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**RESEARCH
ANALYSIS
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**Intelligence Requirements
in Incipient Insurgency (U)**

DDC
14 1967

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UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE DEPARTMENT
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Intelligence Requirements in Incipient Insurgency (U)

by
Robert H. Williams

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RESEARCH ANALYSIS CORPORATION

MCLEAN, VIRGINIA

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FOREWORD

This is one of several papers presented in the Special Warfare and Incipient Insurgency Working Groups at the 18th symposium of the Military Operations Research Society (MORS) held at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, Ft Bragg, N. C., from 19 to 21 October 1966. The Unconventional Warfare Department has selected three for publication. As a rule, papers presented in working groups are not published in the MORS Proceedings. It is believed that the current interest of the defense community in low-intensity warfare warrants timely circulation.

George A. Martinez
Head, Unconventional Warfare Department

CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Abbreviations	2
Introduction	3
Failure	3
Success	4
Fundamental Requirement	6
Training Gap	6
US Objective	7

Intelligence Requirements in Incipient Insurgency

ABBREVIATIONS

ARVN	Army, Republic of Vietnam
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Viet Cong

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Introduction

(U) In the recent history of Southeast Asia there are examples of a successful counterinsurgency intelligence effort, a failure, and an on-going effort that may end either way. It is to be hoped that those responsible for the on-going effort in a context of incipient insurgency (Thailand) have been able to apply the lessons hopefully learned from the success (Malaya) and the failure (Vietnam). Any discussion of the requirements of intelligence in Phase I, or incipient insurgency, is apt to spill over into Phase II—marked by guerrilla warfare—if only to illustrate what happens if the intelligence requirements of Phase I are not met. In this paper, references to Vietnam (including the one just made) concern only the period before the commitment of US combat troops.

(U) The US approach to counterinsurgency has been distorted. From the beginning—in 1961 when the US Government began to take an enormous interest in counterinsurgency—an extraordinary emphasis has been placed on exploiting our overwhelming technological advantage in operations against armed guerrillas. The problem in Vietnam has proved to be one of finding the guerrilla to bring our superiority to bear. The inference is clear: Timely and usable intelligence on Viet Cong (VC) unit locations and movements, on which to base offensive operations, was not produced.

Failure

(C) The commitment of US combat troops reflected, by inference, a US estimate that the armed forces of Vietnam—advised, trained, logistically supported, and operationally assisted by the US—were losing the war and would shortly suffer defeat unless the US intervened directly. It is held that the principal cause of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) failure, both in pacification and combat operations, was a lack of intelligence information.

(C) During 1962, 1963, and 1964 most ARVN operations were routine area sweeps based on after-the-fact intelligence, if any. Executed in battalion or multibattalion strength, such operations seldom resulted in serious contact because the VC had foreknowledge of ARVN movements and could avoid contact. It was a little like a man with a shotgun, but without a bird dog, hopefully tramping about a 40-acre field where a covey of quail had been reported the day before. The VC controlled the population but did not try to occupy or contest ground. Their population control was so effective that villagers would seldom inform on the location or identity of VC even in the so-called pacified areas colored blue on the map.

(U) Realizing that ARVN could not generate enough intelligence on which to base operations, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) tried to make up for it with efforts to reduce reaction time by the increased use of helicopters. The concept was that when a VC unit attacked, thereby disclosing

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its presence, which otherwise would not have been known, strong reaction forces could be flown in to fix and destroy the VC before they could get away. Although the movement of the VC was restricted to how fast their legs could carry them, they usually got away because their operations were based on good intelligence. Their plan of attack had been made with the knowledge of where the reinforcements would come from and how long it would take them to arrive.

(C) The VC laid many successful ambushes from 1962 to 1965. Every 6 months or so MACV would become distressed at the number of US advisors who were being killed in ambushes. A conference of knowledgeable officers would be called to explore the ambush problem. Operations research efforts would be directed at finding effective counterambush devices of a protective or reactive nature. The ambush problem has not changed much since the time of Hannibal. A column can avoid being ambushed in any terrain if it observes march security and proceeds at $\frac{1}{2}$ mph, but the portion of any column that enters unsuspectingly into the killing zone of an ambush "has had it." What is wanted to avoid this, and yet maintain a good rate of march, is very simple—merely a friendly peasant to inform on the enemy's presence.

