt to anti-guerrilla fighting. Guerrilla insurgents, operating in small groups in inaccessible mountains & jungles, were elusive & impossible to control. The lack of extensive roads, railways and airfields in Malaya severely limited the ability of government forces to locate and attack guerrillas. Using hit

and run attacks on vulnerable enemy targets, the guerrilla insurgency continued to gain popular support. In the context of insurgency, this greater potential violence is not simply military, but included all measures, which would decrease the military potential of the enemy to include strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, blockades, occupations, riots, sabotage (Nagl 2002:32). Some recent examples include large-scale indigenous mobilizations against neo-liberal economic polices in Argentina, Bolivia & Ecuador where millions of people took part in blockades, riots, etc., effectively shutting down all highways, airports, cities, commerce, transportation, industry and others.

THE INSURGENTS' PERSPECTIVES

The achievements of the Malayan Races Liberation Army during the period of the Emergency witnessed casualties among the insurgents that never rose much above 6,000 and they never had any significant external help, and yet at the peak of the Emergency, their activities were wearing down some 300,000 Security Forces personnel which included regular troops, police and home guard (Van der Froef 1967:91). Between June 1948 and Independence Day, 31 August 1957, the Security Forces killed and captured 7,643 terrorists and persuaded 1,938 more to surrender; but the Security Forces themselves lost 1,851 killed and 2,526 wounded. It included 1,000 police and 500 British and Commonwealth troops killed. In addition, the terrorists killed 2,473 civilians during the whole of the Emergency and wounded 1,385, with a further 810 missing. The cost of the anti-terrorists campaign was enormous. From 1948 until Malayan Independence in 1957 it has been estimated that the total expenditure was more than $700 million, of which $525 million was provided by the United Kingdom (Van der Froef 1967:103).

Initially, everything seemed to favour the side of the terrorists. They organized their hit-and-run raids from camps hidden in the jungle, well-screened from the air, with sentries out to half a mile and escape routes well worked out. The Min Yuen organization brought them tens of thousands of sympathizers from the Chinese population and guaranteed the supply of money, food, medicine and intelligence. The terrorists forced rubber estates, tin mines, police stations and isolated homes to become armed camps surrounded by high wire fences, lit at night by searchlights and patrolled constantly by guards (Van der Froef 1967:105). Planters and miners slept with revolvers under their pillows, with grenades on nearby tables. Bedrooms became strongpoint, with Bren guns sited at windows. People travelled in lorries converted into armoured

trucks with escorts. No stretch of the road could be guaranteed safe from ambush, and railway travellers had to contend with derailment as a permanent hazard along isolated stretches of tracks. Yet the CPM did not win. Some believe they could never have won. Their initial successes were mainly achieved as a result of the slow British response to events, and gave an illusory indication of their strength, even though the damage they inflicted on the rubber and tin industries, only just beginning to recover from the effects of the Japanese occupation, brought development to a virtual standstill for three years and posed a very real threat to the security and economy of the Malaya Federation (Van der Froef 1967:106).

It was only with the appointment of Lieutenant-General Sir Harold Briggs as Director of Operation in March 1950 that a true military response to the CPM threat was initiated. Also, the CPM Terrorist Organization (CPM) seriously miscalculated the support they were likely to get from the two and a half million Chinese in Malaya (Brimmell 1956:10). There was no rush to join the ranks of the MRLA in the jungle. Also, the Government policy of grouping Chinese elements into settlements where they could be effectively controlled and protected paid early dividends. With security came loyalty, brought about partly by effective government and partly by an intensive propaganda campaign, and once this had been guaranteed the Security Forces could devote their full attention to eliminating the insurgents.

