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**COMBATING INSURGENCY: CAN LESSONS FROM THE HUK REBELLION APPLY
TO IRAQ?**

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Executive Summary

Title: Combating Insurgency: Can Lessons From The Huk Rebellion Apply To Iraq?

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Thesis: Operation Iraqi Freedom can be won using a strategy which utilizes all instruments of American and Iraqi national power to eliminate the root causes which drive the populace to support the insurgents, consequently strangling the insurgency from its critical base of support, and enabling the Iraqi government to gain the support of the populace.

Discussion: The Hukbalahap (Huk) Insurrection, faced by the Philippine government, had distinctly different origins and motivations from the insurgency the United States is currently fighting in Iraq. Despite notable differences in these conflicts, similarities exist which may provide useful lessons for combating the challenges facing U.S. and host nation forces in Iraq. In the Huk rebellion, insurrection forces were defeated when savvy leadership reformed military efforts, and combined social, political, and economic actions with improved military action, to alienate insurgents from their popular support. The U.S. and Iraq must implement a similar strategy in order to achieve victory. The Iraqi insurgency will be defeated when ingenious leaders apply strategies, and supporting operations, that focus on winning the popular support of the people and undermining support for the insurgency, instead of ignoring the populace and focusing solely on militarily eradicating armed combatants.

Conclusion: The Iraqi insurgency will ultimately be defeated when Iraqi leaders, assisted by U.S. support incorporate lessons from the Huk rebellion into current strategy. Operation Iraqi Freedom can be won by combining military and political actions to combat the root problems leading to the uprising, which will alienate insurgents from their base of support, and strangle the insurgency.

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The Hukbalahap (Huk) Insurrection, faced by the Philippine government, had distinctly different origins and motivations from the insurgency the United States is currently fighting in Iraq. Despite notable differences in these conflicts, similarities exist which may provide useful lessons for combating the challenges facing U.S. and host nation forces in Iraq. The success of the Philippine government in defeating the Huks merits an analysis to determine if methods used successfully in quelling that rebellion can offer possible approaches to the conflict in Iraq. This paper will examine the Huk insurgency to determine its origins and to determine how it was ultimately defeated. The Huk rebellion will then be compared to the Iraqi insurgency to determine if lessons from the Huk rebellion can be applied to strategies in Iraq.

In the Huk rebellion, insurrection forces were defeated when savvy leadership reformed military efforts, and combined social, political, and economic actions with improved military action, to alienate insurgents from their popular support.¹ The U.S. and Iraq must implement a similar strategy in order to achieve victory. Operation Iraqi Freedom can be won using a strategy which utilizes all instruments of American and Iraqi national power to eliminate the root causes which drive the populace to support the insurgents, consequently strangling the insurgency from its critical base of support, and enabling the Iraqi government to gain the support of the populace.

In the Huk rebellion, following the defeat of the Japanese, the government of the newly established Republic of the Philippines focused on attacking guerrilla strongholds using conventional military operations. Stand-alone military operations were conducted without integrating other instruments of national power to aid in governmental efforts against the insurgency. On typical missions, large military units consisting of poorly trained soldiers were used to execute daylight missions, and then consolidated overnight at fixed bases to await the

next assignment.² This strategy of implementing only the military instrument of national power, in a stand-alone war against the insurgency, was largely ineffective. Highly mobile guerrilla forces avoided large-scale engagements and moved unfettered throughout the area of operations. As the military focused its efforts on attacking the actual armed insurgents, who represented only a small fraction of the people in their movement, the government unwittingly empowered the very cause they were trying to defeat. Government actions, which should have coordinated all elements of national power, instead used only military force and caused more harm than good. Most military actions only killed or captured a few insurgents, and created a broadening base of support for the rebel movement among frustrated citizens. Empowered and emboldened by the inept actions of the Philippine government, the Huk insurgency continued to grow and became a real threat to the legitimate government of the Philippines. By the early 1950's, the Philippine government faced a growing crisis and guerrilla forces had reason to believe that victory was forthcoming.³

American policy in Iraq, after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, mirrored the initial actions of the Philippine government in efforts against the Huks. First, ignoring the growing insurgency and believing the war to be won, U.S. forces consolidated on large military bases. As the insurgency grew and could no longer be ignored, the U.S. failed to integrate all instruments of national power in its efforts to stabilize the country. American efforts, similar to initial Filipino strategies, clumsily used the military in conventional actions to target armed combatants, while doing little to address the problems faced by the bulk of the Iraqi population. As the U.S. focused on establishing a fledgling Iraqi government, civilians were generally neglected as long as they were not observed directly contributing to hostile acts against friendly forces. Actions against those actually identified as armed insurgents did little to counter the overall insurgency,

