Edith Cowan University

Research Online

12-3-2012

Creating a Counter-Insurgency Plan: Elements Required Based upon a Comparative Analysis of Research Findings

William J. Bailey
Edith Cowan University, b.bailey@ecu.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.ecu.edu.au/asi

Part of the Computer Sciences Commons

CREATING A COUNTER-INSURGENCY PLAN: ELEMENTS REQUIRED BASED UPON A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

W. J. Bailey
SRI - Security Research Institute, Edith Cowan University
Perth, Western Australia
b.bailey@ecu.edu.au

Abstract

The development of a counter-insurgency doctrine is an evolutionary process: no two insurgencies are the same. However, certain fundamental principals remain consistent and these can be applied to meet the required circumstances. The creation of an overarching plan encompassing a combination of military, political and social actions under the strong control of a single authority is central. Therefore, understanding the basics allows for the development of a tactical strategy based upon a structured plan. Compiling the 'Plan' should be based upon the lessons learnt from the past. To this end, the methodology used is supported by a literature review and interviews from participants in a limited assessment of the two historical conflicts: Malaya and Kenya.

Based upon the findings, a condensed table is presented to aid analysis, using a French doctrinal approach as a tool for interpretation. In addition, this is supported by quotes from the respondents involved in the research process. These findings are the preliminary results of a research study looking at what was effective during the prosecution of the selected insurgencies. Outcomes indicate that the fundamental principals are pertinent today and are therefore generally applicable.

Keywords

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the partial results from two case studies: Kenya and Malaya dealing with counter-insurgency. The paper forms part of a much larger study that looks at three case studies, including the Rhodesian Bush War, in an effort to understand what were the key elements involved in prosecuting an effective counter-insurgency campaign. A preliminary finding has been how important it is to have a defined 'Plan' that encompasses all aspects required to achieve this objective. The combined approach is recommended by Galula (1964); his synopsis is that counter–insurgency is a combination of military, political and social actions under a strong control of a single authority.

What stands out in approach taken by the British Government in Malaya was the use of this composite strategy combining the civil authorities with the police, military and intelligence under a determined rule of law whilst enticing the population through welfare programmes. The carrot was independence, through gradual local self government thus undermining any promises the Communist insurgents might make. A series of structure measures were progressively introduced to support the strategic plan. An assessment of the key elements is presented based upon the research.

METHODOLOGY

A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted, transcribed and then coded for the study. The coding was primarily based upon the themes identified by the literature review. However, a further series of codes were developed to cover any new avenues of research that were brought out from the narratives of the interviews, "noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures." By employing this method a researcher is able to question, evaluate and balance the data with a view to developing a further usable data, "drop categories and to make a hierarchical order" (Basit, 2003, p. 144). Although, as pointed out by Basit, this cannot be created "in in isolation from the other categories we want to use in the analysis" (p. 144). Therefore, any new codes used were grouped back to the core themes, ensuring they corresponded to the areas identified for analysis.

Based upon the finding thus far, a Table 1.1 has been produced that has been condensed into a summary. A limited comparative analysis is presented based upon these incomplete results, as a further case study involving Rhodesia needs to be added to complete the research study. However, a comparison between the two conflicts shows up similarities and trends capable of being adopted elsewhere.

