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THE UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

ADDRESS BY MAJOR GENERAL VICTOR H. KRULAK, USMC

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY

AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES, TO NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

MONDAY, 4 JUNE 1962



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TACTICS AND TECHNIQUES OF INSURGENCY

AND COUNTERINSURGENCY

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I

INTRODUCTION

In a well-known passage in Alice in Wonderland the White Queen is asked the meaning of a word. Her reply is prophetic, in the context of our subject today. She answers, "What does it mean? Why, it means what I mean it to mean."

The term "insurgency" was not the one about which the White Queen was speaking, but it might well have been. Each of us has a mental picture of the term, and each picture is different - either as to foreground, background, subject matter, color, or texture. This is one of our real problems. I have listened respectfully to everyone from the President on down, in Washington, speak about insurgency, world-wide. And, the fact is, we just are not always talking about the same thing.

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However, for purposes of our brief meeting today, I will take my departure from the definition which now has approval all the way up to the White House; --

SLIDE 1 ON

"INSURGENCY -- A condition resulting from a revolt or insurrection against a constituted government which falls short of civil war. In the current context, subversive insurgency is primarily communist inspired, supported, or exploited."

Ignoring the qualifying second sentence, we see that insurgency may take multiple forms.

SLIDE 1 OFF; SLIDE 2 ON

Certainly, they are not all bad. Indeed, we have roots of national pride in a certain period of insurgency which existed on this very continent.

SLIDE 2 OFF

Beyond this some modern insurgencies may be given overt or covert support from our own country; some may have political inspiration; others may have economic inspiration. But I believe that the form of insurgency which flickers across our common picture tube today is a wicked thing; - communist-fed, communist-led; communist-generated -- a formal element of the communist program.

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Khrushchev promised us this diet two years ago, and he is trying manfully to keep his promise.

II

THE PROBLEM

What Khrushchev really forecast was a sort of total war; not a total war in the context of multi-megaton exchanges; not a total war in the context of the masses of marching bayonets characteristic of the world wars of the past; but a total war whose prosecution involves all the sources of national strength of those who foster it, and of those who oppose it too.

Acknowledging this to be the fact, the real problem which would appear to confront the United States and her free-world allies is twofold: first, at least until recently, we have not recognized the true nature of the threat; and second, not having recognized it, we have not organized adequately to meet it.

Taking these two elements of the problem in succession; first a word on the nature of the threat.

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-- In every corner of the globe there are emerging societies -- peoples who have lived in a semi-primitive state for centuries; who, now, in the face of improved world communications, and in the light of progress elsewhere, are growing restless and seeking better things. Just as a moth is at its most fragile stage when it emerges from the cocoon, so are these nations or peoples extremely fragile during this period of transition. Their objectives are simple and eminently laudable. -- As General MacArthur put it; "a little more food in their stomachs, a little better clothing on their backs; a little firmer roof over their heads, and the realization of the normal nationalist urge for political freedom".

Regrettably, the mechanisms for achieving these objectives are far less crystalline than are the objectives themselves, and efforts to put these mechanisms to work often have left the underdeveloped peoples in a most vulnerable position. It is this fragility, this vulnerability, which the communists have come so clearly to perceive, and it is in this cauldron of change that the insurgency brew, world-wide is boiled; -- never by chance; always by design; and invariably with communist participation. This is the threat.

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Turning to the second point of the problem -- the fact that we are not fully organized to meet the threat. -- To the United States of America, war in the past has been a simple mechanism, like a lever. -- Power applied at one point results in corresponding reaction at another. War to us, moreover, has been mainly a matter of violence -- tanks and ships, bombs and planes -- mechanisms of destruction. All of the other elements of our national power -- useful in a degree - have sat in the economy seats while the practitioners of violence have been in the dress circle.

But the terrifying array of military strength which we possess (and need, I must emphasize, for another equally grave prospect) has no real identification with the counterinsurgency battle. Our tremendous sources of violent power are an ill-suited solution to the problem, and we are thus faced with the need not only to remarshal our sources of strength but to reorganize our systems for their application.

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To complicate our problem further is the melancholy fact that our enemies, in contrast to us, are organized both for the creation and the support of subversive insurgency. The communist system adapts ideally to the task of fomenting trouble and fanning the flames. This is their stock in trade.

III

INSURGENCY IN BEING

I think it is fair to say that we have had all too great a tendency to equate the insurgency problem world-wide, to the jungle, to the guerrilla, to the machete, to nighttime stealth and terror. These are certainly a part of it, but the fact is, as I am certain you know, the matter is far more complex than the age-old guerrilla problem. If it were just guerrillas, we would be home free.