and further isolated the population. This isolation and frustration among the citizens of Iraq created a situation ripe for exploitation by anti-government forces. As described by one insurgent during an interview with a journalist: "recruitment was easy because people were upset by the inappropriate way American soldiers searched people's homes" and due to a myriad of other perceived grievances.⁴ Capitalizing on the sentiments of the population and a rampant lack of security, Iraqi insurgents rapidly garnered support from the populace using both favor and coercion. Succeeding in their efforts, the insurgents quickly became a formidable foe with the capability and resources to threaten the long term stability of Iraq. Despite the failures of the American and Iraqi governments in Iraq, similar to those initially experienced by the Filipino government combating Huk forces, the Iraqi insurgency can be defeated. The Iraqi insurgency will be won when ingenious leaders apply strategies, and supporting operations, that focus on winning the popular support of the people and undermining support for the insurgency, instead of ignoring the populace and focusing solely on militarily eradicating armed combatants.

This strategy was proven successful during the Huk rebellion, whose origin can be traced to the 1930's. In 1930, after previously attending communist conferences in both Moscow and Berlin, a group of Filipinos founded the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).⁵ The party was founded as a legal organization but frequently ran afoul of the law with violations ranging from disorderly conduct, to conducting meetings without first obtaining appropriate permits.⁶ A 1932 Philippine Supreme Court decision ruled the party illegal, and members were charged with "plotting the overthrow of the government and instigating large-scale, bloody riots in Manila."⁷ Instead of halting the communist movement, the ruling served to drive the CPP underground and limit governmental visibility and control of the organization. Under ground the organization began to vigorously pursue its stated goals:

(1) Fight and overthrow American imperialism in the Philippines; (2) Direct the movement for immediate and complete independence; (3) Establish communism under the authority and direction of the masses; (4) Fight against the exploitation of the masses and to defend their rights and liberties; (5) Fight and overthrow capitalism; and (6) Use the dictatorship of labor to expedite the move for early independence of the nation and for redemption of the masses and for the practice and adoption of Communism.⁸

The masses, long exploited by the ruling wealthy, responded to the communist message and increasingly began to support the movement. Slogans such as "land for the landless; work for the jobless; equality among men" played to the sympathies of rural populations, who had worked for generations to earn a living from unfair landlords. Wealthy landowners had continually increased their fortunes by exploiting the labor of lower class farm tenants while providing only minimal compensation to the poor workers. Increasingly, tenant farmers saw little hope of improving their circumstances.⁹ As the communists identified and targeted vulnerabilities in Filipino society, their message provided hope for the masses. Seizing what many citizens perceived as an opportunity to improve their lives, the masses readily turned their backs on the Philippine government and supported the insurgency. This large scale change in sentiment and the subsequent shift in loyalty provided the impetus for the CPP to flourish and become a credible force.

Another important aspect of the Huk rebellion was the physical environment where it developed and prospered. The environment consisted primarily of the large island of Luzon in the Philippines with the majority of the insurgents operating throughout central Luzon. Remote, mountainous, and heavily forested, the terrain was extremely difficult for conventional forces to access, and consequently, was well suited for guerrilla operations. At home in rural areas, close to many of the land tenants who supported them, the insurgents operated with relative impunity from government actions.¹⁰ The poorly orchestrated military efforts conducted by the government served only to strengthen the guerrilla cause. In their sanctuary, and with the

implicit or in some cases open support of the populace, insurgent forces continued to grow unabated until the Japanese invasion in December, 1941.

The Japanese invasion brought about significant changes to the CPP organization. Initially the CPP offered to cooperate with the Philippine government in efforts against the impending Japanese invasion. Despite the serious external threat to national security, the Philippine government did not trust the insurgents and refused to enter into an alliance with a movement that threatened the government's existence. Following the Japanese invasion, the defeat of Filipino forces, and the retreat of the American military from the Philippines, "the CPP merged with Luzon's remaining socialist and peasant organizations to form the Hukbalahap, an acronym for the Hukbo ng Banyan Laban sa Hapon or the Anti-Japanese Army."¹¹ As a fighting force against the Japanese occupiers, Huk forces gained only limited success when measured in terms of actual casualties or damage inflicted on the enemy. However, remarkable victories were achieved in their struggle to gain both prestige among the populace and acceptance by the Filipino people. Viewed by the masses, who were often subjected to abuse by Japanese occupiers, Huk forces came to be seen as patriots and possible liberators. Although Filipino and American resistance forces also carried out guerrilla operations against the Japanese, Huk forces took credit for many of the Filipino and American actions and gained respect from the populace for standing up to an oppressive Japanese army. With support from the masses, Huk forces continued to grow throughout the war and totaled approximately 100,000 members and supporters by the fall of 1944.¹²