Element	Malaya	Kenya
Administration	Part of combined strategy	Held sway over decision process
Aircraft	Bombing used but halted	Bombing but not effective
Dogs	Limited use by army/ not by police	Large use of dogs by police/army
Emergency Powers	Issued in 1948/draconian	Issued in 1952/draconian
Food control	Yes, harsh/strict imposition	Limited but used effectively
French lessons	Oil spot used and pop control	Pop control, sweeps/ detentions
Hearts and Minds	Developed successfully	Limited and not generally known
Home Guard	Vital part of overall strategy	Vital part of overall strategy
Indigenous forces	Used in police/ army/home guard	Used in police/ army/home guard
Insurgents	Predominately Chinese communist	Predominately Kikuyu tribe
Intelligence	Became very effective/monetary bribes	Limited and patchy/ informers used
Language	Major problem/ few Chinese speakers	Few Kikuyu but many Swahili speakers
Legislation	Extensive and draconian	Extensive and draconian
Martial Law	Never imposed/ Emergency powers	Never Imposed/Emergency powers
Mechanisms	Over-arching supremo	No overarching supremo
Mounted units	Not used but Mules for transport were	Both the Police and KR used effectively
Notable actors	Templer/Briggs/Catling/Young	Erskine/ Kitson/ Henderson/Catling
Plan	Briggs Plan/ an overall blue print	Series of semi-interrelated plans
Oaths and sorcery	Chinese religion and Triad control	Main aspect of Mau Mau/de-oathing
Organisation	Poor at first then highly successful	Poor becoming moderately successful
Police	Poor at first then highly successful	Poor at first then highly successful
Population	Part of overall strategy	Part of overall strategy
Propaganda	Comprehensive/effective	Limited and piecemeal
Pseudo gangs	Limited/ used near the end of conflict	Highly successful/used from '53
Psychological operations	Very successful/comprehensive	Limited success/limited
Public works	Used extensively to support Plan	Limited use but accelerated later
Reasons for conflict	Communism/colonialism	Land issues/ tribalism/Colonialism
Restricted areas	Security areas/ enforced	Prohibited & special areas/ enforced
Roads	Used to infiltrate the jungle	Used to infiltrate the forests
Special Branch	Poor at first then highly successful	Poor at first then moderately successful
Special units	SAS, Jungle squads, Ghurkhas	Combat tracker units/Pseudos/GSU
Spotter planes	Used but not effective without infrared	Became very effective, but limited
Strategy	Developed through central Plan	Loosely held together/no central Plan
Structure of forces	Colonial forces with British army units	Colonial forces with British army units
Villages	Developed successfully/ Briggs Plan	Used /limited success/hostility

Table 1.1 Core elements of counter-insurgency in Malaya and Kenya

The elements presented in the Table 1.1 have been identified as key to the overall prosecution of the conflict. A cursory examination indicates how complex, diverse and intricate are the aspects that need to be considered when building a counter-insurgency strategy. For the purposes of this paper, only a limited selection can be dealt with, therefore an explanation of how strategy is formulated follows, primarily based upon a French interpretation of counter-insurgency doctrine. The other observation is how similar the elements are, as effective

tactics were transferred between the two conflicts. In addition, there were notable actors who were very influential to the conflicts.

COUNTER-INSURGENCY

The strategy, factors and roles to combat armed conflict can be summed up by the term 'counter-insurgency', which involves all the means available to accomplish success including repression, intimidation, reprisals, coercion, destruction and death (Beckett, 2001, pp. 26-43; Joes, 2004, pp. 233-246; Taber, 1970). As an evolving model, this has taken on many guises as it has developed over the years, which always need to be defined in relation to the period of study. Hence, "an effective counterinsurgency (sic) program depends on an accurate, substantive, and comprehensive profile of the adversary and the environmental context within which he operates"(O'Neill, 2005, p. 155).

"It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperilled in a hundred battles"(Tzu, 2011/ 6th Century BC, p. 14 ch III).

Therefore, the fundamental starting point in preparing a counter-insurgency strategy must be who are your foes? Building up a clear understanding of the insurgents' aims and objectives unpinned by a clear appreciation as to where they are getting their support and how is a basic requirement? Conversely, this is not as easy as it sounds, as it requires a substantial and comprehensive intelligence capability to build up the picture. Generalising at this early stage is fraught with problems and errors are costly. Unfortunately, this was the case in Malaya, the authorities ignored the early warnings and their initial actions were inept and fumbling allowing a large section of the Communist insurgents to escape capture by heading into the deep jungle (Carruthers, 1995, p. 74). Similarly in Kenya, the Kikuyu rebels who formed the Mau Mau, were not taken seriously at first and this stalled an effective counter-insurgency plan from being developed. Although a net was cast arresting what was thought to be the core protagonists in operation 'Jock Scott', this was found to have missed the active organisers of the Mau Mau (Parker, 2009, p. 142).