As a general proposition, the insurgency problem in any country or region will be identified with some or all of these four characteristics:

- SLIDE 3 ON →
- a. Economic imbalance
 - b. Ignorance
 - c. Political cracks, and
 - d. Military cracks.

And the result - almost inevitable - unrest, violence and misery - with the gate wide open for subversion, which is an essential ingredient of insurgency in our current context. Now, let us look around the world for a moment and observe where these factors have created either insurgency in being or insurgency in prospect. In taking our examples, I feel it will be well to pass over the very hottest spots and to reflect upon others, simply to remind ourselves of the global breadth of the insurgency problem today. First, let us turn to Ecuador where we have an excellent example of economic imbalance.

SLIDE 3 OFF; SLIDE 4 ON

Modern cities;

SLIDE 4 OFF; SLIDE 5 ON

primitive villages;

SLIDE 5 OFF; SLIDE 6 ON

modern homes,

SLIDE 6 OFF; SLIDE 7 ON

Indian shacks. Fifty percent of the useful land is controlled by less than one percent of the people. The legal minimum wage is 26 cents per day, but many agricultural workers do not receive even this much, and are understandably discontented.

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Here is economic imbalance in extreme form, and the specter of violent insurgency faces these essentially helpless people.

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Next, a word on Bolivia, for a picture of incredible nation-wide ignorance -- and not too far from home, either. Sixty-five percent of the people in this little country are illiterate, even by the most moderate standards. A good fifty-five percent of all the people in Bolivia do not speak or even understand Spanish -- the national language. Here is the sort of ignorance which gives the creators of disorder the most fertile field in which to work.

Next, an example of the political cracks which are to be found around the world. Indeed, it was really difficult to pick an example from the many areas where political weaknesses are exploited by the communists. But just for one, let us take Guatemala. The President is an opportunist who accepted communist support in the 1958 elections. He later split with the communists only because his own military compelled him to do so.

His position is fragile in the extreme, and it has been said that a thousand well oriented activists could upset the government.

Then turning to the military cracks, for weaknesses in a country's military structure, we need only look at Venezuela. Here there are disloyal fringes in the military, plotting to create uprisings. As recently as last month, there was a mutiny by the marine garrison in one part of the country, and guerrillas are active in many areas.

Indeed, the guerrilla is almost the hallmark of insurgency, since unchecked lawlessness breeds trouble.

SLIDE 8 ON

Take Colombia, for example, where violence in the hinterland has resulted in the death of $\frac{1}{4}$ million people in 14 years; where $1\frac{1}{2}$ million peasants have fled their land to the cities because of fear; where 75% of the military is totally engaged in hunting down guerrillas. It takes little imagination to perceive how easy it is for the merchants of trouble to get a foothold in circumstances such as these; - and they are alert to them all.

SLIDE 8 OFF

It is plain that these sources of insurgency and potential insurgency should -- at least largely -- be eliminated by the countries themselves. Put another way, it is easy to say that it is up to these nations, whose societies are in the emergent state, to straighten out their own political house; to improve their own economic system; to create military and police forces which are sufficiently efficient and dependable to protect the people from terror.

However, the pure reality is that they cannot -- or sometimes will not -- do these things for themselves. They need help; they need encouragement; often they need just plain reveille; - and our stake is so large that we cannot afford to put the bugle aside.

IV

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO THE
UNITED STATES MILITARY?

Much of this help must come from the United States. While by no means the sole helpful figure, the U.S. military forms a large part of the support mechanism needed by our friends in fighting the war against insurgency.

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I use the word "war" advisedly because it is a war, in the keenest sense of the word. It has been so characterized by every one in Washington from the President on down. Needless to say, the U.S. military cannot win this war alone, but they are an essential element in the matrix of power that can win it.

So let us talk now about our organization for combat in counterinsurgency operations. Furthermore, let us do our organizational discussion on a soldierly basis -- that is to say, starting at the bottom and not the top.

As an initial point, and ignoring any specific localities, what are the sources of our strength to combat the problems about which we have just been talking? They fall into five general categories:

SLIDE 9 ON (WITHOUT FLIP)

Diplomatic strength, economic strength, the power of education, the power of propaganda, and military strength. These are the sources from which the power to help our friends stems.

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Actually, however, these sources of strength do not take on meaning until it is understood that, in action, they are represented by people. Put it this way - in any given country,

SLIDE 9 PLUS FLIP ON

the diplomatic strength is represented by the ambassador; economic power by such elements as the Agency for International Development; educational power by such activities as the Peace Corps; propaganda by the United States Information Agency -- the Voice of America; the military, of course, by the various forms of Military Assistance Advisory Groups and missions. These are people. None of them can win the battle alone. All of them, put together, may conceivably win it. This is the Country Team idea, and around it turns the bulk of our counterinsurgency effort.