As Luzon was liberated in 1945, Allied military forces under American command decided not to embrace the Huk guerrillas as fellow liberators of the Philippines. Despite Huk efforts against the Japanese and a large following among the people, "Americans and Filipino

feared any movement tainted with communism ignored the Hukbalahap's accomplishments and believed allegations about its criminal acts, murders, and anti-Americanism."¹³ Once again left out of a legal means to participate and disappointed in their hopes that they would be included in the new government, the communists decided to continue the fight against the Philippine government. In the ensuing confusion following the liberation of the Philippines, and specifically on the island of Luzon, there was ample opportunity for Huk forces to revamp and increase the size of their forces. Over time they developed a post-war strategy, based on a two-phased plan, to increase their power and influence over the population. The first phase of the plan would encompass a campaign of terror against citizens and government personnel who opposed the Huk movement. This part of the plan was designed to demonstrate the government's inability to provide security for its citizens who resisted Huk forces. The second phase of the plan called for an aggressive indoctrination of the masses to encourage dissatisfaction with the U.S. supported Filipino government and to persuade current supporters of the government to shift their support to the Huk movement.¹⁴

For the first phase of the Huk campaign, the guerrillas focused on coercing support from portions of the population who were believed to be sympathetic to the government, or merely failed to provide support to the insurgency. By focusing terror on the government and its supporters, Huk forces demonstrated their ability to operate throughout society. Diligent in efforts to avoid attacking their own supporters, Huk forces targeted opponents and terrorized pro-government citizens under the very noses of security forces who were responsible for providing protection. The terror campaign proved highly effective in demonstrating the dangers of cooperating with government forces as supporters were often kidnapped and murdered. As the

danger of supporting the government grew, fewer citizens proved willing to provide information to aid in operations against Huk forces, allowing Huk forces to become even more successful.¹⁵

The second part of the overall Huk strategy involved the indoctrination of the masses in attempts to gain support for the Huk cause. The strategy involved spreading the word that Huk forces were fighting for the common man. To this end, "Huk propagandists were quick to exploit even the most minor case of government abuse or corruption, and there was no difficulty in identifying these."¹⁶ Each action clumsily undertaken by Filipino military forces provided more opportunities for Huk forces to spread their message. Successful in winning the war of information and in their strategy to terrorize those who opposed their movement, Huk forces convinced the masses that their movement was the only viable alternative to a life with little opportunity. Effective in their strategy, Huk forces rapidly swelled in size and became prominent in influence among the people of central Luzon.¹⁷

As Huk forces became a real threat to the legitimate government, an effective strategy was needed to counter the popular uprising. Promising to defeat the insurgency in only 60 days, in November 1946, Manuel Roxas was elected President of the Philippines after a bitter campaign. Although supported at the national level because of his promise to forcefully defeat the insurgency, he failed to gather support from central Luzon where the insurgency was centered.¹⁸ Despite suffering from a lack of support throughout central Luzon, Roxas further alienated the masses on Luzon by refusing to allow elected congressmen with ties to the Huk movement to take their positions in Congress. In extreme measures to rid the island of guerrillas, President Roxas ordered "Huk hunts" to search out suspected insurgents and their supporters.¹⁹ Poorly trained personnel conducted these hunts and created an abundant source of recruits for the Huk movement by terrorizing citizens throughout the areas they searched. Wanton seizures of

property, terrorist acts and criminal conduct were often the hallmarks of those engaged in government sponsored Huk hunts. Failing drastically, each government action served only to further alienate the population and incite the masses to support the leaders of the Huks who treated them better than the government's own forces.²⁰

When President Roxas died suddenly of a heart attack, his Vice President became the President of the Philippines. In April 1948, Vice President Quirino stepped up to become the President and initially brought a new strategy to the fight against the insurgency.²¹ President Quirino offered an opportunity for the rebels to negotiate a truce with the government. However, after only a few months, talks broke down, both sides returned to their previous positions, and the conflict escalated. The deteriorating situation gave the impetus for the Huk Politburo to openly call for an overthrow of the Philippine government by declaring a "Revolutionary Situation" in 1950.²² Faced with increased problems, President Quirino was forced to change his approach to the rebels. Instead of continuing conciliatory actions, he once again placed the military in charge. Despite his decision to go on the offensive against the Huks, President Quirino followed in the footsteps of his predecessor and did little within the government to change the status of peasant workers or to decrease support for the Huk forces. In addition, the Philippine military, who was assigned the task of defeating the insurgency, remained ill prepared to carry out its duties. In 1950, the poorly funded and largely untrained armed forces numbered only approximately 31,000 men.²³

Under pressure from Filipino citizens and from the United States, President Quirino needed to appoint a leader, capable of instituting change, as the Secretary of National Defense.²⁴ His choice was Ramon Magsaysay, who was raised in central Luzon, had fought as a commander of guerrilla forces against the Japanese, and received post-war recognition by General

