THE INSURGENT STATE: TERRITORIAL BASES OF REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT. For contemporary national revolutions, the capture and control of territory has virtually become a "territorial imperative." Control of a geographic part of the state is a manifesto proclaiming: "We have arrived. We are ready to replace the existing government." Each stage of a guerrilla war has its basis in geographic as well as political circumstances. "Mobile war" is required when the insurgent is unable to establish a base in the cities and must continually move to avoid capture by government troops. Once a base area is established, it is possible to enter the stage of "guerrilla war." If a system of guerrilla base areas evolves, then a parallel state (insurgent state) is formed. It is the continual effort to create an insurgent state, complete with the elements of power, a *raison d'etre*, core areas, and administrative units that is the manifestation of the insurgent's territorial imperative.

REVOLUTION is certainly not a new phenomenon in the history of man, but today it is a process that occurs with increasing frequency. Owing to the number of national revolutions that have occurred since 1945, one author has termed this period the "insurgent era."[1] There are many possible explanations for this increase but among the more significant must be the role of World War II and its legitimization of armed insurrection as a means of political change.

During World War II, insurgent and guerrilla movements were established and supported by Allied forces. They were particularly concentrated in Asia, North Africa, and continental Europe. Although there were no Allied-supported partisan bands in sub-Saharan Africa or Latin America, the process of armed insurrection had international recognition as one means of political change, and the lesson was not lost on these areas.

Despite the politics of their leaders, the various partisan movements of the war established the basic ingredients for continued insurrection, namely, territorially-based groups that were armed, politically as well as militarily organized, and politically oriented toward the overthrow of any government (occupation or other) that did not meet their ideals. Respect for due process and legal means of political change were abrogated, and the ends justified the means.

Although one may claim that war requires unusual political methods, the fact remains that, particularly in Asia, partisan revolution was the first experience of indigenous political leaders in the process of political self-determination. To assume that these men would accept the return of the *status quo*, especially where this meant the return of foreign rulers, was pure delusion. In addition the very successes of revolutionary movements in China, Indonesia, Indochina, and more recently in Cuba, have merely added support to revolution as the means to political change. The failures in Malaysia, and the

set backs in the Philippines and recently Bolivia, have merely added to the body of "how to" knowledge. They have not diminished the attraction of revolution as the means to political change.

It is understandable that the study of revolution and revolutionaries has become of prime interest to scholars as well as to politicians and military men. Virtually every aspect of the revolutionary process has undergone intense study. There remains one element, however, that has not received adequate attention. This is the geographic aspect in the evolution, as well as definition, of revolutionary movements. There is a definite distinction between secessionist movements, rebellions, revolutions, and national revolutions. Secessionist movements, such as those of the American South during the Civil War and the 1967–1969 situation between Nigeria and Biafra, are the attempt of one region of the country to withdraw and become independent. A rebellion is locally oriented and often of only limited political objectives. Overthrow of the entire government, or secession from the state, is not part of its objective. Revolution, on the other hand, is directed toward the overthrow of the entire national political structure and government. The distinction between revolution and national revolution is not in their objectives, but in the involvement of national population. Revolution often is characterized by political struggles among elites. Its manifestation is most often the palace *coup d'etat*. By contrast, national revolutions consciously attempt to involve entire populations in their causes. Their objectives are not merely to replace the present leadership of the state but to drastically alter the form of government and often the structure of society itself. It is this pattern that is characteristic of today's "insurgent era," and it is the national revolution that is the subject of this study.

Comparing such well-documented revolutions as those in China, Greece, the Philippines, Malaya, Indonesia, and Cuba, it became evident that regardless of the cultural or geographic location of such revolutions, there was a common commitment to the capture and control of a territorial base within the state. This commitment has virtually become an obsession and might even be termed a "territorial imperative." Revolutionary movements do exist in Thailand as well as in various African countries, but they have thus far been either unable or unwilling to declare "we are here, let the revolution begin." One reason may be that they still lack an adequate territorial base.