SLIDE 9 AND FLIP OFF

Here I must revert to my earlier observation that we have not previously been organized for the counterinsurgency job.

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Put in its most extreme form, the ambassador might say, "This matter of advising another government on the defeat of internal unrest is largely a political problem, and, of course, that is my affair."

The economist might say, "The problem really lies in the elimination of poverty and want. This means the expenditure of dollars; and dollars are my affair."

The educator or the propagandist might say, "The real issue hinges on enlightenment; on conveying the right facts to the right people in understandable terms -- and this is certainly our affair."

The military might say, "Insurgency? Guerrillas? Terrorists? These are nothing new to us. Just let us at them. This is our business."

The fact is they are all right -- and they are all wrong, too. They are every one involved, and no one of them is involved exclusively.

This coordinate performance is a new thing for us, but it is something that, I am happy to say, has taken firm hold in many countries around the world to the extent that the term "Country Team" is coming rapidly to be a word of art describing a dynamic mechanism.

It is the machinery through which our counterinsurgency efforts are finding expression in many places today.

Moving to the national level, we find precisely the same problem of organization. We are not geared to the task in Washington as completely as we are geared to it in many other places in the world.

Although we have exactly the same problems in marshalling our strength to fight the battle against insurgency, our organization at the top is still compartmented and operations are sometimes impeded as a result.

A tremendous step forward, in this regard, was taken last year by the President when he created, at the White House level, a mechanism which he called the "Special Group (Counterinsurgency)". Here he brought together at the top-most echelon, the same general components which comprise the Country Team -- The State Department, CIA, AID, The Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Justice Department. Their function is to do counterinsurgency planning in any area designated by the President, and to pursue any and every aspect of the counterinsurgency program in the designated countries.

[REDACTED]

Their organization is simply a pantographic enlargement of the organization that obtains in the Country Team. This system is really just picking up speed, but already it is breaking down the institutional walls which can impede progress. The Group meets weekly and considers a broad agenda which has been the subject of hard work for the respective staffs. An agenda might comprise items as diverse as this - training of the Border Patrol Police in Thailand; a personal report from the Ambassador to Colombia; a survey of the paramilitary assets of western oriented countries, world-wide; a report on operations in South Vietnam; and the development of a national counterinsurgency doctrine. As you can see, the Group's work crosses all departmental lines - particularly in the last topic mentioned - doctrine.

COUNTERINSURGENCY DOCTRINE

Here is another unique problem. Just as we have had trouble reorganizing our national and field arrangements to fight the insurgency battle, so have we had to rearrange our thinking on how the governing doctrine is created.

[REDACTED]

The Special Group (Counterinsurgency) has come to agree that a national doctrine for waging the counterinsurgency war must be developed just like a Country Team plan. -- Each participant in the Country Team makes known to the Ambassador his conception of his own part in the over-all task. The Ambassador puts these conceptions together, much as a builder creates a house from stone. He may have to chip off the edges, here and there, but ultimately he completes the walls; whereupon he puts a roof over the structure.

Our national doctrine for facing up to subversive insurgency has to be developed the same way, and it is. You, I presume, have seen one building block - the Joint Counterinsurgency Concept and Doctrinal Guidance put out by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This, as a matter of fact, is the only building block yet surfaced, although the others are busy on theirs. At the present time there is a comprehensive treatment of national counterinsurgency doctrine now in draft form; it is being slowly hammered into shape. Ultimately, as a coordinate project, we will have produced a national concept of how our strength shall be marshalled for this task.

The Thai military has many odd ideas about how it should be armed and equipped. The provincial police are not prepared to assure the security of the people from the violence that accompanies subversive insurgency. Relatively little has been done to improve the economic social or educational lot of the people. Very few of them really understand the nature of the communist menace; how close it is to them, nor what it will bring if it comes.

All of these factors unite to make Thailand an almost ideal target for the growth of insurgency, and I fear that it is, indeed, growing.

We have a Country Team there, and it works as such. Here are some of the tactics and procedures that the Country Team is using to attack the insurgency problem.

SLIDE 10 OFF; SLIDE 11 ON

First, it acknowledges the fact that the counter-insurgency battle is fought mainly in the daily existence of the primitive villages and not on any conventional battlefield; that, without the enthusiasm, support, good will, and resolution of these villagers, no numbers of tanks or F-104's will do the trick.

SLIDE 11 OFF

It is clearly understood that the merchants of subversion cannot survive in an atmosphere of indigenous hostility, where food and information are hard for them to come by. Or, put the other way round, the Country Team in Thailand knows that the good will of the people is a treasure beyond all calculation and, while it cannot be bought, certainly it can be won by simple deeds which respond to the drives which General MacArthur described so aptly.

So the Country Team has embarked on a comprehensive program of helping the Thais make the lot of the man who lives in the hinterland a better one.

