MARXIST COUNTERINSURGENCIES

by

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While the 1950s and 1960s can be labeled the Western Counterinsurgency Era, the 1980s are rapidly becoming the Marxist Counterinsurgency Era. During the earlier period, Western nations and their allies were beset with insurgencies throughout the world: Greece, Malaya, Kenya, Indochina, Colombia, Bolivia, and Algeria to name a few. Certainly, Marxist states faced unrest and some armed opposition, but in this earlier period, it was the West that was besieged by guerrillas. The situation is now different. Of the 13 current insurgencies where armed guerrilla organizations are in strengths of over 5000, about half are against Marxist regimes. Over three-quarters of the 324,000 armed insurgents of those organizations are at war with communist governments.[1] If the 1950s and 1960s were a period of rising expectations in the Third World, the 1980s could be called the era of unfulfilled expectations, because most of today's guerrilla wars against the communists are in lands where Marxism has been recently installed.

The concern in these pages is not for Washington policy alternatives. What follows is an examination of Marxist counterinsurgency, how it came about, an analysis of the insurgents, and what portends for the late 1980s. In many respects, the Marxist Counterinsurgency Era is following the pattern of the earlier Western Counterinsurgency Era. In 1955, for example, well before the climax of American counterinsurgency involvement, the United States had some 11,000 military advisors permanently stationed abroad, mostly in the developing nations. In contrast, the Soviets at that time had only a handful of advisors working in the Third World. Now the United States has less than a thousand such military advisors in the Third World, while the Soviets and Cubans are fielding some 32,000. A prime feature of the American military assistance in the 1950s was the provision of grain under the Food for Peace Program to US allies fighting insurgents. Today, the Soviets are mimicking the earlier American practice, often giving of their scarce grain supplies to Third World Marxist states. The United States had about 500,000 combat troops fighting insurgents during the Vietnam War. The Soviets, Cubans, and North Vietnamese now have more than 300,000 combat troops fighting guerrillas in six different Third World states—and that figure is climbing.[2]

All of this would be mildly amusing to Western observers except for the fact that how the Marxists fare in their counter-guerrilla endeavors will in some measure determine future East-West relationships. It is a subject worthy of study, worthy of an examination that takes into account the lessons of the earlier Western counterinsurgency period. But such a study should be devoid of the myths so prevalent in the West during that era.

INSURGENTS AND COUNTERINSURGENTS

One of the myths that gained currency during the 1960s is that poverty causes insurgency. That belief had a corollary: economic development sweeps insurgency away. If the first supposition were true, most of mankind would be in revolt. Armed revolutions are not the product of poverty but are the product of those very few skilled revolutionaries who have been able to persuade, organize, lead, and survive a race against a government's security forces. The insurgent leader may use the issue of poverty to his advantage, but he needs far more than that to succeed. For the most part, the three billion disadvantaged of this world bear poverty stoically and rarely take up arms to better their lot. As to the corollary, economic development may be an important and laudable element in a government's plan to deal with insurgency, but history clearly indicates such efforts are not essential to success. Insurgencies have often been put down with repressive, brute force. Paradoxically, development pushed too far can sever the sometimes fragile threads of social stability—as the Shah of Iran found out. Additionally, economic development, hard enough to achieve in peace, is extremely difficult to produce in the midst of a guerrilla war.

Another myth is that in order to succeed, the guerrilla must have the willing support of the peasantry. This belief has a distinct Western appeal based on the tenet of majority rule. The corollary here is that the right (read: majority) will win. Unfortunately, the "right" side did not march into Phnom Penh in April of 1975. Pol Pot and his victorious Khmer Rouge, for example, did not have the willing support of the people of Cambodia. The support they gained throughout that war was achieved by beastly coercion. In these wars, he who is right does not necessarily win, only he who is left when the shooting stops.

A third myth is that these wars are wholly the result of the Cold War. The inevitable and trailing gem of flawed logic is that if the superpowers would only stay out, guerrillas would go away. The fact is that wars of this type are regrettably consistent on this planet. Insurgencies today are actually replicas of the civil wars of the past. We no longer call them civil wars, but essentially that is what they are: "outs" versus "ins." When war became mechanized in the early part of this century, most of mankind found that it could not participate in the new form of warfare. Mao did not choose guerrilla warfare as a superior technique. He chose guerrilla warfare because he could not get the airplanes, tanks, and battleships to wage mechanized war. His civil war against Chiang Kai Shek was fought with the only tools he had at hand. Upon attaining victory, Mao quickly acquired as many aircraft, tanks, and warships as China could afford. Civil wars occurred all during the 19th and the early part of the 20th centuries when there were some 60 nations in the world. After World War II, the number of nation-states increased threefold. It is therefore not surprising that there has been a corresponding rise in the number of civil wars, conflicts we choose to call insurgencies.

Since these wars have been almost wholly centered in the developing nations, the "outs" had no option for mechanized warfare and followed Mao's example, selecting guerrilla warfare. Sooner or later, either the insurgent leaders or the leaders of the besieged government have asked for support from one of the superpowers. An

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avowed Marxist will likely obtain aid from the Soviets. Similarly, a leader who professes allegiance to the West stands a good chance of receiving Western support. The Cold War has colored these conflicts, but it cannot be blamed for their existence. They would probably have happened in any event.

So much for the myths. There are a few fundamentals that emerged from the Western Counterinsurgency Era. A substantial insurgency requires the counterinsurgent to field forces far larger than those of the insurgent. A general rule of thumb, widely accepted in international military circles, is that the counterinsurgent must have close to a ten-to-one advantage to be successful. Of course, that rule has a number of exceptions and certainly cannot stand alone. Insurgency is a complex phenomenon. However, the ten-to-one factor is no better and no worse than the two-to-one rule of thumb generally accepted as a rough estimate for the attacker's required superiority over the defender in conventional operations. The magnitude of the required superiority for the counterinsurgent is dependent on a number of factors, one of which is the nature of the insurgent's organization.