The process of developing a counter-insurgency strategy requires identification of the goals of the insurgents as well, as this will assist in developing ways to frustrate their aims. This important aspect appears not to have been clear at the start of the Emergencies in both Kenya and Malaya. Four major works of the time, point out this requirement in their methodologies for dealing with insurgencies by stressing the need to understand the aims of the insurgents (Galula, 1964; McCuen, 1966; Paget, 1967; Thompson, 1966). However, as Strachan (2007) points out, strategy was evolving very quickly through necessity, as the British learnt the heavy lessons from the brutal campaign in Palestine, 1946 to 1948, and then tried to apply them to Emergencies in both Kenya and Malaya. Palestine policemen were recruited directly to the colonial forces in both countries, to supplement the limited local police in 1948; as soon as they were de-mobbed (p. 9). Those men who had experience in dealing with terrorist activities were in particular demand (Jones, 1948).

BASIC UNDERLYING PRINCIPALS

Four works by Galula (1964), McCuen (1966), Paget (1967) and Thompson (1966) , all attest to the necessity of constructing a strategic plan based upon the nature of the insurgency. The initiative should lie with the recognised government and not the insurgents. Galula's (1964) approach centres upon his theory that counterinsurgency is not solely military, but a combination of military, political and social actions under the strong control of a single authority. The four basic rules that he puts forward, form the strategies for most of the operations that have followed across the globe, in one form or another:-

1. The support of the population is as necessary for the counterinsurgent as for the insurgent.

2. Support is gained through an active minority.

3. Support from the population is conditional.

4. Intensity of Efforts and vastness of means are essential (pp. 52-55).

Population is central to the whole effort. Furthermore, interpretation of these laws indicates the aim of counter-insurgency is to gain the support of the population rather than control of territory. The majority of the population will try to remain neutral in the conflict; from bitter experience they know being on the wrong side can mean death. The fear of retribution remains constant amongst the population. They will only give their support to the

government if they know they will be protected, this support is fickle and quickly lost if they see any sign of weakness or resolve. Achieving order and support of the population can only be done by progressively removing armed opponents from the district; thus securing the area. Building infrastructure and strengthening positions will assist in creating long-term relationships with the population; this must be done area by area (Artelli, 2007; Galula, 1964).

When assessing how the British government dealt with the conflicts in both Malaya and Kenya when they started, it appears as if there was little coordination or structure to their counter-insurgency efforts. It was not until Lt-General Sir Harold Briggs was appointed Director of Operations in 1950 did any structure become apparent to produce an overall plan. The Plan became known as the *Briggs Plan* (1950) for Malaya, followed by the one developed later by Erskine in Kenya (1953); loosely based upon the same principals. Briggs sought to cut off the supplies to the insurgents by a series of measures, one of which was building new villages to keep the inhabitants away from being intimidated or supporting the rebels (Hack, 2009, pp. 387-388).

CREATING A PLAN

Appointing General Briggs as an over-all supremo and Director of Operations in 1950 with executive "authority over all the security forces-army, police and air force-and the power to coordinate actions of civil departments that affected the war", was one of the most important actions taken to ensure that every one pulled together (Clutterbuck, 1966, pp. 56-57). Briggs developed his 'Plan', which became the blue print for prosecuting the counter-insurgency efforts against the Communist Terrorists (CT's). But it was General Templar that ensured the 'Plan' was carried through (Cloake, 1985 ch 9).