It is my contention that modern national revolutions have accepted as a basic tactic the creation of a territorially based anti-state (insurgent state) within the state. This is no mere "shadow government" involving only political leaders. The national revolution is aimed at directly involving the general population as well as national real estate in the revolution. The mechanism is the creation of territorial units complete with all the attributes of any legitimate state, namely a *raison d'etre*, control of territory and population and, particularly, the creation of its own core areas and administrative units as well as a power base in its guerrilla army. In fact it is useful to view contemporary national revolutions as a process of the evolution of a territorially based political unit within politically hostile territory.

Looked at from the viewpoint of internal political developments, the creation of an insurgent state has a number of values to a national revolutionary movement. First, it acts as a physical haven for the security of its leaders and continued development of the movement. Second, it demonstrates the weakness and ineffectiveness of the government to control and protect its own territory and population. Third, such bases provide necessary human and material resources. Finally, the insurgent state and its political administrative organizations provide at least an aura of legitimacy to the movement. It is not a process of state breakdown. The creation of an insurgent state is an effort gradually to replace the existing state government. The geopolitical tactic is the attrition of government control over specific portions of the state itself.

REVOLUTIONARY GUERRILLA STAGES AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE INSURGENT STATE

Traditionally the study of a national revolution concentrates on its military aspects and begins by dividing the movement into three political or military stages, *i.e.*, the stages of "contention," "equilibrium," and the "general counter offensive," or "mobile war," "guerrilla

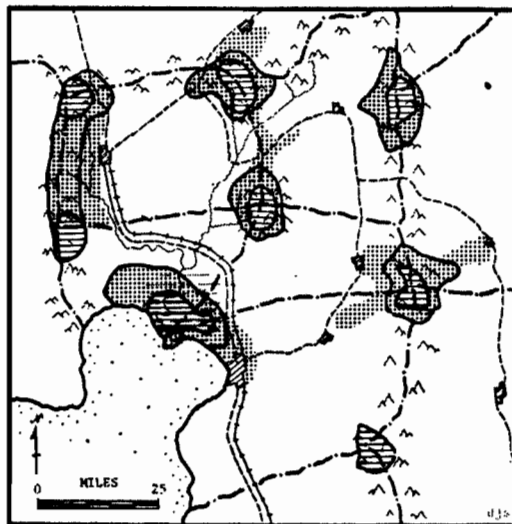# TYPICAL PATTERNS
OF
INSURGENT EXPANSION
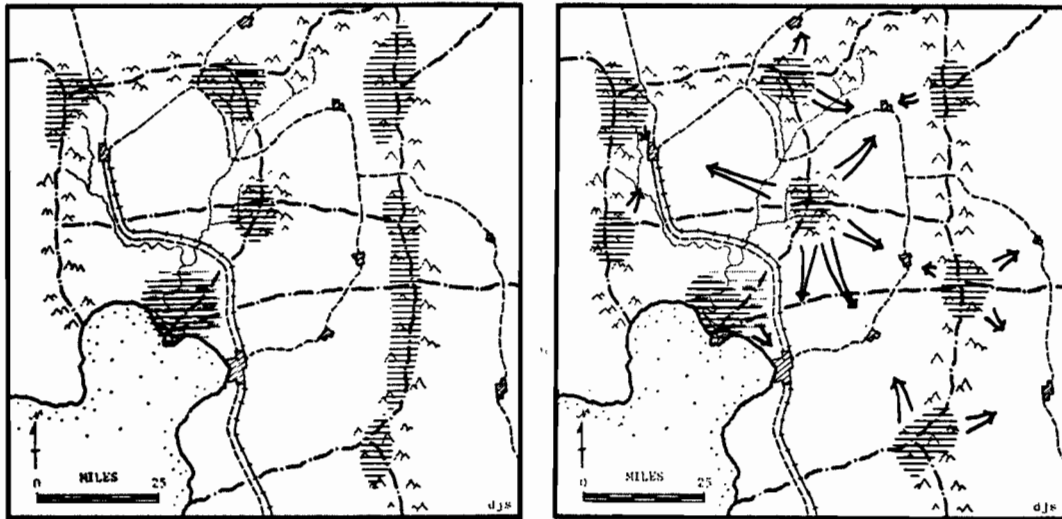
MOBILE WAR