The 1960s taught us that there is a general structure to an insurgent organization. There are usually three and in some instances four parts to these formations. The first and fundamentally essential element is the auxiliary, a term found in post World War II American insurgency doctrine. The term has been dropped from most US military literature but has recently resurfaced in the lexicon of the Guatemalan insurgents. Users of the term normally define the auxiliary as the unarmed peasant who recruits for the armed guerrillas and supplies them food, clothing, and medical supplies. The auxiliary also performs two important intelligence tasks. The first task is obvious: finding out who, what, where, and when about the counterinsurgent. The second intelligence task is less well known but probably more vital. The auxiliary must accomplish counterintelligence tasks. He must verify the loyalty of the guerrilla recruits in order to prevent the unknowing acceptance of the most powerful of all counterinsurgent tools: the penetrator. The auxiliary is the mother and father of insurgent organizations. It feeds, clothes, and protects the insurgent.

The second and most familiar element of the insurgent structure, the guerrilla force, needs little description. The guerrilla will often pose as a law-abiding citizen by day and fight at night.

The third and in some cases the last element of the insurgent organization is the underground. This element contains the shadow government of the insurgent organization and serves as its ultimate headquarters. The underground has to communicate and produce intelligence. It must manage a network of couriers and in some cases it controls an urban terrorist force. Some insurgent organizations have had their shadow government and headquarters outside the target nation, but this is a dicey choice. In the event of guerrilla success, those who have lived in the relative security of a neighboring state may find their claim to leadership held fraudulent by proud, victorious guerrilla combat leaders. Such may be the case with the insurgent leaders opposing the Nicaraguan government today. In the 1960s, it was a common American practice to use the ambiguous term "infrastructure" to identify the combination of the auxiliary and the underground. Many insurgent organizations have had only these three elements: the guerrillas, the underground, and the auxiliary. However, others have added another.

The fourth, and possibly essential, element of the insurgent organization of the 1980s is the regular force. Full-time field soldiers, the regulars keep the counterinsurgent's army on edge and concentrated to prevent its dispersal into small groups that could seek out and destroy the insurgent's guerrillas. The regulars are also useful for a sudden, all-out offensive to destroy the opposing army if the opportunity presents itself. Regulars can be recruited from the ranks of the guerrilla forces, as in the case of the Chinese civil war, or they may be of external origin, as in the case of the North

Vietnamese army during the later stages of the Second Indochina War. Should there be a substantial and well-disciplined regular force with assured reliability, the underground or controlling headquarters of the insurgent structure may be placed outside the country. In that case, the fruits of victory can be secured by the regulars. The guerrillas are important, but secondary.

The general anatomy of a successful counterinsurgent organization may also be depicted from the experience of the 1960s. The first and most important element is the security service. Police, informers, penetration agents, and a competent crew of intelligence analysts are the main components of such a service. All of this is most efficient if placed under one bureaucratic roof, as the efficacy of the security service depends on speed. It is essential for such an organization to do more than identify and locate the insurgent; it must have the power to make the arrest or stage the raid. Any substantial insurgency will require the arming of large segments of the nation's population. The militia may be tasked only to protect home and hearth, but if it is a sound organization, it can be used to defend vital bridges, power lines, and other likely guerrilla targets. The counterinsurgent must also have regulars. The regulars must root out and destroy armed guerrillas and, if need be, defeat the insurgent's own regulars. Finally, the counterinsurgent must have an effective government that is not only capable of raising, equipping, and effectively controlling its intelligence organization and armed forces, it must be resourceful enough to undercut the insurgent's appeal—whether by sheer force of arms, by being able to attract the enthusiastic support of the people, or more likely, by a combination of the two.

MARXIST COUNTERINSURGENCY

Fundamentals aside, what are the Marxist approaches to counterinsurgency? To those whose only source of information has been a steady diet of video tape from Afghanistan, the Marxist counterinsurgent surely appears to be a Neanderthal man, stamping out resistance (or purported resistance) with hairy feet wherever it is found. While the Soviets may not be reluctant to use force, they are very knowledgeable in the more subtle ways of counterinsurgency. So too are the Cubans and, to a lesser degree, the North Vietnamese. Although the communists are traditionally viewed as revolutionaries, the ruling governments of these three nations are actually quite experienced in the methods of counterinsurgency. The Bolsheviks spent little time as guerrillas, but from the minute they took power in 1917, they were immersed in counterinsurgency. Russian leaders in the past 70 years have spent at least 30 of those years conducting major counterinsurgency campaigns. Castro had only about four years as a guerrilla, but he has been in the counterinsurgency business, both at home and abroad, for the last 25 years. The North Vietnamese have more experience in the role of insurgents or insurgent supporters, but their current leaders now have a decade of work against guerrillas in Laos and Cambodia. On the whole, the Marxist confederation is now an alliance of counterinsurgents, and Moscow is by far the most experienced.

Paradoxically, Kremlin leaders owe much of their success in counterinsurgency, and no small number of their current principles, to their czarist predecessors. Moscow has expanded its control of surrounding territory through the use of force and has been suppressing armed revolt on an almost continuous basis for some six centuries. With such a rich legacy of successful counterinsurgency experience, it is small wonder that the present leaders in the Kremlin have followed the examples of the Czars. The first of their principles is to divide their adversaries and encourage "barbarians to fight barbarians." As the Czar pitted the Kumyks against the Chechens, the Kabardians against the Avars, and the Christian Ossetians against the Muslim Azerbaidzhanis, the Marxist leaders of the 1920s played the Darghins against the Avars and the Ingush against the Chechens. In the 1940s, the Soviets recruited and led large formations of Ukrainians to battle their own people. In the

early 1950s, the Soviets recruited and armed a substantial Lithuanian militia to defeat the Lithuanian insurgents. As with Rome, "Divide and Conquer" is the supreme rule. A second principle normally followed by the Soviets is to use mass deportation and large-scale resettlement schemes to deprive the guerrilla of local support. Mass deportation was particularly successful against the Lithuanian and Ukrainian insurgents. A third principle has to do with placing your man in the other fellow's tent. The Soviets are, and the Czars were, noted for their skillful use of penetration agents. Another standard practice is to cultivate and indoctrinate tribal or regionally prominent families, particularly the younger members of those families. A similar program is used for religious leaders. Russians plan for the long term when they are engaged in a counterinsurgency campaign. Additionally, a Russian counterinsurgency hallmark is to gain firm control of cities and towns first. The countryside can wait. The Soviets do not, however, hesitate to employ forces in the countryside once they have laid the groundwork by establishing secure bases in the urban areas.[3]