Galula (1964) lays out the framework for conducting a counter-insurgency operation and lists six principles. The first of these is to seize the initiative and become offensive (p. 82) The second is the "full utilization of the counterinsurgent's assets" (1964, p. 57), by which he includes all resources available to the nation: economic, administrative, judicial, military and police, control of the information and the political element too. Third, is economy of force, which in colonial terms was taken to mean both being thrifty, as fighting in the colonies was expensive and also not to wipe out the local population either; as this could prove counter-productive (1964, p. 56). The fourth, is the concept of irreversibility, which means defending the ground gained and not to cede this back to the insurgents. It is this principle that underpins the whole strategy; as once ground is gained, this goes a long way to convincing the population that the government forces are winning. Once this conviction is accepted then superior intelligence comes forth from the local population, as they recognise it is in their best interests not to allow the insurgents to return; the fear of retribution if they did becomes too great. The fifth concept sequentially follows, "to command is to control" (1964, p. 85).

The first principle deals with selecting the areas to concentrate on before moving to other areas, focusing "enough forces to destroy or to expel the main body of armed insurgents" first (Galula, p. 55). In both Malaya and Kenya the creation of a Home Guard supported by a Special Constabulary and augmented by a large number of trained police men from Palestine further allowed this strategy to come about (Miller, 1972, p. 41).

Once the forces available had been achieved it was possible to secure the areas cleared and ensured the rebels did not return. Furthermore, cutting the support for the insurgents meant restricting the movement of the population, which was done by placing them progressively into fortified villages. Further draconian measures required issuing everyone with identification cards, applying strict curfews, extending the powers of arrest, search and detention with the death penalty for possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives. The rule of law provided for a fair trial, which is the principal difference from martial law (Ghows, 2006, pp. 38-39).

The Briggs plan in Malaya sought to ensure that the population not only took an active part in their own defence, thus adhering to the second law proposed by Galula, but also devised a vast strategy to keep the insurgents away from their sources of sustenance; both physical and ideological. The construction of 'New Villages', which housed over half a million Chinese keeping them safe and secure from intimidation as well as proving them with welfare services; was fundamental to this approach (Ucko, 2010, p. 16). Improved administration, economic management and education were further tools to aid this process (Rid, 2010, p. 750). Kenya adopted the protected 'Villages' concept as part of the Emergency Regulations, which were brought in between January and April 1953.

These included provisions for communal punishment, curfews, the control of the individual and mass movements of people, the confiscation of property and land, the imposition of special taxes, the issuance of

special documentation and passes, the censorship and banning of publications, the disbanding of all African political organisations, the control and disposition of labor (sic), the suspension of due process, and detention without trial. (Elkins, 2005, p. 55)

"Detention without trial was a controversial, but widely practised by the Government" with between 76,000 and 80,000 detained; as it was reminiscent of concentration camps used by the British in the Boer War (Parker, 2009, p. 174). In addition to detention, was cutting the rebel forces off from their support base and preventing them from terrorising others; this was called 'villagisation' or protected villages. The extended settlements were all brought together in to a fortified protected village. "By October 1955 more than a million people had been concentrated into 854 villages" (Orrù, 1989, p. 366). KENA-P-2 explains how this was done,

> --This was villagisation. The idea was to protect the villagers. When the villagers were in the reserve, scattered all over the place, one hut there, another hut there, they were very vulnerable to attack by Mau Mau. Now the Mau Mau had to capture the minds of their own people. The idea was to herd them together into villages where they would be protected and safe at night. By day they could go back to their plots and work their plots, but by night they were protected, they were in a palisade, they had look out posts, protected by Home Guard. That was the idea. (KENA-P-2; 09/05/2010)

The programme of villagisation was not without its problems; especially amongst a tribe that was already disgruntled by issues of land in the first place. It could easily have turned those that were supportive of the Government against them,

> --It wasn't popular certainly but that raises another story. Having been brought into villages they then had reasonable central medical attention, primary schools and things for the kids, and better administration and that led in turn to land consolidation program. It might have come from Malaya, I don't know. (KENA-P-7; 05/02/2011)