GUERRILLA WAR with FIXED BASES

≡ AREA OF MOBILITY   ≡ GUERRILLA AREA   ➤ DIRECTION OF EXPANSION

REGULAR WAR

BASE AREA   LIBERATED AREA   GUERRILLA AREA

Fig. 1.

war," and "regular war."[2] What is overlooked in this division is that each stage and the progression between them is linked directly to the insurgent's determination and ability to control some part of the state's territory. Each stage actually represents the evolution of an insurgent state and its ability to increase the area under its political and military control.

Whereas division into political or military stages is helpful to the political scientist, such stages ignore the fundamental purpose of a national revolution, namely to gain control of the people and territory of the entire state. Such a process requires intimate adjustment to the realities of both the physical and human geography of the country. To focus attention on the generally unrecognized commitment of the insurgent to the gradual attrition of government control over the state, I have combined the use of these standard political and military stages with their geopolitical significance. Each stage is looked at as part of the progressive creation of a new state (insurgent state) within politically hostile territory.

The accompanying schematic illustration is designed to indicate the geographic patterns associated with the traditional revolutionary stage. (Fig. 1). As with any process of evolution it is always possible for one or more stages to be bypassed, or even for the need to return to an earlier stage. It is generally true, however, that any revolution that has not followed this general pattern of development has failed to achieve its objective of total national political control. This was certainly the case in the 1948–1960 Malayan insurgency and also the 1946–1949 Greek insurgency. Even the recent efforts of Che Guevara to start a revolution in Bolivia failed because of his inability to establish a viable guerrilla area.

"Mobile War:" Creation of a Guerrilla Area

Regardless of their social or political basis, all revolutionary movements are characterized by an initial loss of a geographic base for their political opposition. Simultaneously the government or political party in power has

declared the movement illegal and its followers rebels or bandits. Deprived of any means of open political opposition, the movement is forced underground for its survival. This is the beginning of the territorial stage of revolution. As Luis Taruc put it for the Hukbalahap (Huk) movement in the Philippines:[3]

> We wanted to fight, but the question of how to go about it was at first obscure. The Chinese guerrilla movement, we knew, had been enormously successful, but in China the country was better adapted to guerrilla warfare. China had vast distance to hide an army and to provide space for maneuvering. There, large scale fighting could be undertaken, towns and whole regions liberated; in our case we had a tiny area, easily reached by overwhelming Japanese reinforcements. In China there was an established base, from which guerrilla forces radiated; we did not even have a base. It was obvious that our tactics would have to be different.
> From the moment of the invasion (Japanese) we had been looking around for possible bases. We had picked Mount Arayat, Candaba Swamp, the Sierra Madres, and the Zambales mountains.

Once the need for a territorial base becomes evident, the insurgents must choose a specific area for their activity. Naturally, the first choice, if possible, is the capture and control of some key city or region, preferably the capital. Castro's attempt to storm Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953, was such an attempt and characteristic of the Latin American palace coup. Similarly the Chinese Communist movement made several early attempts to capture major cities in China, the most notable being the short-lived Canton Commune of 1927. The same tactical error was committed by the early Vietminh movement in French Indochina when attempts were made to capture Hanoi at extreme loss of men and material. By the late 1960's revolutionaries had learned that they must not underestimate the ability or determination of the "enemy" to hold on to its critical installations, particularly the cities and major lines of transportation-communication. Most contemporary national revolutions thus start in the countryside and save attacks on the major cities for the later stages of the revolution.