MacArthur for his efforts. Following the war, he gained widespread support from Filipino citizens and was elected to the House of Representatives where he served as the Chairman of the Armed Forces Committee, earning the respect and loyalty of the Filipino populace.²⁵ Supported by the U.S. and under internal pressure to address the growing rebellion, President Quirino appointed Magsaysay as the Secretary of National Defense in 1950.²⁶ As the Secretary of National Defense, Magsaysay immediately set out on a comprehensive campaign against the insurgency. His strategy was to fix critical problems in the military, enabling them to fight successfully against the insurgents, and then to address the root problems which created support for the rebel movement. Understanding that winning the war would take more than just targeting insurgents, Magsaysay established three requirements for every military operation. In order to meet his approval, each operation had "to get civilian cooperation, to get information, and to get guerrillas," with civilian cooperation being the priority.²⁷ His successful guidance offers critical insight into possible answers for today's problems in Iraq.

Similar to the Huk rebellion, the Iraqi insurgency consists of more than one insurgent group, with varying goals, who gained support following the fall of the Hussein government.²⁸ In the ensuing confusion and chaos that spread throughout Iraq while the new government was slowly formed, the U.S. failed to maintain the rule of law after the established regime was removed. Without an effective force to maintain law and order, crimes such as looting, kidnapping, and murder became prevalent throughout the country. Paul Bremer, who headed the U.S. led Coalition Provisional Authority, described the effect of rampant looting, "We paid a big price for not stopping it, because it established an atmosphere of lawlessness."²⁹ In this lawless environment countless criminals were given free rein, and citizens who wished to live peacefully and abide by the law often had to resort to crime to survive. Those who avoided criminal and

illicit activities frequently found themselves or their families abused and exploited. In this environment of widespread chaos, similar to the disorder found in the Philippines following the defeat of the Japanese, the opportunity was open for various enemies of a free Iraq to organize and unite against the U.S. and the Iraqi governments who they perceived as a common enemy. Seizing the opportunity, Islamic fundamentalists quickly created an insurgency of sizable force and resources. Resorting to many of the same tactics of terror and indoctrination used by the Huks, the Iraqi insurgents garnered the support of the Iraqi population. Terror was used to target civilians and government officials alike who aided or were suspected of aiding U.S. forces. This tactic was extremely effective in preventing support for U.S. forces by those who were initially inclined to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq.³⁰ Mass media sources such as television broadcasts on the Al Jazeera television network and extremist clerics served as ministers of indoctrination for the insurgent movement by continuously depicting U.S. forces and sympathetic Iraqis as anti-Iraqi and anti-Islam. Under interrogation after being captured, Walid Muhammad Hadi al-Masmudi stated why he and others joined the insurgency:

We watched Muslim clerics on television and on Al-Jazeera declaring jihad in Iraq . . . there was a statement, fatwa, by a list of 40 scholars from the Arab and Islamic world on Al-Jazeera . . . They used to show events in Abu Ghurayb, the oppression, abuse of women, and fornication, so I acted in the heat of the moment and decided . . . to seek martyrdom in Iraq.³¹

Messages such as these spread on Al Jazeera and by other propagandists aided the insurgency by depicting insurgents as freedom fighters engaged in a holy jihad against evil American forces. Insurgents who died in action were portrayed as heroes and honored as martyrs. In this environment, the Iraqi insurgency grew rapidly and quickly became a credible threat to the future of Iraq. Just as the Huks were successful in winning the war of information against the Philippine government, so were the Iraqi insurgents successful in their efforts against the U.S.

and Iraqi governments. Consequently, the Iraqi insurgency has grown and is capable of threatening the legitimate government of Iraq. Similar to the Huk insurgency where government action was ineffective until Ramon Magsaysay became the Secretary of National Defense and devised a new strategy, the U.S. and Iraq must also implement a new strategy to achieve success.

In the Huk rebellion, despite similar government failures, numerous differences exist when compared to the Iraqi insurgency. In the Philippines, the enemy was clearly defined, geographically isolated, and the Philippine government directed the counterinsurgency while the U.S. played only a supporting role. In Iraq, the enemy is more difficult to identify, is supported by external actors, and the leadership role has been largely undertaken by the U.S. while the Iraqi government has been relegated to a supporting role.³² In spite of these obvious differences, Magsaysay's strategy for defeating the insurgency provides relevant lessons for the conflict in Iraq. In the Iraqi insurgency, as in the Huk rebellion, the loyalty and support of the population is the key to victory. Magsaysay focused on the population and his example provides critical insight into how a government can win the loyalty and support of the masses.³³