Figure 6: Sir Harrold Briggs

The CPM failed to realize at first that to terrorize the 'imperialists' and their economic organizations brought immense hardship to the workers and peasants, the very people they should have readily won over to the CPM cause (Brimmell 1956:12). Instead of ensuring overall sympathy, the most they obtained from towns and villages was grudging and fearful co-operation. Their plans to establish liberated areas also collapsed when the estate owners failed to flee and instead set about building up their own defence forces, composed of workers who remained remarkably loyal unless they were terrorized. By the time the terrorists realized their mistake and revised their policy, it was too late. The New Village scheme to resettle half a million Chinese squatters – the 'sea of the people in which the guerrillas aimed to swim like fish', to use Mao's description – had been firmly implemented and the 'sea' no longer existed (Brimmell 1956:15). To counter CPM efforts to re-establish supply lines, stringent Government controls were imposed on the sale and movement of essential commodities, especially food. Shopkeepers were made to keep records of sales, farmers had to record their harvests, villages and estates became guarded areas. It was clearly stated that the Emergency would not be permitted to hold up economic and political progress (Boddye 1993:9). In April 1951, Sir Henry Gurney gave political and community leaders ministerial status and entrusted them with the control of some Government departments. Even when the Emergency was at its most critical point, Malayans were taking steps towards self-government (Boddye 1993:12).

Figure 7: A core policy in defeating the CPM insurgency was the creation of model 'New Villages' such as this one being inspected by the High Commissioner Sir Henry Gurney (left) in Jelebu

The clear message was that Britain would keep her promise to see the Federations achieve independence, and that message was repeated with even greater emphasis by General Templer. The end result was to deprive the CPM of one of their strongest propaganda weapons which was that Britain was essentially an imperialist power interested only in preserving her hold over Malaya. On the military front, the CPM had seriously underestimated the ability of Commonwealth forces to adapt themselves to jungle Operation (Boddye 1993:15&16). Had the CPM seen soldiers of those same armies in action in Burma and New Guinea later in the war, their outlook might have been very different. Initially, Operation during the Emergency involving large numbers of troops met with little success, but when hunter-killer platoons were set up, composed of tough, aggressive soldiers well-trained in jungle Operation and marksmanship, acting on information supplied by an increasingly efficient Police Special Branch intelligence service and assisted by Dayak Trackers from Sarawak, these efforts bore results.

Figure 8: Fld. Marshall Sir Gerald Templer Half-length, almost full face, standing with hands in suit pockets, with Lady Templer and two others. Sir Gerald was former Chief of the Imperial General Staff

These troops outfought the terrorists in their own ground and, with substantial air support, ensured that the jungle was no longer a safe refuge. It is a fact that troops already acclimated to jungle Operation produced the best results in the anti-terrorists campaign. One of the biggest mistake of all made by the CPM in Malaya was to believe that they could emulate the achievements of the Viet Minh guerrillas in Indo-China, who by 1948 were locked in a deadly war with the French colonial authorities (Boddye 1993:20). The Viet Minh, under the leader Ho Chi Minh and his able military commander, General Giap, were already strong and well-armed, and were conducting their Operation from a near-impregnable mountain fortress. For a time there was stalemate, but Ho Chi Minh, while sustaining intense political pressure and launching raids on French border garrisons, set about reorganizing his army on a regular basis, and when Mao Zedong's victory over Chiang Kai-shek in China brought the Chinese CPM forces to the frontier of Indo-China, the Viet Minh themselves had a secure base for rest and re-training, a source of ammunition, equipment and instruorrs. By 1950 Ho Chi Minh, possessed thirty regular units in the north of the country, with a large number of guerrilla units operating in the south.

The CPM in Malaya had no such friendly cross-border sanctuary, nor did they have an external source of modern arms and equipment. There is no parallel between the terrorist campaign in Malaya and the efficient, well-organized war waged by Ho Chi Minh. Nor is there any parallel between the British administration in Malaya and the oppressive, heavy-handed attitude of the French colonial power in Indo-China, with its belief in the use of extreme military force to keep a restless population in check. (Cross 1989:11-13).