Regardless of these "principles," the general outlines of an effective counterinsurgency force or the structure of an insurgent's organization, each counterinsurgency campaign is unique. Some of the principles may apply; others are discarded. An appropriate structure in one case may not be useful in another situation. A ten-to-one counterinsurgent-to-insurgent ratio may be preeminent in one instance and less important in another. With that in mind, an examination of current Marxist counterinsurgency campaigns includes a study of several dissimilar situations.

Angola

With a population of about eight million and a literacy rate of ten percent, the oil-producing Marxist state of Angola is undergoing a tenth year of insurgency. There were several factions that fought and defeated the Portuguese in 1975. A mix of tribalism and politics promoted disagreement and eventual armed conflict among those factions. The winning group, largely based on the Kimbundu tribe, asked for and received Cuban support one year after independence. The new Angolan government rapidly put the Cubans to work against opposition forces, the most prominent of which were the Ovimbundu and Chokde peoples under Jonas Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the Bokongo tribe under Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola. The Cubans were successful in driving the opposition into the bush, but they failed to destroy the enemies of the young Marxist regime. This initial and limited Marxist success spawned new hope and support for the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in its endeavor against the government of South Africa. By this process, the war spread to Namibia, the land between South Africa and Angola. After a decade of fighting, Angola has some 110,000 combat troops, composed of both Angolans and Cubans, involved in the fighting. They use some 970 armored vehicles and 150 modern aircraft.[4] The opposition is largely composed of UNITA's 18,000 guerrillas and 23,000 auxiliaries, but the government now must concern itself with more than internal opposition.[5]

A running fight has existed between the Angola-based SWAPO and the government of South Africa since the mid 1960s. South African forces have staged border incursions against Angola some 14 times since 1975, and the whites have raised a fighting force from the Angolan Bokongo tribe. Not only has South Africa managed to defeat SWAPO's offensive operations, it has accomplished the unusual feat of putting the would-be insurgents on the defensive in their privileged sanctuary. Firsthand observers estimate that SWAPO now must devote 40 percent of its operations to defending Angolan soil in a fight for survival. White South African officers live with and lead the Bokongo force. The unit is reported to have led many of the South African incursions into Angola. The Bokongo tribe is largely located north of the Angolan capital of Luanda, and an active

insurgency in that region has been operative for some time. Savimbi's UNITA, however, is the real insurgent force to be examined here. It is based on the Ovimbundu tribe that inhabits the region south of the capital and provides Savimbi with a healthy, in-country auxiliary structure. He is usually comfortably based on Angolan soil, some 100 miles or so north of the border with Namibia. The techniques used by UNITA and South Africa are the classic methods of the guerrilla: cutting communications, destroying bridges, isolating economic centers, kidnapping, disseminating propaganda, and ambushing convoys.[6]

Although it is difficult to separate the normal inefficiencies of a Marxist command economy from the effects of a guerrilla war, the overall result has been devastating, even by African standards. Apologists have often cited the mass exodus of the Portuguese as the rationale for the sad state of the Angolan economy. After ten years that argument is wearing a bit thin. Angola, once a food exporter, is now a food importer. In late 1984, despite the severe drought in northwest Africa, Angola had Africa's largest delegation of the International Red Cross. Most of the Red Cross planes were flying as many as 30 flights a day to six regional centers. Expensive air transport was essential due to the ability of UNITA to close roads. Coffee production has dropped 95 percent in the last ten years. Once a tire exporter, Angola is now a tire importer. It is estimated that 90 percent of the Angolan state-run companies are losing money. Angola has what must be one of the world's most worthless currencies. The Kwanza is officially rated at 30 to the dollar, but goes for 1200 to the dollar on the black market—when anyone will take it. Angola is kept afloat by its oil exports, along with Soviet aid. Oil provides about 90 percent of Angola's foreign exchange. The United States is buying a little more than half the total oil production, with Brazil picking up another six percent.[7]

In order to prop up the disastrous Angolan economy, the Soviet Union is conducting an economic aid program. As shown by documents captured in Grenada, Soviet aid is complex. It involves barter arrangements: raw materials for arms mixed with outright grants. The agreement with Angola provides that country about 200 million dollars per year. However, a recent estimate by a "senior State Department official" claims that the Soviets have poured some two billion dollars into Angola during the past two years. What is not known is how much oil the Russians took out. Cuba supports an estimated 6500 "economic technicians" in Angola. Other Soviet bloc states, including the Soviet Union, provide 3900 other "technicians." Although many of these "technicians" are probably police, intelligence, and security advisors, a healthy percentage of them are undoubtedly as advertised: advisors and administrators, working to make Angola economically self-sufficient. Additionally, Marxist states underwrite some 1655 Angolan students who study in bloc nations every year.[8]

South African border incursions and the constant and growing guerrilla activities of UNITA have made it imperative for bloc states to maintain a sizable military presence in Angola. In the case of the Cubans, who actually conduct combat operations, Angola has represented a ten-year-old battleground. In addition to their 25 to 30 thousand combat troops, Cuba supplies a substantial number of the 1600 military technicians in Angola. The bloc supports some 180 Angolan military students per year who train abroad.