Denied open political expression or the creation of a physical base in an important

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[2] Mao Tse-tung, "On Protracted War," in Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. II (New York: International Publishers, 1954), pp. 183–84, and passim; Vo Nguyen Giap, People's War People's Army (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), pp. 101–10, and passim.

[3] L. Taruc, Born of the People (New York: International Publishers, 1953), pp. 61–62.
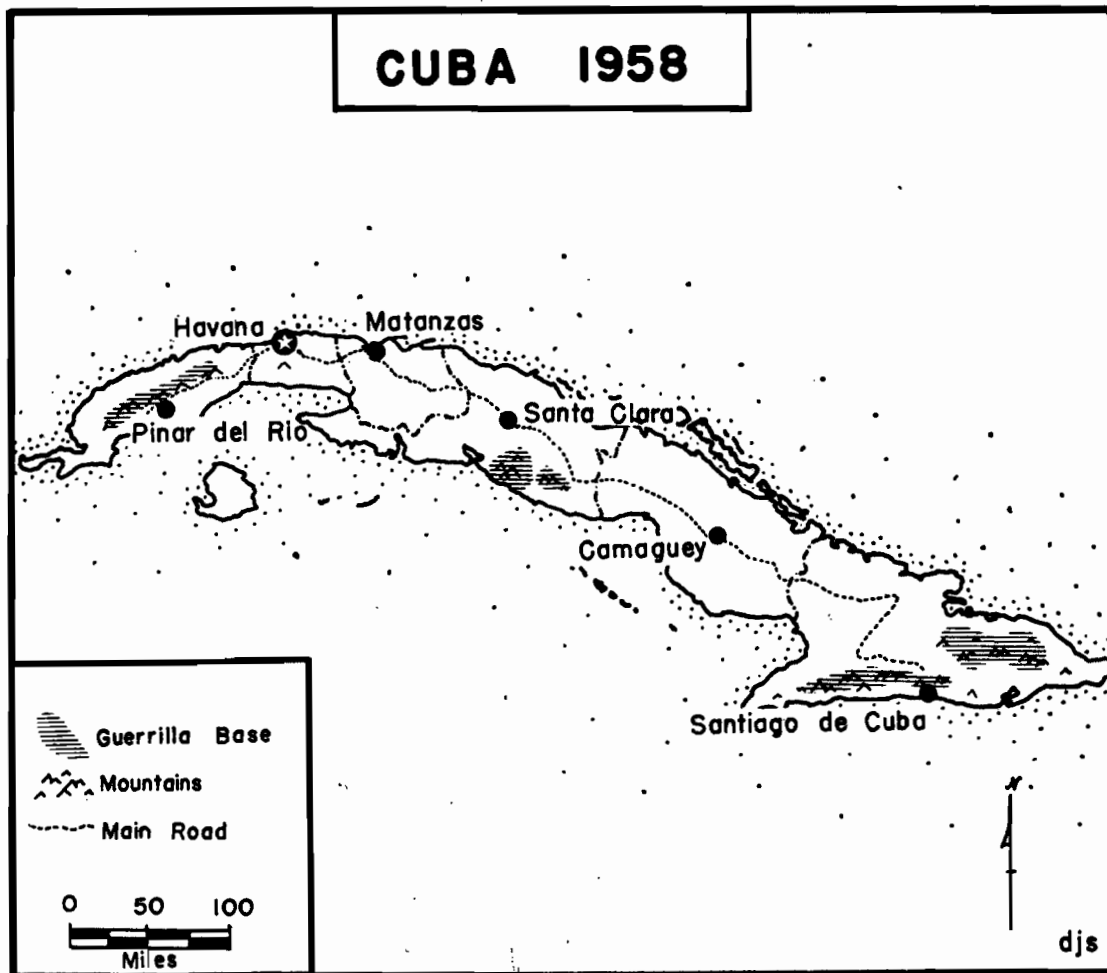
Fig. 2.