They have undertaken the building of all-weather roads -- providing material, advice, and technicians while the Thais provide the labor. You can imagine what this means to poor folk who have, traditionally, been closed in completely by every rainy season. In addition, they have embarked on a program of sponsoring education, of school building, of encouraging local officials to provide for much more medical assistance in the back country.

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-- A man who can pull a tooth, splint a leg or treat a case of yaws is a real hero in his home village. They have sought to get the Thais to set up a sound police system and a paramilitary guard system to protect the villagers against violence, threats and extortion. They have sought to get the Thais to orient their military a little more toward internal security and a little less toward external matters. The Country Team has set up a back country program for enlightenment, through films and sound trucks to make the native know the nature of the communist menace, to make him know that the issue is freedom on the one hand versus slavery on the other; because, unless these people want to be free, we are wasting our time and theirs in pretending.

All these and more are in progress in Thailand now and, while they constitute little more than a beginning, they make plain, at the outset, the across-the-board nature of the techniques involved in our undertaking.

Turning now, very briefly, to the matter of tactics and techniques in South Vietnam.

SLIDE 12 ON

Here the tempo of the insurgency is at a much higher level. The war had been in the process of being lost to the Communists for at least fifteen years, and its winning demands heroic measures, since large elements of the populace are actually under effective control of the Viet Cong now. Probably 12% of the people are now fully under the Viet Cong control, and another 18% are under their nominal control.

Again, the Country Team is engaged in a broad spectrum of activities aimed at emancipating the citizen from insurgent domination, improving his lot and, most of all, winning his confidence.

The strategic hamlet program is an example, and it involves participation by all elements of the Country Team. First, our military advises and supports Vietnamese military in destroying or driving off communist forces from a Viet Cong dominated area in the hinterland, and in re-establishing a firm government control.

SLIDE 12 OFF; SLIDE 13 ON

With the help and advice of other elements of the Country Team, a strategic hamlet is then created with organized physical defenses to ward off marauders and a home guard unit to take up the initial shock of an attack. In its ultimate form the hamlet has good buildings, schools, medical support, plus a warning system to call for help in the case of trouble. Over 1500 of these have been created.

The program, however, is hardly begun, since there are 15,000 hamlets in the country, and they cannot be made secure overnight. Beyond the physical problem, moreover, there is the moral one; - just how do the natives react to being uprooted from one place and obliged to move to another? -- As a general thing they experience a sense of relief, since they are no longer subject to what they themselves call Viet Cong "taxation" which, of course, is simply extortion.

SLIDE 13 OFF

In the same vein, schools are being run to train provincial administrators and to persuade them, contrary to Asian custom, that the people are important, and are not fair game for graft. Roads are being built through U.S. advice and material support, airfields

are being constructed in the hinterland, and agricultural education is being pursued to help the native improve his own subsistence situation.

On the military side, the component of the country team is working to develop a sensibility, in their Vietnamese counterparts, of the importance of military civic action -- a dramatically important means of helping the natives to raise their own living standards while improving the image of the Vietnamese military at the same time.

You will note that I have said little about the tactics and techniques of the pure counter-guerrilla campaign. -- This, of course, is a brutal, deadly, and exhausting endeavor, but I have avoided going into details on this aspect for the good reason that there is relatively little new in it.

Without doubt there are some new factors, but they serve only to give the Vietnamese incremental superiority in some basic area. -- Mobility, for instance, where we achieve great advantage in the use of the helicopter; logistics, where the helicopter, the powered small craft, and the parachute are favorable factors; intelligence,

where our air and communications capability make powerful contributions; and basic tactical strength where our air and other sources of fire power are of great usefulness.

But, in the last analysis, these aids merely make a brutally rough job a little less rough. They do not alter significantly the essential principles which have governed guerrilla fighting over the years.

Actually our field manuals are replete with good techniques for chasing down and killing guerrillas; and, with the best of training and good leadership, this problem holds no real mysteries - only bitterly painful times for those who do the job.

VI

SUMMARY

The burden of what I have been saying, up to this point, could probably be summarized in these brief thoughts. First, insurgency, communist inspired and communist directed, promises to be with us for a long time. It is plain to the communists that here is a battleground, short of cataclysmic war, where they may have a chance.



Next, we are just on the threshold of knowing that the battle can be won only by a synthesis of all of our elements of national strength, and, that both at the bottom and at the top, we must organize on a team basis if we are to make real progress.

And finally, that the battle which we are fighting is less a battle of guns and bullets than it is a battle of ideas.

The battlefield, moreover, is found not on some classic area of tactical terrain selected by one of the antagonists, but in nameless villages and hamlets, and the objective to be gained is not a hill or a city, but the hearts and minds of thousands of little people, without whose support there can be no victory.