Herding together disparate members of the tribe was certainly not popular, especially as their land was taken and property looted by the Kikuyu Home Guard; who were used to contain them in 850 fortified villages (Brendon, 2007, p. 564). Nonetheless as has been argued by Bennett (2007), it may well have been unpopular but in the end it was central to effectiveness of the combined strategy and increased the amount of intelligence gained (pp. 147-148). Furthermore, it has been propounded by Berman (1989) that it became a valuable tool of the administration in the reconstruction of Kikuyu society around a stable consolidation of land, recognising individual land rights (pp. 366-367).

The strategy behind the Villagisation process was to cut the supplies off from the insurgents in the forests. Restricting access to food was central to this objective. General Erskine in Kenya cleared the areas around the forests of crops, bananas and sugar cane, extending roads for greater access as well as building a fosse around the fringes. Harsh collective punishments were inflicted on those that contravened the regulations. There was also detention for any suspects considered to be Mau Mau. The rule of law required that they be prosecuted, but until they could bring the large numbers to court and face trail they were detained pending their appearance in court (Brendon, 2007, p. 564).

SUMMARY

The general interpretation gleaned from these findings appears to be how much more piecemeal the approach to counter-insurgency was in Kenya when compared to Malaya, even though the insurgents were geographically contained in a relatively determined area and not receiving external support. It still took the authorities ten years to bring insurgency under control. What was at fault was a lack of a defined Plan until General Erskine took control; although even then he was not given carte blanche, which hampered the mopping up operations.

The overall plan must be the summary of the strategy to accomplish stability of three key factors: control, morale and supply. Each of these factors contributes to a sense of well being which is reflected in support for the over objective of the government; a return to a stable, viable and confident country, no longer living in fear or repression. If it is to succeed, that means it must demonstrate it can win (Thompson, 1966, p. 69).

The plan incorporated much of what was a basic structure for dealing with insurrections used by the French. What was different was bringing over all control under the central coordinated counter-insurgency structure

with a military man at the head as part of the strategy to manage the conflict. Only when in 1952 General Templer, was appointed as High Commissioner and Director of Operations in Malaya with full authority over the civilian and military resources did the British recognise the advantages this structure would have to the prosecution of the conflict (Hack, 2009, p. 387).

CONCLUSION

Although the evolution of warfare, including counter-insurgency, has required the use of new technologies to compete and defeat the enemy, the fundamental principals remain consistent today (Artelli & Deckro, 2008, p. 228). Fuller (1916) made similar observations almost a century ago " the correct application of principals to circumstances is the outcome of sound military knowledge built up by study and practice" (p. 1). Nothing has changed; therefore the application of the principals to the situation is where the difficulty lies. The adage "no need to reinvent the wheel" applies not only to modern warfare and insurgency but also to counter-terrorism. The French military theorists laid out a model, which should form the basis of each plan. Whilst this process has been adopted by many more military theorists, particularly in the US, by Aspin (1993) and Patraeus (2006), it should be possible to incorporate the fundamentals into each strategy.

The population are the key fundamental to all aspects of strategy and central to any counter-insurgency plan. Until their support can be assured, then no amount of military intervention will prevail, as their loyalty will always return to where they perceive their best long term interests to lie. Protecting them from intimidation is as important as not allowing the insurgents to feed off their support and succour. The 'Villagisation' strategy demonstrated the importance of this aspect.

REFERENCES

Artelli, M. J. (2007). *Modeling and analysis of resolve and morale for the `Long War'.* Ph.D Doctorial, Air Force Institute of technology Wright-Patterson, Dayton, OH. (ADA480793)

Artelli, M. J., & Deckro, R. F. (2008). Fourth generation operations: principles for the 'Long War'. *Small Wars & Insurgencies, 19*(2), 221-237. doi: 10.1080/09592310802061372

Aspin, L. (1993). The bottom-up review:Forces for a new era. Washington, DC: US Department of Defence.