Magsaysay used insightful leadership and innovative tactics to defeat the Huk insurgency. Realizing that the Filipino people were the center of gravity for the insurgency, he almost single-handedly implemented a comprehensive strategy completely different from that employed by previous leaders. Opposing Magsaysay was the Huk leader Luis Taruc. Taruc knew that an incompetent military did more to help his cause than defeat him. After one major offensive prior to Magsaysay reforming the military, Taruc addressed the problem of maintaining personnel to support the insurgency, "We knew that all we needed to do was to live through it, and that the people and the conditions that facilitated their organization would be there, waiting."³⁴ As a former guerilla himself, Magsaysay recognized the truth in this statement

and began to institute needed reforms in the military. As he took office, the military suffered from "low morale, ineffectiveness, poor leadership, and" was "riddled with corruption."³⁵ Military pay was so low that soldiers could not support themselves honestly on their daily wages. Soldiers resorted to stealing food and supplies from the locals as a matter of survival. As stealing became accepted, other abuses easily followed and each abuse of the civilian population further served to strengthen the Huk base. To reform his military, Magsaysay immediately raised the soldier's wages to more than triple their previous salary which allowed them to purchase food and supplies on the local economy instead of stealing as had previously been the custom. The effect was essentially doubled by not only preventing the stealing of precious local supplies, but instead buying those supplies and food from local sources, which served to stimulate the communities' economies and aided in the development of civil-military relationships. To further change the military, Magsaysay immediately fired several top ranking officers and other leaders. Those fired were leaders who advocated remaining in the safety of military bases instead of the field where Magsaysay insisted results must be achieved. In addition, continual surprise inspections improved unit readiness while the new Secretary of National Defense shifted the military from conventional strategies to small unit tactics. In a speech to military leaders Magsaysay said: "Gentlemen, I know you all have graduated from military establishments here and in the United States. Now I am telling you to forget everything you were taught at Ft. Leavenworth, Ft. Benning, and the Academy."³⁶ Under his leadership the military was given a new mandate; first, to protect the people from guerrilla forces and second, to kill Huks.³⁷

In other steps to earn the respect of the populace, Magsaysay set up a system to provide military officers with legal training to represent peasants free of charge. These officers were assigned to work on cases which pitted peasants against landlords. Previously, poor peasants had

faced wealthy landowners in court without the benefit of legal representation. Almost overnight these tactics produced remarkable results in gaining the confidence of the people, who began to understand that the military was there to serve and protect them. As stated by Major Bohannon, who was an advisor to the Philippine Armed forces during the conflict, Magsaysay's results were dramatic, "three months after he started shaking things up, when a truck load of soldiers pulled into a town, you could see kids come running," as opposed to previously when kids would run and hide.³⁸ Another significant contribution made by Magsaysay in the area of military improvement was the ability of civilians to report on military activities. Magsaysay promoted this effort, setting up a staff section to handle the numerous reports. Each report was checked by the staff and then Magsaysay often personally investigated reports of abuse.³⁹

Numerous lessons from the Philippine military's reform can be applied to U.S. forces in Iraq. While U.S. forces are supplied, paid and fed adequately, counterinsurgency training is inadequate. According to a study from Fort Leavenworth's School of Advanced Military Studies, "currently, the U.S. military does not have a viable counterinsurgency doctrine, understood by all soldiers, or taught at service schools."⁴⁰ Despite generally well intentioned military personnel, "some soldiers treat ordinary Iraqis as if they were terrorists."⁴¹ This mistreatment of average Iraqis has driven many to the insurgency and created the popular support necessary to sustain the insurgency. American and Iraqi military members must clearly understand that their responsibility is first to protect the citizens of Iraq and second to kill insurgents. Only when Iraqi citizens begin to believe that soldiers have their best interests at heart, will they willingly aid efforts against the insurgency.

Another opportunity lost by American commanders has been their ability to have a positive monetary effect on the local economy. With soldiers living off imported supplies from

outside corporations, few monetary benefits have trickled down to the local Iraqi economy where the hearts and minds of the masses are influenced. Local economies are little better off than if U.S. soldiers were stationed elsewhere.⁴² This fact alone fails to produce incentives for the populace to support an American military presence. The American military should operate as much as possible off of the local economy in Iraq in order to become valuable members of the community. As Magsaysay reformed the Philippine military and made its soldiers valuable members of the community, so must American and Iraqi soldiers become valued members of the Iraqi community. This value creates a shared loss between the community and military units when soldiers are hurt or killed and provides incentives for the community to assist in military efforts. By providing an economic benefit to the community, commanders can increase the likelihood of their soldiers receiving local support. Purchasing supplies from the local economy would not only provide economic incentives for the populace to support U.S. forces, but the interactions would lead to frequent dealings with Iraqi citizens. These dealings under conditions beneficial to Iraqis and not solely as combatants could provide the opportunity to build enhanced civil-military relationships. These relationships could allow Iraqi civilians to see the U.S. as partners in their rebuilding efforts rather than as merely soldiers or occupiers carrying out military missions. If successfully accomplished, these civil-military affairs could provide a significant impetus for the populace to take a vested interest in supporting U.S. forces.