city, the revolutionary must turn to the countryside. Pursued by government troops and police as a rebel or bandit, he must continually be on the move and maintain mobility. In a large country such as China, the problem of the large size prohibits movement over the entire state area. In small or insular countries such as Indonesia, Cuba, or the Philippines, the presence of government troops in intervening areas, and the limited mobility of international boundaries or natural barriers such as the sea, set another limit to mobility. Once it is possible to concentrate activities in a specific geographic area, the location is not randomly chosen. There are very explicit geographic criteria that have evolved from past revolutionary experiences. These location features have been most explicitly stated for

the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions, but they have been and are being applied in numerous other revolutionary movements. Ideally a guerrilla area should have the following attributes:

1) If possible an area should be chosen that has had previous experience in revolution or political opposition to the central government;

2) political stability at both the national and local levels should be weak or actually lacking;

3) the location must provide access to important military and political objectives, such as provincial capitals, regional cities, and critical resource and transport services;

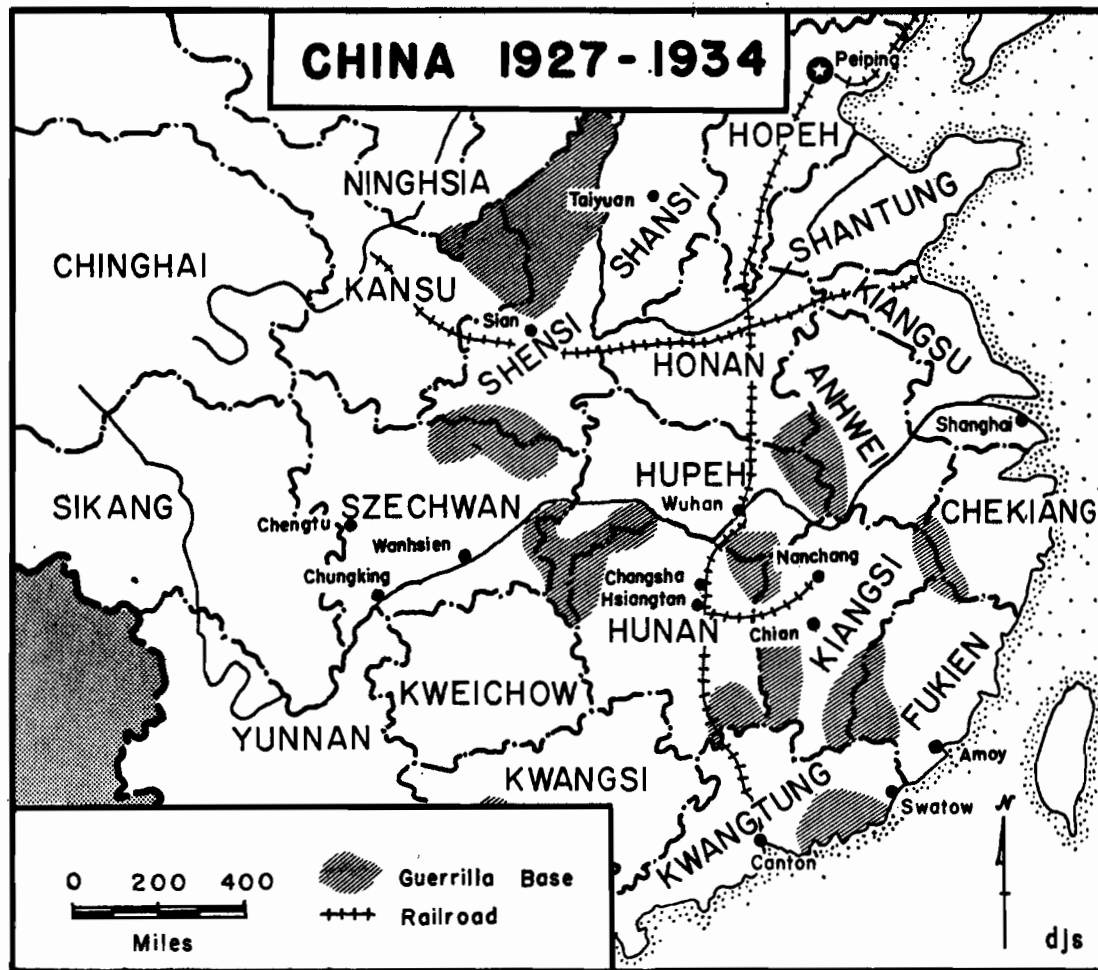4) areas of weak or confused political

Fig. 3.