The 40,000 members of the Angolan armed forces are augmented by a paramilitary force of some 50,000. Adding the 30,000 Cuban combat soldiers, this provides a total of some 120,000 troops facing UNITA's 18,000. Using the ratio of ten-to-one for the counterinsurgent to win, Angola's seven-to-one ratio falls short of the mark. The prospects are even dimmer for the Marxists when UNITA's 23,000 auxiliaries are considered. Also, UNITA has an in-country structure that has defied communist forces. Finally, the Marxists must tailor their operations against the insurgents and maintain some degree of concentration so as not to jeopardize deployments designed to react to South African border incursions. It is

therefore not surprising that Angola's government has not been able to use its road net to support its economy or control its population. The Angolan economy continues to deteriorate, and it is quite possible that the Marxist government will fail to survive.

Mozambique

The insurgency in Mozambique is in some respects parallel to that in Angola. Whereas Angola nurtured SWAPO, incurring the wrath of South Africa, Mozambique harbored the Mugabe forces that eventually triumphed in Rhodesia. Mozambique also has served as a base for the anti-South African ANC (African National Congress). The latter organization is receiving Soviet arms through the Organization of African States. The reaction of Rhodesia during the 1970s was to exploit dissatisfaction with the Marxists of Mozambique by establishing support for the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR), a rough duplication of the situation in Angola with UNITA. Tribalism is again a vital factor in the insurgency. The victorious Marxists that replaced the Portuguese in Mozambique were largely based on a minority tribe, the Makonde. Their black opposition includes the Muslim Macua tribe and the Yao, who have carried on their war with the Marxist government of Samora Machel for eight years. Peace negotiations with South Africa have failed in the same manner as the talks between Angola and South Africa.[9]

Estimates of the strength of the insurgent MNR organization range from 6000 to 15,000. External support is rumored to be from South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and the large Portuguese population in South Africa. Recent claims include even European support for the MNR. Protesting South African authorities readily point to the large stores of weapons and munitions left in Mozambique after the campaigns against Rhodesia and the Portuguese. The Machel government's charge that the opposition is composed of bandits may have some basis in fact, but Machel admits that the country is "living in a war situation." Regardless of where the insurgents' support comes from, the guerrillas have been successful in choking the economy of Mozambique.

Guerrilla activity has been directed at controlling the rural areas and the transportation system. Essentially, the guerrillas own the countryside and the government controls the larger urban centers. However, in December 1985 the MNR reported that it was occupying two district capitals in central Mozambique. As in Angola, the government has been forced to use expensive air transport to feed many of the city dwellers. All of this has been vastly complicated by the drought of the early 1980s. The economy of Mozambique is probably in worse shape than that of Angola since the Portuguese found that Angola had to support Mozambique during the period of colonial rule. In 1984, the planting of crops was reduced by some 50 percent due to the strangled road net. The Machel government is, however, banking on American support. David Rockefeller of the Chase Manhattan Bank has made two recent trips to Mozambique; three American oil companies are investigating an oil drilling venture; and the US government is considering 15 million dollars' worth of non-military aid.[10]

Mozambique has an armed force of 15,800 personnel equipped with 515 armored vehicles and 18 combat aircraft. Armed paramilitary forces amount to some 9500. The army is constantly required to escort civilian convoys on the roads and is regularly ambushed. Marxist bloc support consists of about 1000 Cuban troops and 550 bloc technicians. Mozambique has some 530 military students in bloc schools. In order to bolster the sagging economy, the Marxist nations have provided 2800 advisors and technicians, including East German security police experts. Training for about 2500 students from Mozambique is conducted in bloc schools.

An effective tribal auxiliary structure supports the guerrillas in Mozambique. The ratio of guerrillas to government opposition is about one-to-four, a ratio that projects a rather grim future for the Marxists. One difference from the situation in Angola is the absence of South African border incursions. If the armed forces of Mozambique ever do

begin serious counterinsurgency operations outside the populated areas, they can do so without having to look over their shoulders for an attack from their white neighbors.

Ethiopia

The basis of insurgency in Ethiopia has its roots in the United Nations' 1952 decision to provide Haile Selassie's Ethiopia authority over the former Italian colony of Eritrea. When the emperor established Eritrea as a national region ten years later, active fighting began. The general insurgency throughout Ethiopia was sparked by the revolt of the Fourth Infantry Brigade in 1974. That insurgency spread to include dissident groups representing Oromo, Afar, Tigray, and Somali, as well as Eritrean, peoples. Initially, the Soviets backed the Eritrean guerrillas, but with the advent of a Marxist regime in Addis Ababa, Moscow quickly switched sides in order to assist in the defeat of their former allies. The war is now over ten years old and continues without an end in sight.[11]

There is little unity among the insurgents. For example, while the Eritrean movement has been striving for simple independence, the Tigre People's Liberation Front is bent on overthrowing the regime of Lieutenant Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam. Moreover, the Eritrean element of the insurgency has only recently formed a rather loose union of their three splinter groups into the Eritrean Liberation Front. Despite the fragmented nature of the Ethiopian insurgency, the rebels have proved their ability to control not only large segments of the northern countryside, but also to hold populated areas of the north. The guerrillas' prime technique is to conduct ambushes on the nation's roads in order to stymie any government attempt to extend and maintain control of the countryside.[12]

The Marxist Mengistu regime is squarely based on the dominant Amhara peoples of central and southern Ethiopia. Almost all government offices are held by the Amhara. The great drought of the early 1980s has worked to the advantage of the government. The necessity to concentrate the northern dissident tribes to facilitate efficient food distribution has given the government the opportunity to undermine the control of the insurgent leaders. The Ethiopian government has a large armed force of some 217,000 members equipped with 1775 armored vehicles and 180 combat aircraft, including some armed helicopters. The government also controls a paramilitary force of some 169,000. Bloc support for the regime is substantial.

Cuba is represented in Ethiopia by 12,000 combat troops. Other bloc nations have 1900 military technicians in the country. Marxist states also support an unusually large number of Ethiopian military students in training abroad. Currently, it is estimated that some 2095 members of the Ethiopian military services are studying within the bloc states. Economic aid from Marxist states is estimated at 15 million dollars per year. In order to bolster the Ethiopian economy, the bloc is providing about 2800 economic technicians and advisors. It is believed that there are about 5350 Ethiopian civilian students studying in bloc nations.