In a sense, the CPM in Malaya elected to fight the wrong war in the wrong place, not least because over half the population were Muslim Malays for whom Communism had little appeal. They seriously miscalculated the strength of their position, their chances of support from Russia and China, and the British response (Boddye 1993:23). Their leadership was poor, their communications easily disrupted, and their application of Maoist strategy a failure. Even so, it took a force outnumbering them sometimes by fifty to one, itself applying Maoist principles, efficient, with huge reserves, to defeat them; and yet they never surrendered.

The Malayan Emergency holds many lessons on how an anti-guerilla campaign can be effectively conducted. It also indicates how effective Maoist strategy can be if properly applied under favourable conditions. The conditions might have been favourable if the population of Malaya had been starving, or oppressed, or suffering under a corrupt regime. None of these factors applied, and the people of Malaya realized that what they had already was better than anything communism had to offer them. (Lee 1996:3-5).

GUERRILLA OPERATIONS - SOCIAL FORCE

Support for the MNLA was mainly based around 500,000 ethnic Chinese then living in Malaya (there were 3.12 million Chinese in total); the ethnic Malay population supported them in smaller numbers. The MNLA raised the support of the Chinese because they were denied the equal right to vote in elections, had no land rights to speak of, and were usually very poor. The MNLA's supply organisation was called "Min Yuen." It had a network of contacts within the general population. Besides supplying food and weapons, it was also important to the MNLA as an information gatherer. (Stubbs 1989:93).

The MNLA had its hideouts in the rather inaccessible tropical jungle with limited infrastructure. Most MNLA guerrillas were ethnic Chinese, though there were some Malays, Indonesians and Indians among its members. The MNLA was organized into regiments. The regiments were considerably smaller than a regiment would usually be in a modern national army; the term was largely a geographical designation as each regiment operated in a different area of the country. The regiments had political sections, commissars, instructors and secret service agents. They also promoted lectures on Marxism-Leninism, and had political newsletters distributed to the locals. MNLA also stipulated that their soldiers had to get official permission for any romantic involvement with local women.

In the early stages of the conflict, the guerrillas envisioned establishing "liberated areas" in which the government forces had been driven out and MNLA control established. They were unsuccessful, however, in establishing any such areas. The initial government strategy was primarily to guard important economic targets such as mines and plantation estates. Subsequently, Director of Operation General Sir Harold Briggs developed an overall strategy known as the Briggs Plan. Its central tenet was that the best way to defeat an insurgency such as the government was facing is to cut the insurgents off from their supporters amongst the population (Clutterbuck 1967:72).

The Briggs Plan was multi-faceted; however one aspect of it has become particularly well known: this was the forced relocation of some 500,000 rural Malayans including 400,000 Chinese into guarded camps called "New Villages". These villages were newly constructed in most cases, and were surrounded by barbed wire, police posts, and floodlit areas, the purpose of which was both to keep the inhabitants in and the guerrillas out. People resented this at first but soon became content with the better living standards in the villages. They were given money and ownership of the land they lived on. Removing a population which might be sympathetic to guerrillas was a counter-insurgency technique which the British had used before, notably against the Boer Commandos in the Second Boer War (1899–1902) (Clutterbuck 1967:91).

At the start of the Emergency, the British had a total of 13 infantry battalions, comprising seven partly-formed Gurkha battalions, three British battalions, two battalions of the Royal Malay Regiment and a British Royal Artillery Regiment being utilised as infantry

(Clutterbuck 1967:103). Yet, this force was too small to effectively meet the threat of the "CPM terrorists" or "bandits", and more infantry battalions were in Malaya.

MILITARY INVOLVEMENT - SOCIAL FORCE AND WAR

The British brought in soldiers from units such as the Worcestershire Regiment, Royal Marines and King's African Rifles. Another effort was a re-formation of the Special Air Service as a specialised reconnaissance, raiding and counter-insurgency unit in 1950. The Permanent Secretary of Defence for Malaya, Sir Robert Grainger Ker Thompson, had served in the Chindits in Burma during World War II, which meant that his vast experience in jungle Operation may have proved valuable during this period (Clutterbuck 1967:106).