(C) The VC also executed many daring raids on ARVN units and outposts including attacks on several Special Forces fortified camps. Often nothing was known of the presence of a strong VC force until an intense mortar barrage preceded an attack from assault positions just outside the friendly wire. In this type of warfare, intelligence of guerrilla movements and locations must come from the people. Through achieving a limited but effective control of the population as a whole the VC were able to preempt the flow of intelligence. It is very difficult to reverse this flow of information until the people can be separated from the insurgents and made to feel secure. The failure of successive pacification programs since 1962 did not permit this.

Success

(U) The Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) is an example of a successful counterinsurgency in which counter guerrilla operations by the British Army were disappointing until after this requirement was met. Between 1950 and 1952 all the Chinese squatters on the fringe of the jungle, which covers 80 percent of the Malayan Peninsula, were forcibly resettled into attractive new villages away from the jungle fringe. The villages were sited and constructed with a view to defense and control of ingress and egress. Ambushes and control points were set up on the paths between the villages and the jungle. This accomplished two things: (a) it prevented the insurgents' supporters from slipping into the jungle with food for them, and (b) it denied the insurgents contact with the rest of the people who, when they felt secure from acts of terror, could be persuaded to cooperate with the government. Thus an environment was created conducive to the development of an intelligence capability.

(S) The latter, however, does not develop of itself. Riley Sunderland, in his study of the Malayan Emergency for the Department of Defense, states that "the intelligence reports of 1948–1951 are an illustration of bad intelligence in guerrilla war."* They consisted largely of after-the-fact records of insurgent

*Riley Sunderland, "Anti-Guerrilla Intelligence in Malaya 1948–60," The RAND Corporation, Sep 64. SECRET

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attacks and security force contacts and casualties so typical of MACV/ARVN intelligence. Almost nothing was known of the guerrillas' organization or of their leaders although the guerrilla force at that time was well organized with numbered units that had area responsibilities. Sunderland quotes the commander of a Ghurkha battalion who wrote after an operation:

Contrary to what one might expect, there was no information about anything in the area on the day the operation was due to start, apart from the generally-accepted fact that the haystack did contain a needle or two; then, to carry the simile a little further, the only thing to do was to disturb the hay and hope at least to get our fingers pricked.

(U) This is the sort of situation that has led some people to assert solemnly that it takes 10 or 20 or 40 soldiers to one guerrilla for counter-guerrilla operations to be successful. It is the situation that generally prevailed in Vietnam except for reaction operations.

(S) The British have a deep conviction that this kind of intelligence is beyond the competence of an infantry battalion's intelligence section. This is police business. When Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer became High Commissioner for Malaya in 1952, he immediately tackled the intelligence problem. The Director of Intelligence had line responsibilities, i.e., the US system where G2 is on the same line as G3. He found that Malaya had the usual police force that Britain organized in support of the civil authority in her colonial territories, with highly trained British officers and Malayan policemen. There were very few Chinese policemen—most of them were Malays. He found that (a) there was no clear division of responsibility between the police and military as to who would collect and who would process different types of intelligence, (b) the military were getting involved in intelligence matters beyond their competence and the police were not producing intelligence in a form the military could use, and (c) the Police Special Branch capability was insufficient for the counter guerrilla intelligence task.

(S) Field Marshal Templer took the following steps:*

(1) He relieved the Director of Intelligence of all line functions and made him directly responsible to the Director of Operations (himself; Templer was both High Commissioner and Director of Operations). The Director of Intelligence then had no executive authority, but he had the whole weight of the enormous powers vested in Templer behind him and could coordinate all intelligence agencies—military and police—in Malaya.

(2) The Police Special Branch was given the mission of producing intelligence of the guerrillas exclusively. Only the police could have secret agents and organize informant nets. Combat intelligence belonged to the troops, but captured documents and prisoners were turned over to the police.