Although almost all of the West's attention has been drawn to the Eritrean and Tigrean insurgents, a large number of the 20-plus non-Amharic ethnic groups of Ethiopia are in some stage of revolt. It is estimated that 85 percent of Eritrea is controlled by the insurgents. All told, the total guerrilla strength pitted against Addis Ababa is believed to be 34,000. Compared to a government and Cuban strength of 398,000, the rebels are at a twelve-to-one disadvantage.

Afghanistan

The beginnings of the war in Afghanistan stem from the dissatisfaction of Moslem fundamentalists with the Afghan regime in the mid-1970s. The Soviet invasion of 1979, apparently a failed attempt to bring about order, has resulted in an unending bloodletting. It is in this land that the Soviet Union has exerted a serious, overt effort; has made a substantial investment in facilities, troops, and economic support; and has begun to use

the techniques and methods that have been successful against Moscow's previous insurgents.[13]

The opposition to Kabul and the Russians is estimated at 90,000 armed insurgents. Many, however, spend considerable time in nearby Pakistan, and as few as 20,000 are believed to be fighting in Afghanistan at any time. There is little solidarity between the various insurgent organizations. Most are based on a particular sectional, religious faction. Both Sunni and Shiite are represented among the guerrillas, and bickering between these groups is the norm. The insurgents are equipped with a variety of weapons, including shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles. They dominate much of the countryside of eastern Afghanistan, and in this region Kabul's presence has been reduced to besieged towns that are dependent on air supply and occasional armed convoys. Much has been written about the lack of unity within insurgent ranks, but little note has been taken of the extraordinary difficulties that such disunity poses to the counterinsurgent.

For most practical purposes, the armed forces of Afghanistan have disappeared. At a strength of some 80,000 at the time of the Soviet invasion, they are now believed to have only 47,000. It is further believed that the desertion rate approximates 10,000 per year. What is perhaps of more significance is an organization called the KHAD, the Afghan security service. Its strength of 40,000 rivals that of the current Afghan armed forces. Led by KGB advisors and technicians, the KHAD produces what the Soviet armed forces need most: intelligence. If the Soviets do succeed in Afghanistan, it will be largely because of Afghan penetrators, agents, and defectors from the insurgents who operate under the control of the KHAD.[14]

Soviet strength in Afghanistan is some 115,000, with about 120 combat aircraft, 270 helicopters, and hundreds of armored vehicles. Moscow's economic aid is estimated at 500 million dollars per year, much of it in fuel and food that is needed to keep some form of an economy alive in government-controlled areas. Soviet influence in the country is now pervasive. The Afghan flag has even been changed to resemble that of a Soviet republic. There are over 5500 Afghan military students in the Soviet Union and some 8700 other Afghans studying in the USSR. It is estimated that there are 2000 Soviet "military technicians" in the country and 3800 economic advisors. The Soviet Union has invested an enormous amount of capital in constructing roads, bridges, airfields, and communications facilities.

Soviet techniques against the insurgents include extensive propaganda campaigns and heavy indoctrination, even to the extent of rewriting Afghan history for school use. The Russians offer considerable financial rewards to those Afghans who serve the Kabul regime. For example, members of the Afghan militia now receive more pay than a prewar deputy minister. The Russians have spent a great deal of effort on religious leaders, recruiting mullahs who can be relied upon to support the government. The sweeps conducted by the Russian army in the countryside are partially designed to create refugees. Those who flee to populated areas within Afghanistan become subject to rigid population control measures. Of those who make the long journey out of the country to join one of the various resistance groups, only a small percentage return to fight. Those Afghans who stay in their valleys are reduced to a dangerous existence, eking out a living between Soviet offensive operations.

An estimate of the counterinsurgent-to-guerrilla ratio is about two-to-one. However, since only 20,000 guerrillas are in active opposition at any one time, a better figure is ten-to-one. Parallels with Vietnam are not appropriate in that the Afghans have no regular forces as did the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. Afghanistan's resistance organizations do, however, have a considerable auxiliary structure within the country. Since that network is fragmented, it will be difficult for the KHAD to gain any advantage with a single penetration operation. Disunity provides some protection, if not concerted effort.

Kampuchea

The Cambodian nation has been beset with insurgency for most of the past 15 years. After the 1975 fall of Phnom Penh to the Khmer Rouge, there was a brief lull in the fighting. But when the North Vietnamese army installed the government of Heng Samrin in 1979, opposition began to coalesce and serious fighting broke out once again. In some respects, the war is a contest between Marxist regimes. China is backing the Khmer Rouge exiles and conducted a large-scale border incursion against Hanoi in 1979, shortly after the North Vietnamese invaded Cambodia. The Chinese rationale for the incursion is generally acknowledged to have been a retaliation for deportation of large numbers of the Chinese minority in Vietnam, alleged Vietnamese border violations, and for the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Since that time, China has maintained steady support of the Khmer Rouge insurgents.[15]

The opposition to Heng Samrin and the Vietnamese is not only the 35,000 armed guerrillas of the Khmer Rouge. There are also Son Sann's 18,000-man People's National Liberation Front as well as Sihanouk's small 7000-man National Army. The latter two organizations are loosely connected and are recognized by the United Nations. It is doubtful that the Khmer Rouge have a sympathetic following inside Cambodia, but their forces recruit by armed coercion, in much the same way they did in the early 1970s. In July 1985, Secretary of State George Shultz was informed by the representatives of the two non-communist factions that their groups were recruiting at a faster rate than the Khmer Rouge; however, the strength of these elements is largely based on the growing Khmer refugee population residing in Thailand. As yet, the insurgents have not been able to seize and hold a single population center. The guerrillas claim that their operations range far to the south, and there are reports from a Canadian TV team that the insurgents are waging battle well into Cambodia. Deep-seated Khmer hostility to the Vietnamese might ensure popular support for the guerrillas in the countryside, but since the Vietnamese seem to center their operations on the Thai border, a strong and active auxiliary base within the country for the guerrillas appears doubtful.[16]