British army units began a "hearts and minds campaign" by giving medical and food aid to Malays and indigenous tribes (Clutterbuck 1967:107). At the same time, they put pressure on MNLA by patrolling the jungle. Units such as the SAS, the Royal Marines and Gurkha Brigade drove MNLA guerrillas deeper into the jungle and denied them vital resources. The MNLA were forced to extort food from the indigenous tribes and earned their enmity. Many of the captured guerrillas changed sides. In comparison, the MNLA never released any Britains alive. In the end the conflict involved up to a maximum of 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops against a peak of about 7–8,000 CPM guerrillas.

On October 7, 1951, the MNLA ambushed and killed the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. The killing has been described as a major rallying factor in causing the Malayan psyche to roundly reject the MRLA campaign. The incident led to widespread fear. The perception was that "if even the High Commissioner was no longer safe, there was little hope of protection and safety for the man-in-the-street in Malaya." (Andrew 1995:56). More recently, MNLA leader Chin Peng, by contrast, revealed that the killing had little effect, as the CPM had radically altered their strategy that month in their 'October Resolutions' (Chin Peng 2003:13). These MNLA initiatives were in response to the Briggs Plan. They included reducing unit sizes, increasing jungle farming, and attempting to boost political work. Gurney's successor, Lieutenant General Gerald Templer was instructed by the British government to push for immediate measures to give ethnic Chinese residents the right to vote. He also pursued the Briggs's Plan, and hastened the formation of a Malayan army. At the same time he made it clear that the emergency itself was the

main impediment to accelerating decolonisation (Herbert 1995:64). He also instituted financial rewards for detecting guerrillas by any civilians and expanded the intelligence network (Special Branch) (Herbert 1995:68).

Australia was willing to send troops to help a South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) ally and the first Australian ground forces, the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), arrived in 1955. The battalion would later be replaced by 3RAR, which would in turn be replaced by 1RAR. The Royal Australian Air Force contributed No. 1 Squadron (Avro Lincoln bombers) and No. 38 Squadron (C-47 transports), operating out of Singapore, early in the conflict. In 1955, the RAAF constructed Butterworth air base, from which Canberra bombers of No. 2 Squadron (replacing No. 1 Squadron) and Sabres of No. 78 Wing carried out ground attack missions against the guerillas. The Royal Australian Navy destroyers Warramunga and Arunta joined the force in June 1955. Between 1956 and 1960, the aircraft carriers Melbourne and Sydney and destroyers Anzac, Quadrant, Queenborough, Quiberon, Quickmatch, Tobruk, Vampire, Vendetta and Voyager were attached to the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve forces for 6-9 months at a time. Several of the destroyers fired on CPM positions in Johor State. (Komer 1972:77)

Realising that his conflict has not come to any fruition, Chin Peng sought a referendum with the ruling British government alongside many Malayan officials at Baling in 1955. The meeting was intended to pursue a mutual end to the conflict but the Malayan government representatives, led by Tunku Abdul Rahman, dismissed all of Chin Peng's demands. As a result, the conflict heightened and, in response, New Zealand sent NZSAS soldiers, No. 14 Squadron RNZAF and later No. 75 Squadron RNZAF, and other Commonwealth members also sent their troops to aid the British in Malaya.

"Decisions in principle were taken to move toward independence for Malaya from 1952 onwards, and proceeded via elections in 1955 to full independence in 1957. The effect of these political decisions was to improve the cooperation of the Malay authorities, allowed the Malayan armed forces to be built up and integrated into the Operation to defeat the insurgency, and to gradually isolate and neutralize the insurgents…" (Bulloch 1996:4-16)

By 1959, the guerrillas were forced to seek sanctuary in nearby Thailand. The Malayan Emergency officially ended in 1960, and military Operation continued until 1963.