Critical to the success of building civil-military relationships is the need for military forces to operate in a disciplined manner. When alleged abuses occur they must be investigated immediately. As Magsaysay provided a way for civilians to report military abuses, so must American and Iraqi leaders follow his example. Unlike the situation which permitted the atrocities of Abu Ghraib, the system must not only allow Iraqi citizens to voice their concerns,

but to also follow up on complaints.⁴³ Confirmed violations of law must then be dealt with in a firm and transparent manner. Only then will Iraqi civilians begin to trust American and Iraqi soldiers to guard their best interests.

Another major lesson from the Philippine insurrection was the benefit of small unit tactics as opposed to large scale operations from fixed operating bases. As small units dispersed, they were initially more vulnerable to attack. However, these dispersed units were better able to protect cooperating members of the population from influence and reprisal by Huk insurgents. As the population became more secure, they provided more information, which increased security for the dispersed soldiers.⁴⁴ Over time, as the soldiers and civilians developed trust and confidence in each other, guerrilla operations became significantly more difficult. To further impede guerrilla activities, Magsaysay's small units conducted patrols, operated at night, and infiltrated enemy forces. Their actions, based on information provided by locals, were invaluable in penetrating the Huk environment and locating and interdicting guerilla forces who previously operated with impunity.⁴⁵

In Magsaysay's practice of employing small, isolated units lies a distinct lesson that should be appreciated by American military leaders. As the American public has become more and more conscious of U.S. fatalities in the war in Iraq, the tendency has been to focus on force protection measures and to isolate troops in large, relatively safe garrisons away from possible insurgents. In this environment, troops rarely deal with the populace except when they are engaged in combat with actual insurgent forces. As civilians often suffer the effects of combat, this tendency, as in the case of the Huk insurrection, plays directly into the hands of the insurgents. To win, American forces must gain the popular support of the people and this can only be accomplished by interacting with them on a daily basis. This daily interaction must

involve more than combat. It must involve the activities of normal life where U.S. forces can appreciate and understand life from an Iraqi perspective while the populace experiences increased security and economic benefits. When this goal is achieved the populace will begin to welcome and not fear the soldier's presence.

Another major example from the Huk rebellion was Magsaysay's innovation and ability to sway popular support in his favor. Implementing a program called the Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR), Magsaysay targeted the message of the insurrectionists. EDCOR's intent was for the government to provide "Land for the Landless." This co-opted the cause of the Huks and produced a result "that was more than the Huk movement itself had been able to do."⁴⁶ This single slogan of "Land for the Landless" had been the rallying cry and had formed the backbone of recruiting efforts for Huk commanders. No other issue had served to enflame the emotions of peasant farmers who for generations had served under greedy landlords who grew wealthy while peasant workers survived on meager earnings. Magsaysay began by spreading the word among the populace that Huks who surrendered could have free government land. Huks who surrendered were then given land and with the assistance of the military helped to set up a community with amenities better than their previous living conditions. As word spread among the masses, support for the insurgency plummeted. This was exactly Magsaysay's intent as he focused on advertising the program more for the benefit of the populace than for actual Huk fighters. Over time the populace began to believe: "Now why should we be giving contributions to these guys, these Huks, who are coming to us? Sometimes they are nice to us, sometime they are cruel. Why should we be supporting them and suffering for or from them? They say that they are fighting for land. If that is true, all they have to do is surrender, and Magsaysay will give them a homestead down in Mindanao. He will take the man, and his family

too, put them down there on a piece of land, support them until their first crop is harvested, and even give him title to the land if he works it for five years. What are they really fighting for, these Huks?"⁴⁷ Instead of actually targeting the leadership of the insurgency, undermining their credibility was Magsaysay's focus, and there he achieved the effect he desired. In the end, only several hundred families, who had been in the Huk movement, participated in the program. But despite the small numbers of actual participants, the program was a huge success.⁴⁸ The lesson in this example is not the particulars of the program or in offering land to insurgents. The lesson to be derived is in the effect the program had on the population and in the consequent loss of support suffered by the insurgents. This success was realized largely because the people began to trust the government to deliver on its promises and to question the overall message of the insurgency and its leadership.

The U.S. must support Iraqi leaders in implementing tactics in Iraq with goals similar to the goal of Magsaysay's EDCOR project in order to sway the population in favor of coalition forces. While it plays well in the media, the U.S. and Iraqi leadership must avoid the pitfall of only concentrating on actual insurgents. This tactic has been showcased time and time again in U.S. efforts during the War on Terror. Named leaders such as Saddam Hussein have been the focus, instead of the masses from whom their support was drawn. When one insurgent leader has been captured or killed little benefit has been realized as another de facto leader quickly arises to take his place. Instead of continuing this unending strategy, the coalition must focus on winning the masses. The population of Iraq, similar to the masses in the Philippines, will aid the side they believe can credibly provide the best opportunity for them to succeed. The coalition must focus on a campaign to discredit the message of the insurgency while demonstrating good faith efforts to support the population. Numerous opportunities, where terrorists have abused civilians