There are some striking similarities between the regime in Kabul and Heng Samrin's Cambodian government. His army is rated at a strength of only 35,000, dwarfed by the Vietnamese force in the country of some 160,000. Additionally, a statement by General Le Duc An of the North Vietnamese army clearly indicates that the Vietnamese are in Cambodia to stay. Citing the "special relationship" of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, the general disclosed a unified command and the necessity for the entire population of Cambodia to follow the instructions of the party cadre. Such were the tactics and the party line of Hanoi's forces as they brought about the unification of Vietnam under Hanoi's rule. He went on to say that Indochina was a "single battlefield" and that his strategy would be to conduct pacification operations in the hinterland while maintaining regular operations in the border areas. A recent report of Soviet construction of a naval base at Ream lends credence to the conclusion that the Marxist stay in Cambodia is of a permanent nature.[17]

As long as the Vietnamese army maintains sizable forces in Cambodia, prospects for insurgent success appear limited. The ratio of counterinsurgents to insurgents is about four-to-one, but like the situation in Afghanistan, only a percentage of the guerrillas are on active operations in Cambodia at any one time. The war may be characterized as occasional border incursions by outnumbered insurgents. It is not a classic model of guerrilla war.

Nicaragua

The insurgency in Nicaragua had its birth with two events during 1980 and 1981. The first was the expression of dissent against the Sandinistas by the Miskito, Sumo, and Rama peoples of eastern Nicaragua through their Moravian Church leadership. An anti-Cuban demonstration and protests against the promotion of Marxism brought about a

heavy-handed suppression of the Indians that Managua's Minister of Interior, Tomas Borge, later admitted to be a colossal mistake. Closing 50 churches, jailing priests, forcing Spanish into the classrooms, burning crops, and pressing a mass relocation of about 20,000 people, the Sandinistas managed to spark a revolt against themselves. The second event occurred a year later in Guatemala. A group of 60 former members of Somoza's National Guard met and formed the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (NDF), the largest of the rebel factions now fighting the Sandinista government.[18]

The various insurgent factions are loosely joined in a federation called the Unified Nicaraguan Opposition. The NDF is thought to have some 15,000 armed insurgents, and the Revolutionary Democratic Alliance (RDA) of Eden Pastora Gomez is believed to be composed of about 5000 armed men. Although the NDF is primarily based in the north, near the Honduran border, it has recently established some elements in the south, near Costa Rica and Pastora's RDA. Both factions appear to be peasant-based and have few urban, middle-class recruits. There is an exodus of the urban youth from Nicaragua, but most are avoiding the Sandinista's unpopular conscription policies and are not joining the resistance forces. The motivation of the insurgent peasants seems to be based on a variety of religious, resettlement, and agricultural policy concerns. The vast majority of these recruits are from the northern provinces, long a bastion of conservative causes. It is difficult to determine how much insurgent recruiting is caused by Sandinista resettlement programs and how much is due to Managua's other policies. The distinction is an important one. If the recruits are spawned by resettlement, they are likely to be guerrillas-in-exile, elements without a substantial in-country village or urban auxiliary support structure. There is little indication that the insurgents have been able to sustain their operations from within the country. Like their Khmer cousins, they are substantially an army of irregulars, staging border incursions.[19]

Regardless of the insurgent infrastructure, the guerrillas have caused great damage to the economy of Nicaragua. Although much of the insurgent activity is centered in the north, the tremendous expansion of Nicaragua's armed forces has taken manpower from an economy that is labor intensive. Large defense expenditures and the gradual withdrawal of capital investment have debased the currency, creating runaway inflation. Defense expenditures are estimated at 60 percent of the government's budget, and inflation is at 125 percent. The value of the Cordoba has recently been stripped of its official rate of 28 to the dollar because the black market rate was 500 to the dollar. The guerrillas have successfully disrupted the coffee harvest, which in the past averaged 150 million pounds. Currently, the government is expecting only 80 million pounds. Even if the guerrillas had not specifically targeted the coffee industry, it is doubtful that the Sandinistas could manage the manpower to pick the crop since their armed forces have grown to some 63,000 with a paramilitary force of about 3000. There are 40,000 Nicaraguans in the militia, but they seldom are used on offensive operations against the insurgents.[20]

Bloc support for Nicaragua began in 1980 while the United States was still supplying aid to the Sandinista government. The Soviets demonstrated their willingness to underwrite the regime in Managua by giving the government some 20,000 tons of wheat from tight Soviet reserves in 1981. An additional 60,000 tons of wheat came from Bulgaria and East Germany, leading the Sandinistas to believe that dependence on the United States for food was unnecessary. Since that time, the scarce Soviet grain situation has been eased by the resumption of US grain sales. By 1983, publicly known bloc economic aid packages had reached 220 million dollars, consisting, among other things, of road-building equipment, construction machinery, and the provision of port facilities. The Cubans have 4000 "economic, educational, and medical technicians" in the country as well as 2500 military personnel, some of whom are engaging in combat operations. There are 200 bloc economic advisors in Nicaragua along with 125 military advisors. The Sandinistas

have about 260 military students in bloc countries and 425 students studying there for the purpose of returning to restore the economy.[21]

The ratio of government forces to guerrillas is about three-to-one, but without a substantial urban and rural auxiliary support base, this figure may not mean much. This is particularly true when one considers that at any one time, the insurgents may have only about one fifth to one fourth of their strength on active operations. The actual ratio may be more accurately put at about sixteen-to-one.

THE PROSPECTS

Predictions about the future success or failure of the Marxist counterinsurgency campaigns should be founded on the efficiency and effectiveness of counterinsurgency forces balanced against the structure, strengths, and effectiveness of the insurgents. There are also many external factors, some as yet wholly unknown, that will determine the eventual outcome of these conflicts. Forecasts can only be educated guesses. Considering what is now known, the prospects for insurgent success against Marxist counterinsurgent forces appear brighter in southern Africa than anywhere else.