Although the insurgency was defeated in that it failed to seize power & establish a CPM government & economic system, the guerrillas clearly contributed to the ending of direct British rule. With the independence of Malaya under Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on August 31, 1957, the insurrection lost its rationale as a war of colonial liberation. The last serious resistance from MRLA guerrillas ended with a surrender in the Telok Anson marsh area in 1958. The remaining MRLA forces fled to the Thai border and further east. On July 31, 1960, the Malayan government declared the Emergency was over, and Chin Peng left south Thailand for Beijing where he was accommodated by the Chinese authorities in the International Liaison Bureau, where many other Southeast Asian CPM Party leaders were housed (Bulloch 1996:23).

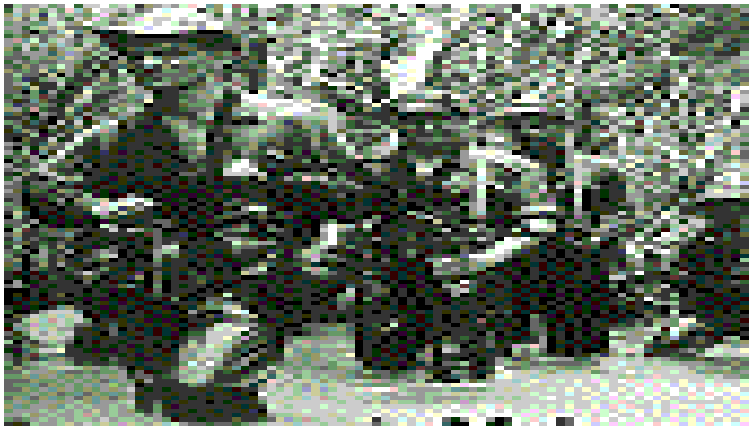
In regards to aerial initiative, the Psychological Operations witnessed aircraft being mobilised to distribute leaflets & taped broadcasts over loudspeakers. Millions of leaflets were dropped over villages & suspected guerrilla camps, calling on insurgents to surrender, highlighting guerrilla failures, personally attacking guerrilla commanders, etc. Transport planes with large speakers were used to broadcast looped messages on tapes, also targeted at individuals and groups by name, promoting the government and other Operation.

Overall, bombing campaigns were more disruptive than effective, and air support was used primarily for transportation, re-supply and airborne Operation. Of far greater value was the use of helicopters: "Helicopters could operate almost anywhere, even in rough jungle. Prior to deployment, security forces were hard pressed to carry the war to the enemy. Foot patrols took considerable time to penetrate an area, and frequently the insurgents were gone after being alerted by aborigines. Likewise, outlying posts & estates were difficult to reinforce and thus vulnerable to hit-and-run raids. Helicopters solved this problem, allowing troops to be moved into deep jungle before [insurgents] could withdraw... Not only could troops penetrate far into CPM territory, but they arrived fresh and ready to fight" ((Hanrahan 1979:30-32). During the conflict, security forces killed 6,710 MRLA guerrillas and captured 1,287. Of the total number of guerrillas, 2,702 surrendered during the conflict and about 500 at the end of the conflict. There were 1,346 Malayan troops and 519 British military personnel killed. 2,478 civilians were killed and 810 recorded missing as a result of the conflict.

MILITARY CAMPAIGN

The limited British military force was unable to maintain law and order at the end of the Japanese Occupation in 1945. This led to the CPM to believe that they would be successful should they seize the initiative and fulfil the vacuum of leadership by the Japanese. After their earlier inability, the British quickly set about trying to dramatically increase the size of the military force, in part because additional military forces would not be available as the British would have liked due to a downsized post-war military commitments. In two years, the regular military force tripled in size from a little over 10,000 to nearly 30,000, a level where it stayed throughout the Emergency. Most of the new military recruits were Malays with the Chinese constantly being underrepresented because of a general unwillingness to serve.