authority, such as borders between provinces or between police or military areas, or even along international boundaries are ideal locations;

5) terrain should be favorable for military operations and personal security;

6) insofar as possible the area should be economically self-sufficient;

7) once established the base should never be abandoned except under the most critical circumstances.[4]

Naturally, any country possesses a number of geographic areas that meet some, or even all, of these criteria. The initial location of

[4] R. W. McColl, "A Political Geography of Revolution: China, Viet Nam, and Thailand," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 2 (1967), pp. 153–67.

the national revolutionary movement, however, is most often found in the areas where the initial uprising or attack took place. The success of this choice, however, will in turn depend upon how well its geopolitical conditions meet the above criteria.

The most important immediate physical consideration is that the area chosen for guerrilla activity, particularly during the "mobile war" stage, must provide adequate room in which to move and hide from pursuing troops and still remain within striking distance of major political (and thus military) targets. To meet these requirements, the area must be large in terms of its geometric configuration (shape), or it must have terrain suited to the hide-and-go-seek character of "mobile war." Mountains are normally thought of as the
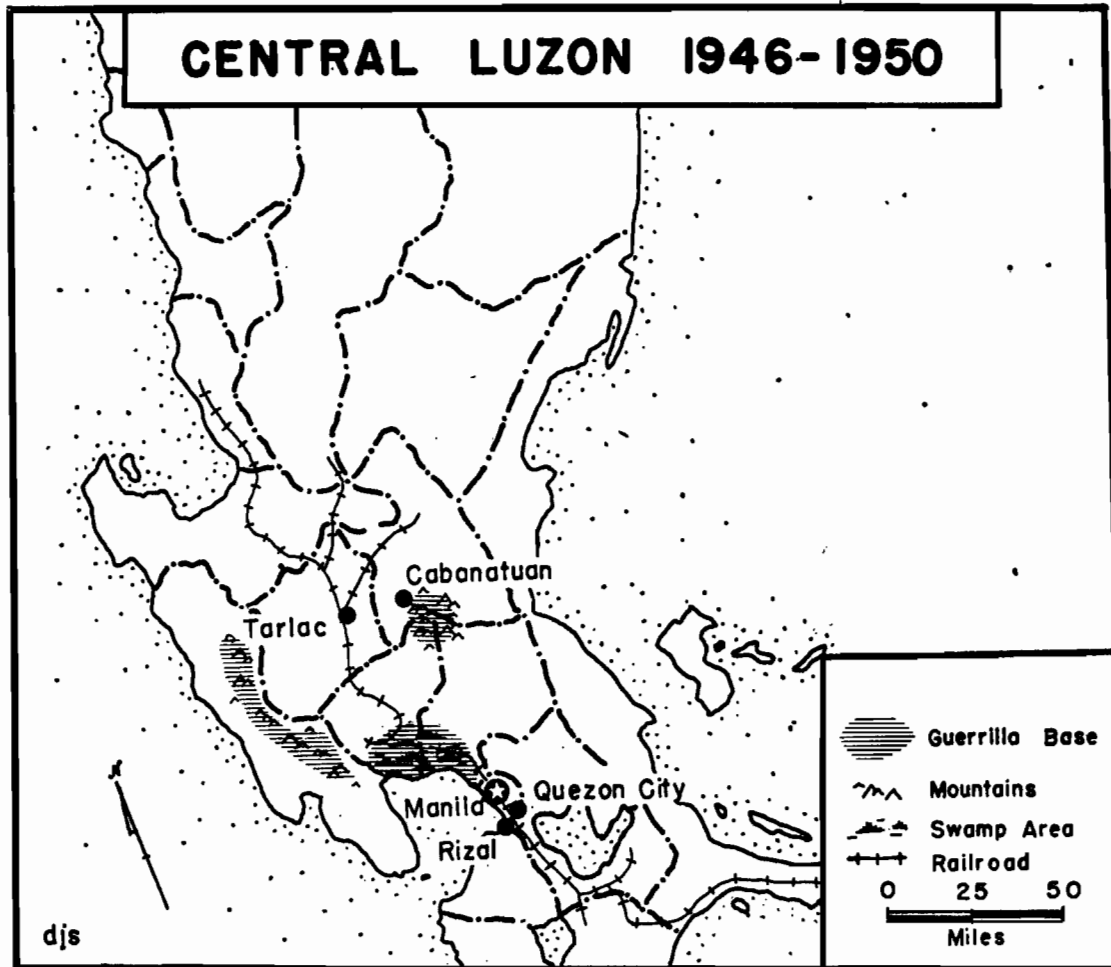
Fig. 4.