In both Angola and Mozambique, Marxist forces have not attained the strength ratios to search out and destroy guerrillas while protecting vital national facilities. In both cases, the insurgents have an established network of auxiliaries, based on strong tribal ties. In both cases, the insurgents have active operational areas north and south of the capital cities. In Angola, the insurgent is further favored by the existence of South African regular forces whose border incursions keep Angolan and Cuban forces on edge and concentrated, a posture that inhibits small-unit operations, essential for effective counterguerrilla operations. In Mozambique, the government advantage is only four-to-one, a ratio that is not likely to produce success for the Marxist counterinsurgents. In both cases, the Marxists are increasingly dependent on American financial support to bolster their weakening economies. If there is to be an ebb in the 40-year tide of Marxist conquest, the best chance is in southern Africa.

In Ethiopia, the prospect for insurgent success is slight, but Marxism in that country does not rest on solid foundations. The insurgents are greatly outnumbered. They have only marginal unity of purpose. With their main strength centered in the north, the insurgents have little auxiliary support in central and southern Ethiopia. Furthermore, the ongoing famine is working to the advantage of the government in Addis Ababa. Without a central underground, headquarters, or shadow government, the insurgents are unlikely to form regular forces to complement their guerrilla formations. The Marxist counterinsurgents can therefore conduct small-unit operations designed to run the guerrilla to ground. As in the cases of Angola and Mozambique, American assistance is providing some direct benefits to the regime in power. In this case, however, Ethiopia is receiving more food assistance than it can manage and it is likely that even if the US aid were discontinued, other sources would make up for the loss. Although the prospects for continued aid are rather good, the military in Ethiopia has an undeniable proclivity to factionalism and unrest. There is a chance for a military coup d'etat from some quarter of Ethiopian soldiery, and it may come from a faction that opposes the heavy influence of foreign Marxist states. That is the probable reason that bloc states host such a large contingent of Ethiopian students. There is, nonetheless, little chance that any dissident Ethiopian military faction would cede to the demands of those insurgent elements that are insisting on independence. Insurgent success is therefore unlikely.

Although the traditional principles of Soviet counterinsurgency are rarely seen in the Marxist states of Africa, they are increasingly evident in Afghanistan. Massive resettlement, cultivation and indoctrination of tribal and religious leaders, large-scale use of penetration agents, and growing control of

populated areas have already taken place. If the Soviets remain true to form, the immediate future should see the use of force in the countryside on an unprecedented scale and the use of agents whose goal is to spark fighting between the different elements of the insurgents. It is doubtful that the insurgents will be able to increase the percentage of their forces that are actively deployed in Afghanistan, or achieve a better degree of unity. They have no known capability to consolidate a portion of their guerrillas into regular forces that would inhibit Soviet small-unit operations. The total absence of any moral restraints on the part of Soviet forces paves the way for the future: brutally effective campaigns in the countryside. This war will be a long one. But if and when Moscow decides to triple its forces in the country, the end will be in sight.

Without a strong internal support mechanism, there is little hope for the Cambodian insurgents. They do not appear capable of organizing the countryside against the North Vietnamese from their bases in Thailand. Hanoi is subjecting the Khmer nation to colonialism in the same fashion that it has South Vietnam and Laos. The insurgents have not attained guerrilla war. They are irregulars—recruited by force or from refugees. They are externally based. That pattern is duplicated in Nicaragua.

There is no indication that the insurgents have established any measure of population support in the countryside of Nicaragua. Nor is there evidence of an effective urban underground working against the Sandinistas. Insurgent leaders have recently expressed a desire for aircraft to handle their resupply problems: an indication that local support from the peasantry of the country is lacking. Internal dissatisfaction with the Sandinistas within Nicaragua will undoubtedly continue the flood of refugees, but this does not automatically translate into effective armed opposition to the Marxists. The prospect for the Nicaraguan insurgents to win on the force of their own arms is not a bright one.

Marxists have reason for optimism in the future of their counterinsurgency efforts. The campaigns are being waged within reasonable costs, they fulfill the credo of communism, and there is a wealth of experience to draw on for technique and method. There are, however, two clouds on the Marxist horizon. First, these efforts will continue to absorb the time and energies of Marxist leaders to an extent that is probably out of proportion to the end worth of the enterprises. A second and possibly more serious consideration is that the Marxists may lose Angola and Mozambique. Such an event would have far-reaching psychological consequences and would be widely heralded as the ebb tide of communist conquest. For insurgents currently battling Marxist regimes elsewhere, the last half of the 1980s does not portend impending triumph. These insurgents would do well to look at the example being set in the southern portion of Africa. There, the insurgent has established a supporting structure of auxiliaries within the countryside of the besieged Marxist states. In that region, the insurgent is not an invading irregular, he is a guerrilla. In that part of Africa, the counterinsurgent would likely have to achieve the ten-to-one advantage. For the invading irregulars, who actually form the bulk of today's insurgents fighting Marxists, the mathematics are quite different. In their case, the counterinsurgent may not even need numerical superiority. Without organizing the countryside into an auxiliary support structure, the invading irregular is left to a more conventional form of warfare. In that realm of conflict, the rule of thumb is that the attacker must have the numerical advantage.

NOTES

1. Insurgent leaders usually inflate strength figures for their organizations, and governments opposing insurgents minimize guerrilla totals. Unless otherwise indicated, the figures herein are from *The Military Balance, 1985-1986* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1985).

2. American military advisory numbers are presented in J. Ross Heverly and Harry O. Amos, "The Military Role in a Functional Collective Security System" (Washington: Department of Army, 1978). Soviet figures are taken from *The Military Balance, 1985-1986*. Cuban combat troop figures are taken from John Hoyt Williams, "Cuba: Surrogate Force for Soviet Power" *National Defense*, 69 (May-June 1985), 47-51.