or conducted barbaric acts such as beheadings, have been presented for the coalition to capitalize on as insurgent mistakes, yet the coalition has failed to realize fully the potential of these opportunities. In the cases where insurgents have abused civilians, the U.S., without a successful information strategy, has often been blamed while the responsible insurgents have been portrayed as freedom fighters. Just as Magsaysay's EDCOR program countered the Huk guerilla message and won the information war, so must the coalition counter the Iraqi insurgent's message and undermine their efforts. When an atrocity is linked to the insurgency, the U.S. and Iraqi governments must use all of their information resources to spread the word throughout the populace. This can be accomplished through several steps, to include: recruitment of moderate clerics who will assist in this effort, as well as use of broadcast media to publish accurate accounts of high profile incidents. Similarly, the coalition must publicize American and Iraqi efforts to aid the populace. When the masses understand that atrocities suffered at the hands of insurgents are greater than the problems caused by government forces, the populace will support the Iraqi and U.S. forces.

Another important aspect of Magsaysay's victory was American support through the Joint United States Military Assistance Group – Philippines (JUSMAG).⁴⁹ As a member of the JUSMAG, LtCol Lansdale served as a key military advisor to Magsaysay. Sharing a house, they became personal friends and worked together to solve the problem of the insurgency. Lansdale treated Magsaysay as an equal, despite the U.S. providing significant aid and assistance. The U.S. allowed the Filipinos to determine the best strategy to engage the guerillas. As Lansdale stated, "the Filipinos best knew the problems, best know how to solve them, and did it with U.S. aid and advice, but without U.S. domination of their effort."⁵⁰ This served two critical purposes. First, although U.S. aid was significant, the Philippine government received credit for each

successful action which built their credibility among the populace and increased their chances for success. Second, every time the Filipinos successfully dealt with a problem, their proficiency and confidence soared, allowing them to tackle the next challenge. It is worthwhile to note that during this period the U.S. government was more concerned with actions in Korea and Europe than the Philippines. Had there been fewer issues on the international level, it is hard to imagine the U.S. taking such a secondary role in the struggle. Attention by the U.S. government on larger strategic issues instead of the JUSMAG likely contributed to Lansdale's ability to let the Filipinos determine their own course and ultimately defeat the insurgency.

Critical lessons for the Iraqi insurgency can be derived from the success of the JUSMAG in the Philippines. First and foremost is the need for the Iraqis to begin to determine the strategy and to lead the fight against the insurrection. Unlike the Huk rebellion, the U.S. cannot simply support an established government in this fight. In Iraq, the U.S. must assist the Iraqis as they work to build their government into an effective governing body. To build confidence in the Iraqi government, the U.S. must take a secondary role in critical areas of leadership, while continuing to finance and supply the bulk of the effort, until the Iraqis can assume a larger role. Critical to the long term success of Iraq's government is an Iraqi leader who can unite the country, just as Magsaysay united the Philippines. The current leader of Iraq, Prime Minister Maliki, must enact policies to bring about this unification of the population or yield his position to another, more capable leader. Additionally, as in the Huk rebellion, influence from Washington should be limited. The fight must be handled by Iraqi leaders, assisted by American commanders on the ground in Iraq, who understand the environment and can take unilateral action when determining strategy.

In the Iraqi conflict, as in the Huk rebellion, mistakes in the initial counterinsurgency campaign were made by an uninformed government who failed to understand the character of the conflict. However, despite initial failure, success in the Huk rebellion was achieved by a competent leader using an innovative new strategy. Combining civil actions with military operations, Magsaysay won the support of the local population and removed the rebels from the base of their support. He alone, of all the previous Filipino leaders, understood that “of all the variables that have a bearing on the progress and outcome of insurgencies, none is more important than government response.”⁵¹ His response, based on understanding his opponent and the environment, directly undermined guerrilla popular support and enabled the defeat of the resistance movement.

Magsaysay’s single-handed herculean efforts offer a brilliant example to the efforts of coalition leaders in Iraq. Iraqi and U.S. leaders can and must implement a similar strategy in order to achieve success. This strategy must first focus on training the U.S. and Iraqi military in the necessary tactics to win in a counterinsurgency fight. Just as Magsaysay emphasized protecting citizens before killing insurgents, so must every commander who leads troops in Iraq. U.S. and Iraqi military personnel undoubtedly desire victory in Iraq. Unfortunately, previous training did little to prepare them for winning in this type of environment. When training overcomes this hurdle, coalition soldiers will have an opportunity to win.