Figure 9: Additional military forces



In early 1949, nearly five hundred new officers arrived from outside Malaya. Most of them were former military men in Palestine, although some came from India and Hong Kong. While their experience was helpful, they brought a number of problems with them, notably the lack of linguistic ability in either Malay or Chinese. This was compounded by little knowledge of the local customs and culture. There were always more foreign military presence in Malaya than native soldiers; especially after 1950 when the military spent much of its time in the jungle, the military became the public face of the British government to the local population.

Military Action by the British

Within days of the Emergency being declared, the military swept into action detaining 600 CPM and suspected-CPM sympathizers; by the end of August, nearly 4,500 leftists were imprisoned. Because of the state of emergency, trials were not always necessary and many suspected CPM members were held without being charged in court. The initial crackdown was successful in that several key leaders of the CPM movement were captured because they were surprised by the sudden declaration of the Emergency and did not have time to retreat into the jungle. By the time reality sank in, the CPM was then in a full-scale guerrilla war for which they were not entirely prepared. With many of their members and supporters arrested, the CPM was then forced into a number of piecemeal raids from their jungle bases, instead of a series of coordinated attacks throughout Malaya that would have been to their advantage. Besides putting the CPM in a tactically poor situation, the initial military action also helped to seal the CPM off from the urban areas. A quarter of the Malayan population lived in cities at the time, including a significant number of ethnic Chinese who were essentially the only members of the CPM. The military helped to cut off the insurrectionists from a number of possible recruits (Hanrahan 1979:41-43).

For the first several months of the Emergency, the fighting consisted of a number of erratic firefights in which the military forces were often involved. Several military stations were raided, and patrols were ambushed while the military struggled to keep informants and civilian collaborators from meeting an early demise. By the end of 1948, the CPM withdrew deeper into the jungles to regroup and retrain, which bought the British much-needed time to bring in reinforcements and create an intelligence network that they had been previously lacking (Hanrahan 1979:37-38).

Additionally, the large military force helped the military by taking over many of its guard duties, especially in the first several years of the insurrection. By replacing the military, who were manning various security posts guarding bridges, road junctions, checkpoints and the like, the military freed up more soldiers to patrol the jungles to hunt the CPM. However, the downside of this was that the military, who were not trained for heavy combat, often suffered noticeably higher casualties than the guerrillas in raids on these posts and in ambushes where the army suffered less in the same circumstances (Short 1975:22-24).

The state of emergency that the British imposed on Malaya was very much akin to a military state, and the British were unafraid to exercise their power. By 1950, 8,500 were being held in detention camps; most people never had a trial or even formally accused of a crime. Additionally, the British did not hesitate to deport opponents, mostly ethnic Chinese - the group that the CPM drew its membership from; about ten thousand were deported in 1949. Additionally, the death penalty was made available for crimes such as possessing firearms or explosives; by the end of the Emergency, 226 CPM were hung. (O'Ballance 1966:33)

While mass arrests and deportations were not popular with the ethnic Chinese, the rest of the Malayan population remained largely unaffected by them, so they were not largely concerned with the arrests. To be sure, many of the powers given and used by the British were rather draconian and perhaps unnecessarily so, especially concerning the expanded crimes for which one could be executed. However, there is generally little doubt that these measures helped to play a major role in weakening the CPM, first by imprisoning several leaders and a number of members and later by weakening the support base for the CPM by literally removing them from the country (Hanrahan 1979:26).

The military also played a critical role beginning in 1952 with the so- called 'hearts and minds' attempt to reduce support for the CPM by offering support and aid to those who helped the government. As part of this, the military replaced soldiers in many local Chinese villages because it would be easier to build a dialog with the locals by having military who were stationed there permanently, instead of soldiers whose units would be rotated out of the villages. To make the military perform better in their new public roles, many were retrained from the paramilitary role they played earlier to that of a more typical military force. The military became less on edge as the fear of guerrilla attacks weakened in 1953. The shooting war had become much quieter, which in turn made the military not ill-disposed to the public at large. The Malayan government mounted several public relations exercises with the military to present them as civil servants who were there to protect the civilians. These factors had a positive impact as far as the British were concerned; the Chinese civilians began to trust the military, and communication between the two groups increased (Stubbs 1989:155-164).