3. A good summary of czarist and Soviet counterinsurgency techniques against Muslim insurgents is presented in Alexandre Bennigsen, "The Soviet Union and

Muslim Guerrilla Wars, 1920-1984: Lessons for Afghanistan," *Conflict*, 4 (Nos. 2-4, 1983), 301-23. Firsthand descriptions of Soviet techniques during the Lithuanian and Ukrainian insurgencies are provided in K. V. Tauras, *Guerrilla Warfare on the Amber Coast* (New York: Voyages Press, 1962) and Yuriy Tys-Krokhaliuk, *UPA Warfare in the Ukraine*, trans. Walter Dushnyck (New York: Society of Ukrainian Insurgent Army Veterans, 1972).

4. *The Military Balance, 1985-1986.*

5. Ibid.

6. An eyewitness report on South African efforts with the Bokongo tribe is contained in Morgan Norvel's somewhat macho account, "32 Battalion," *Soldier of Fortune*, 9 (February 1984), 46-89. A description of Savimbi's base area is found in Alan Crowell's account, *The New York Times*, 9 October 1985, p. 3. South Africa's effectiveness in aiding UNITA is assessed by an Angolan officer in *The New York Times*, 21 December 1985, p. 3.

7. A detailed view of Angola's economy and the effectiveness of UNITA against Angola is contained in the firsthand account of James Brooks' *New York Times* articles; see 16 December 1984, p. 1; 25 December 1984, p. 1; and 6 January 1985, p. 6.

8. Bloc aid to Angola is detailed in a Department of State report, "Soviet and East European Aid to the Third World" (Washington: Dept. of State, 1983). Unless otherwise indicated, all following bloc economic aid figures are derived from this document. The two billion dollar estimate was reported by Susan Rasky, *The New York Times*, 11 December 1985, p. A14.

9. An excellent analysis of the origins of the MNR is contained in Ian F. Beckwell and John Pimlott, eds., *Armed Forces and Modern Counterinsurgency* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); see chapter five. See also *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 16 February 1985, p. 253. Soviet arms aid was reported by John Makhatini, an ANC spokesman, in a *New York Times* interview, 16 August 1985, p. A29.

10. The Machel quote and the economic analysis is taken from Alan Cowell's eyewitness reporting in his *New York Times* articles, 25 January 1985, p. A4; 1 July 1985, p. A3; and 9 July 1985, p. A2. The MNR claim of success in the center of the country is found in *The New York Times*, 5 December 1985, p. A9.

11. For the origins of the current insurgency in Ethiopia, see Yuhannis Abate, "Civil-Military Relations in Ethiopia," *Armed Forces and Society*, 10 (Spring 1984), 380-400.

12. The status of the Ethiopian insurgency was gathered on-site and has been depicted by Clifford May. See his *New York Times* articles of 6 January 1985, p. 3; 4 March 1985, p. A3; and 15 July 1985, p. A3. Indications of Eritrean insurgent unity is reported in *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 16 February 1985, p. 261. Also see Anthony Suau's eyewitness account in "Region in Rebellion," *National Geographic*, 168 (September 1985), 388.

13. A good description of the early years of the Afghan War is contained in Tahir Amin, "Afghan Resistance: Past, Present and Future," *Asian Survey*, 24 (April 1984), 373-78, 399.

14. Any number of firsthand accounts describing Afghan insurgents are available. Richard Bernstein's graphic presentation in the *New York Times Magazine*, 24 March 1985, pp. 30-53, and the reporting of Richard Bonner, *The New York Times*, 15 July 1985, p. A4, are good examples. Also see Paul L. Moorcraft, "Bloody Stalemate in Afghanistan," *Army*, 35 (April 1985), 26-36. The KHAD is described in Tahir Amin, p. 393.

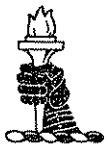
15. The Chinese border incursion is summarized by a senior Indian officer in General Y. M. Bammi, "Sino-Vietnam War, 1979," *Combat* (December 1983), pp. 65-74. Also see King C. Chen, "China's War Against Vietnam," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 3 (Spring-Summer 1983), 233-63. Background details on the Cambodian insurgency are found in the reporting of Barbra Crossette, *The New York Times*, 25 January 1985, p. A2; 7 February 1985, p. A8; 15 February 1985, p. A3; 29 April 1985, p. A4; and 22 December 1985, p. A3.

16. A summary of the Canadian film crew's observations is contained in the 19 July 1984 issue of *The Nation Review*, Bangkok.

17. Le Duc An's article is in *Tap Chi Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, Hanoi, December 1984, pp. 28-43. Hanoi's methods to bring South Vietnam under complete control are described in Truong Nhu Tang, *Viet Cong Memoir* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1985), pp. 267-82. For the Soviet base at Ream, see Son Sonn's statement in *Indochina Chronology* (July-September 1985), p. 11.

18. The views of the Moravian Indians were gathered and are presented in Joan Frawley, "Among the Miskitos," *Policy Review* (Spring 1984), pp. 50-54. The status of the NDF is portrayed in the on-site reporting of James LeMoyne, *The New York Times*, 24 March 1985, p. 1; 23 April 1985, p. A1; and 9 August 1985, p. 1. Additional reports are provided by Stephen Kinzer, 11 April 1985, p. 1, and 12 April 1985, p. A3.

19. Strength figures for the insurgents are derived from Hedrick Smith's Washington-based report in *The New York Times*, 17 April 1985, p. A1. Insurgent activity is characterized in the series of interviews conducted by James LeMoyne noted above. The addition of antiaircraft missiles to the insurgent inventory was announced by Aristides Sanchez, an NDF spokesman, *The New York Times*, 13 December 1985, p. A9.

20. Economic figures are derived from interviews with Sandinista officials by Larry Rother, *The New York Times*, 10 February 1985, p. 9; 19 March 1985, p. 1; and 24 March 1985, p. 11.

21. Bloc support for the Sandinistas is based on *The Military Balance, 1985-1986*, but adjusted with more recent figures presented by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams; see *The New York Times*, 6 December 1985, p. 1. For information on American loans, see the statement of Commerce Secretary Baldridge, *The Baltimore Sun*, 22 December 1985, p. A4.