To properly benefit from individual soldier counterinsurgency training, commanders must be prepared to utilize their forces properly to benefit from their skills. Civilian and military leaders alike must look for opportunities to enact civil action programs using small military units embedded within a community. These programs offer the possibility for individual unit leaders to earn the respect and trust of the populace. This trust, built on mutually beneficial

relationships, can grow to include the greater Iraqi and American governments and is the key to victory. Fortunately, recent events in Iraq have proven many of the tactics demonstrated by Magsaysay can work in Iraq. Following a new strategy outlined by President Bush in January 2007 which included "more than 20,000 additional U.S. troops on the ground in Baghdad and Anbar province, increased responsibility for the Iraqi government and Iraqi security forces, and more diplomatic and economic initiatives", violence has decreased dramatically throughout Iraq since June of 2007.⁵² According to Gen Petraeus, the senior American commander in Iraq, "improvements in security are a result of the greater number of coalition and Iraqi security forces and the strategy that guides the operations we conduct."⁵³ Petraeus describes a "vital part of the formula was the new strategy in which the troops began living among the people they were securing."⁵⁴ While violence across Iraq is currently down, much work remains to ensure the country continues on the road to stability while creating the conditions to undermine the insurgency.

The Iraqi insurgency will ultimately be defeated when Iraqi leaders, assisted by U.S. support, combine military and political actions to combat the root problems leading to the uprising, which will alienate insurgents from their base of support, and strangle the insurgency. As understood by Magsaysay, victory can only be achieved when this lifeline to the insurgency is severed and the masses favor the government over the insurrectionists.

Notes

1. Napoleon D. Valeriano, Charles T.R. Bohannon, Counter guerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience (New York, Praeger, 1962), 238-239.
2. Lawrence Greenberg, The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955 (Washington, DC: United States Army Center of Military History, 1995) 77.
3. Counter-Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 1946-1953 (Fort Bragg, NC, 1961) 4.
4. Zaki Chehab, Inside the Resistance: The Iraqi Insurgency and the Future of the Middle East (New York: Nation Books, 2005) 21.
5. Counter-Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 12.
6. Uldarico S. Bacalagon, Lessons from the Huk Campaign: In the Philippines (Manila, Colcol and Company, 1960) 3.
7. Greenberg, 10.
8. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 12.
9. Bacalagon, 3.
10. Bacalagon, 121-131.
11. Greenberg, 15.
12. Greenberg, 27.
13. Benedict J. Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) 117.
14. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 40.
15. Bacalagon, 35, 248.
16. Greenberg, 41.
17. Luis Taruc, Born of the People (New York, International Publishers, 1953) 218-219.
18. Greenberg, 44.
19. Greenberg, 45.

20. Taruc, 259.
21. Greenberg, 64.
22. Greenberg, 78.
23. U.S. Department of Defense, Lessons Learned: The Philippines 1946-1953 (Washington, D.C.: Armed Forces Information and Education, 1962), 4.
24. Valeriano, 141.
25. Greenberg, 79-82.
26. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 4.
27. Chehab, 99.
28. Nir Rosen, In the Belly of the Green Bird: The Triumph of the Martyrs in Iraq (New York: Free Press, 2006), 174-175.
29. Thomas E. Ricks, Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 214-216.
30. Ahmed S. Hashim, Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 144.
31. Rosen, 159.
32. Hashim, 17-58.
33. Valeriano 105-107.
34. Taruc, 247.
35. Greenberg, 84.
36. Greenberg, 87.
37. Greenberg, 88.
38. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 55.
39. U.S. Department of Defense, 6.
40. Ricks, 226. Study referenced in this book is titled "The French Experience in Algeria, 1954-1962: Blueprint for U.S. Operations in Iraq" (May 2004), completed by Maj Gregory Peterson of the Army's School of Advanced Military Studies.

41. Ricks, 274.

42. Ricks, 256. Gen Sanchez stated "Every single thing that we provided to our soldiers had to be brought in through Kuwait."

43. Chehab, 107-126.

44. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 29-39.

45. Greenberg, 86-88.

46. Kerkvliet, 239.

47. Counter Guerilla Operations in the Philippines, 55.

48. Kerkvliet, 239.

49. Greenberg, 149. Lieutenant Colonel Edward Lansdale became a personal friend of Magsaysay's after meeting Magsaysay when he traveled to the U.S. as the Chairman of the Armed Forces Committee for the Philippine House of Representatives. Landale, who had served as an intelligence officer in the Philippines during World War II, quickly gained Magsaysay's complete trust and was requested by name to support the Philippine effort when Magsaysay became the Secretary of National Defense.

50. Greenberg, 98.

51. Bard O'Neil, Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005), 8.

52. Donna Miles, "Surge, Strategy Working in Iraq, But Challenges Remain, Petraeus Says," American Forces Press Service, January 8, 2008, 1.

53. Guy Raz, "Pentagon Officials Disagree on Impact of Surge," Pentagon Brief, February 2008, 3.

54. Miles, 1

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