The military in Malaya were successful in arresting a number of CPM members when the Emergency was first declared. After using the broad powers granted to them by the Emergency, the military detained significant numbers of suspected CPM sympathizers.

Heavy Patrolling

Ten battalions of British infantry were spread rather thinly throughout Malaya trying to put down a guerrilla movement the size of the CPM. The British Army initially began to conduct its Operation in line with the traditional method of Imperial Policing, which called for large-scale infantry sweeps of suspected guerrilla camps. However, given that Malaya was about fifty thousand square miles and four-fifths was covered by dense, tropical rain forests, which were ideal hiding places, it should not come as much of a surprise that these sweeps met with little success. The CPM would receive word from local sympathizers that a large number of Malayan government soldiers were approaching the area and, as the soldiers were still moving into position, the guerrillas would have fled (Cross 1989:22).

Figure 10: Army began to conduct its Operation

Additionally, these large patrols - normally company size (about 100 men) to battalion size (700 men) - won few friends from the civilian populace near the towns where they operated. There were numerous incidences where, after an unsuccessful search of the jungle, soldiers would take out their frustrations on some of the nearby, uncooperative Chinese villagers. The worst such incident occurred in December 1948 when British soldiers massacred twenty-four Chinese villagers who apparently had little, if any, loyalty to the CPM and were merely at the

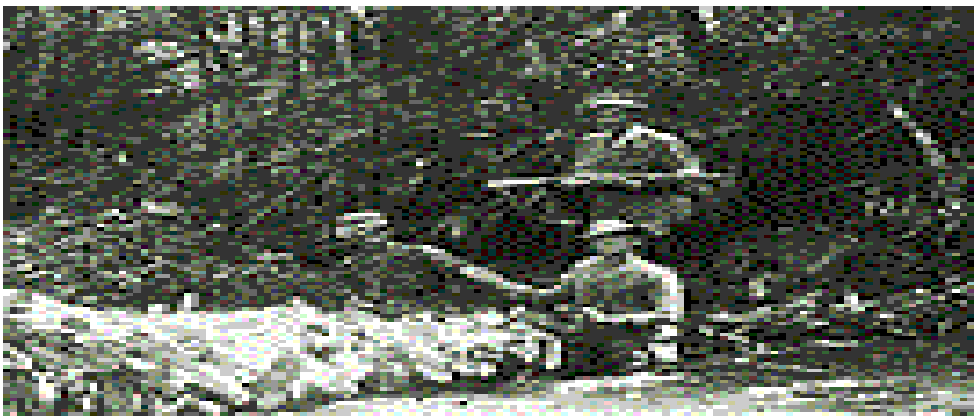
wrong place at the wrong time (Cross 1989:29). It took a couple of months before the British Army realized that the tactics they employed netted little in the way of results.

In late 1948, the British began a campaign to drive the CPM out of the jungles and into the open where conventional forces would annihilate them. They timed several large-scale sweeps hoping to catch as many CPM as possible. The first week ended with no discernible results; the British called for artillery and air strikes into the jungle to help dislocate the CPM. However, the shells and bombs struck only an empty jungle; the operation was soon called off and could be considered nothing but a dismal failure (Jones 2001:81-89) . The large-scale-company to battalion-sized patrols the British initially preferred in Malaya met with little success. The CPM was largely able to avoid these slow and cumbersome sweeps by the military, due in part to warnings provided by sympathetic villagers. The British used SAS teams and Ferret Forces on extended patrols to find the insurgents and then engage them. These missions in extreme cases could last up to three months but up to six weeks was more common place.