(3) The need to ensure that intelligence was passed on to military units in a useful form was met by attaching 30 military intelligence officers to Special Branch State and District Headquarters. Their task was to screen out operational intelligence of immediate importance to units in the field, process it in military form, and get it to them.

(4) Chinese were recruited into the police force, and a large number of British police specialists (many with experience in Israel) were brought to Malaya to staff Special Branch adequately.

*Sunderland, ibid.

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(S) Objective. The intelligence effort was directed toward compiling an order of battle of the Malayan Communist Party to include every individual by name as well as unit and area. This required penetration. The handling of surrendered and captured enemy personnel was developed into such a fine art that many became double agents and penetration at control levels was achieved. The 10-year report of the Director of Operations in 1957 stated that the majority of contacts between soldiers and guerrillas that resulted in a guerrilla's death or capture were directly attributable to good intelligence.*

Fundamental Requirement

(U) This type of intelligence collection requires a static organization that remains in place with little turnover of personnel over long periods. It requires broad and close contact with the people and familiarity with the environment. These are police but seldom military characteristics. An infantry battalion moves about too much. When it is relieved by another battalion almost all this type of intelligence capability is lost. If it is a job for police in Phase II insurgency it is a fortiori a police job in Phase I incipient insurgency. Here in our own country can you picture the US Army being given such a mission?

(U) We are not accustomed to think of police in terms of a national, quasi-military organization commanded by a major general with its headquarters in the capital and with regional headquarters at province and district levels. Thailand has such a police force. The Thai police have an investigative branch that would equate with the British Special Branch. The Thai Border Patrol Police, a component of the National Police, are permanently stationed in some 100 platoon posts on the boundaries of Thailand. The Provincial Police component covers the interior. The National Police rather than the Army is surely the agency to be responsible for countersubversive intelligence.

Training Gap

(U) To the author's knowledge the US Army's Foreign Intelligence Assistance Program does not include this Police Special Branch type training. It is intended to and does meet the needs of foreign armies in combat intelligence training for conventional operations. Until the outbreak of guerrilla warfare and the commitment of military units to counter guerrilla operations there appears to be no internal defense role for military intelligence in forward defense or dual threat countries.

(U) It is the province of the Office of Public Safety of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to advise and train police. No Latin American country faces a credible threat of external aggression except in the context of global war. More and more the defense ministries of Latin America are accepting the US proposition that internal defense is the primary mission of their armed forces. In many of these countries the army is widely deployed in small units having fixed and permanent area responsibilities. Such an army is really a constabulary with the police characteristic of long and fixed residence.

(U) Such an army can be assigned (in some cases it must be assigned since it is the only security force in the country) the internal defense intelligence

*Sunderland, ibid.

responsibility. But the US Army, not USAID, advises such a force, and hence it is neither advised nor trained in the techniques of internal defense intelligence appropriate to the incipient insurgency phase.

US Objective

(U) It may be that insurgency is thought of generally with Vietnam too much in mind—it is unconsciously accepted that an insurgency will proceed through Phases I, II, and III before the counterinsurgency forces win. Our real objective in Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia is to help developing countries achieve a security posture that can identify a subversive organization in its formative, weak stage, i.e., when it is incipient; stunt its growth; and eliminate it or contain it indefinitely to manageable proportions so that it never rises to Phase II. This is a police function, but it is of vital interest to the US Army and to the armies of developing nations that it advises to ensure that the appropriate internal security force—police, constabulary, or military organization—in each friendly developing country is trained and equipped to perform it. Why? Because this may enable the internal security forces to prevent an incipient insurgent movement from reaching Phase II, or if it does and army units must be committed, they will have intelligence support that they cannot provide initially from their own resources.

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(U) The paper deals with the problem of intelligence in the context of incipient insurgency in the underdeveloped country. The intelligence failure in Vietnam is contrasted with the successful intelligence effort during the Malayan Emergency and the reasons for both brought out. The main point is that this type of intelligence is a police function. The military seldom have the static organization required to maintain close contact with the population throughout the country.		

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