Basit, T. (2003). Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research, 45*(2), 143-154. doi: 10.1080/0013188032000133548

Beckett, I. F. (2001). *Modern insurgencies and counter-insurgencies: Guerrillas and their opponents since 1750.* Oxon, UK: Routledge.

Bennett, H. (2007). The Mau Mau Emergency as part of the British Army's post-war counter-insurgency experience. *Defense & Security Analysis, 23*(2), 143-163. doi: 10.1080/14751790701424705

Brendon, P. (2007). *The decline and fall of the British Empire:1781-1997.* London, UK: Jonathan Cape.

Carruthers, S. (1995). *Winning hearts and minds: British governments, the media, and colonial counter-insurgency 1944-1960.* London, UK: Leicester University Press.

Cloake, J. (1985). *Templer: Tiger of Malaya.* London, UK: Harap.

Clutterbuck, R. L. (1966). *The long, long war: The Emergency in Malaya 1948-1960.* London, UK: Cassell.

Elkins, C. (2005). *Imperial reckoning: The untold story of Britain's gulag in Kenya.* New York,NY: Henry Holt and Co.

Fuller, J. F. C. (1916). The principles of war, with Reference to the Campaigns of 1914–1915. *Royal United Services Institution. Journal, 61*(441), 1-40. doi: 10.1080/03071841609419041

Galula, D. (1964). *Counterinsurgency warfare: Theory and practice* (3 ed.). Westport, CT,: Praeger Security International.

Ghows, M. A. H. (Ed.). (2006). *The Malayan Emergency revisted 1948-1960* (2nd ed.). Kuala Lumpur: AMR Holding SDN BHD.

Hack, K. (2009). The Malayan Emergency as c ounter-insurgency paradigm. *Journal of Strategic Studies, 32*(3), 383-414. doi: 10.1080/01402390902928180

Joes, A. J. (2004). *Resisting rebellion: the history and politics of counterinsurgency*: University Press of Kentucky.

Jones, C. (1948). *The situation in Malaya*. London: Public Record Office.

Marine Corps, U. S. (2006). *Field Manual 3-24: Counterinsurgency*. Washington: U.S. Department of Army.

McCuen, J. J. (1966). *The art of counter-revolutionary war: The strategy of counter-insurgency*. Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books.

Miller, H. (1972). *Jungle war in Malaya: The campaign against Communisim 1948-60*. London, UK: Arthur Barker Limitied.

O'Neill, B. E. (2005). *Insurgency & terrorism: From revolution to apocalypse* (2 ed.). Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc.

Orrù, M. (1989). Weber on Anomie. *Sociological Forum, 4*(2), 263-270.

Paget, J. (1967). *Counter-insurgency campaigning*. London: Faber and Faber.

Parker, I. (2009). *The last colonial regiment: The history of the the Kenya Regiment (T.F.)*. Moray, UK: Libario Publishing.

Rid, T. (2010). The Nineteenth Century origins of counterinsurgency doctrine. *Journal of Strategic Studies, 33*(5), 727-758. doi: 10.1080/01402390.2010.498259

Strachan, H. (2007). British counter-insurgency from Malaya to Iraq. *The RUSI Journal, 152*(6), 8-11. doi: 10.1080/03071840701863018

Taber, R. (1970). *The war of the flea: A study of guerrilla warfare theory and practice*. London: `Paladin.

Thompson, R. (1966). *Defeating Communist insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam* (2 ed.). London,UK: Chatto & Windus Ltd.

Tzu, S. (2011/ 6th Century BC). The art of war T. Swinton (Ed.) *Special Edition*   Retrieved from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Sun_Tzu

Ucko, D. (2010). The Malayan Emergency: The legacy and relevance of a counter-insurgency success story. *Defence Studies, 10*(01-02), 13-39. doi: 10.1080/14702430903377944