Tactics

With the Greek Civil War winding down in early 1949, some of the British Special Air Service (SAS) commandos were withdrawn since they were no longer needed. The SAS was looking for a reason to justify their continued existence out of the very real fear that they would be shut down by conventional Army officers, who believed the SAS were glory hounds and unnecessary. As the British in Malaya were requesting more forces, a small number of SAS men arrived with hopes of proving themselves useful in addition to the six infantry battalions that were recently deployed. Soon after, the SAS men were given permission to set up the Jungle Guerrilla Force, which was commonly known as Ferret Force.
(http://www.britains-smallwars.com/malaya/Rod.htm. Viewed on the 25 Aug 07).

Figure 11: Ferret Forces were deployed in the jungle



This new force was essentially a duplicate of the raiding forces the SAS had organized in Greece with the goal of locating and destroying insurgents. The Ferret Force was composed of four groups with about eighty men each. Nearly a third of the men were Chinese, who were important for their language ability; there were also a number of local trackers. The Ferret Forces were deployed in the jungle for up to three weeks while small teams would search for the CPM (Cross 1989:33).

The Ferret Forces soon began to prove that the small-unit patrolling tactics they employed had a great deal of value. The British, who still continued to perform company and battalion-sized sweeps in accordance with standing policy, searched for the CPM but had negligible results. Many local army commanders, however, began to conduct smaller patrols, often squad to platoon size. Instead of searching a wide area, it became common to conduct saturation patrolling where a number of small parties intensively patrolled a limited area for several days on end. While contaCPM with the CPM in the jungle were still limited due to poor intelligence on enemy locations, these new tactics did help the British take the fight to the CPM (Hanrahan 1979:23).

Figure 12: Small-unit patrolling tactics

Through 1950, the British continued to mount battalion-sized Operations into the jungle; even the most stubborn officers began to conduct small-unit patrols. The effectiveness of these patrols was increased when the British set up a school for teaching jungle warfare (Cross 1989:27). By 1951, it became commonplace for small detachments, often SAS troops, to spend up to six weeks in the jungle; they were re-supplied occasionally by aircraft and for small patrols from conventional infantry units to last there upwards of a month. Abandoning large-infantry sweeps, these patrols essentially became the only way the British deployed their forces. Since the local Malayans had little contact with these patrols, it caused them little duress while the CPM was seriously hampered.

From the latter part of 1953, when the CPM was obviously being weakened, until the end of the Emergency in 1960, the general tactics employed by the military remained very much the same. Patrols were usually small by conventional British standards, ordinarily only about fifteen men, and they were generally in the jungle for two weeks. The SAS would be used in an area suspected of having large numbers of enemy units and were, in some cases, on patrol for three months at a stretch. Helicopters, which saw their first widespread use in Malaya in 1953, made re supplying and deploying patrols in remote parts of the country possible (Jones 2001:125-137). As the CPM lost ground to the British, they also lost the ability to recruit new members and could not replace their casualties, thereby causing them to give up more ground. This cycle continued until the CPM was almost completely hunted down by 1960 (Hanrahan 1979:21).

SUMMARY

Despite the existence of numerous interpretations and reviews of the eventual British success in the Malayan Emergency, the contribution of Psychological Operations to defeat the CPM has never been exhaustively researched. New information has shed new light on the neglected years of the Emergency - 1955 to 1958 - demonstrating how it was the ‘soft’ tactics of the Psychological Operations, which decisively ended the initial ‘hard’ shooting war in December 1958. Essentially, it can be argued that the concept of "Psychological Operations" embrace not merely "words" in the form of film, radio and leaflets but also "deeds" such as the behaviour of Government representatives and the manifestation of certain official policies. It argues that for propaganda to be effective, the message transmitted by the propagandist’s words must resonate and be backed by concrete deeds.

Malayan Emergency was a Psychological Operations and it was social force, political competition or a deviation from previously shared social norms; that was warlike character and seriously disrupted settled institutional patterns as to the concept of Psychological Operations. It also has produced a multitude of studies on violent political disorder or internal war.