ideal redoubt meeting these conditions, but equally significant have been areas of complex waterways such as the Mekong Delta and Candaba Swamp, or of dense vegetation as in the jungles of Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Naturally, an ideal location will combine the physical advantages of size and terrain with access to political objectives, primarily towns and cities.

In the recent Cuban revolution, Castro and his small band landed on the coast of Oriente Province and thus hid in the nearby Sierra Maestra rather than walking to one of the other guerrilla bases in the Escambray Mountains. Oriente Province had the advantage of previous political experience in political opposition. It had been the starting point for both of Cuba's wars for independence from

Spain. The additional advantages of rugged terrain, dense vegetation, and access to key cities, particularly Santiago, are too well known to need elaboration (Fig. 2).

In China, the first Communist guerrilla areas were formed in the central and southern provinces. It was here that the first struggle against the warlords had taken place in 1927, and it was in the same area that the Communists had attempted to overthrow the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek. In addition there was the advantage of rugged terrain, dense vegetation, and the access to such key cities as Wuhan, Ch'angsha, Nanch'ang and many regionally important cities and transport routes (Fig. 3).

In the Philippines: "On March 29, 1942, in a clearing in the great forest that joins the
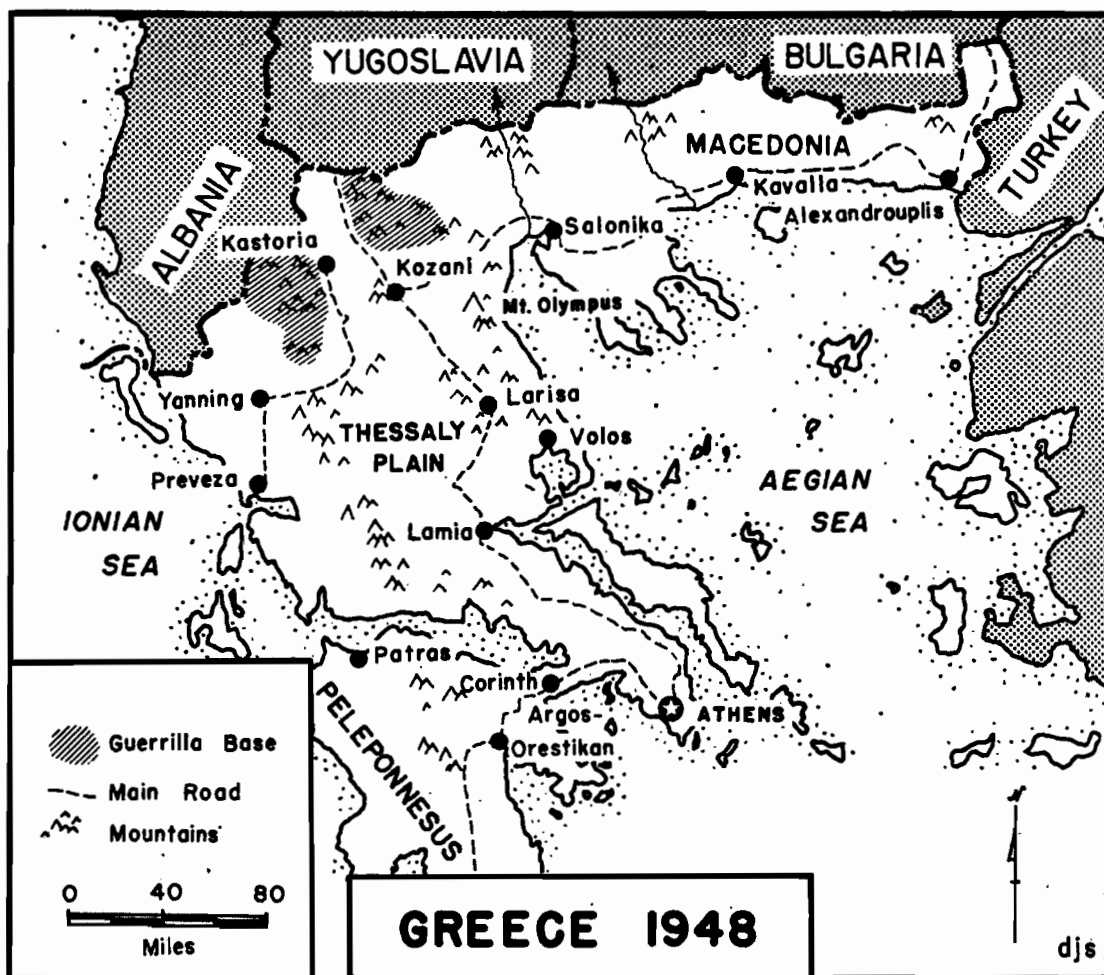
Fig. 5.

corners of Pampanga, Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, the Hukbalahap was born."[5] This area had long been the home of various rebel and bandit groups. In addition these three provinces are the rice-basket of Central Luzon and thus controlled the basic economic structure of Luzon Island and also Manila. The terrain is a combination of dense forest vegetation and the foothills of Mount Arayat (Fig. 4).

In contrast, both the Greek and Malayan communist insurgencies ultimately failed in their objectives because of their limited access to major political targets. In Greece the EAM/ELAS was concentrated in the rugged mountainous terrain along the Greek-

Yugoslav-Albania border. Although the terrain was ideal for military · operations, its distance from the key core areas of Athens and the Peloponnesus was too great to be overcome.[6] Although not the only factor involved in their defeat, this lack of access to key areas was certainly a contributing factor. Likewise, in Malaya, if we ignore the ethnic issue, the Communist terrorists were gradually pushed into the dense jungle and moun-

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[5] Taruc, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, p. 65.

[6] Accounts of the Greek revolution can be found in Col. T. N. Greene (Ed.), *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), and *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict, Vol. 2, The Experience in Europe and the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: The American University, Center for Research in Social Systems, March 1967).

tainous terrain of interior Malaya. Although the area was ideal for hiding from pursuing troops, it was also far from any major town or socioeconomic core of the country. This isolation prohibited access to population groups that might have given support to the movement and contributed substantially to the ultimate failure of the insurgency (Fig. 5).[7]

"Guerrilla War:" Creation of "Core Areas"

Mobile war, although a necessary initial tactic of trading space for time, is wasteful of men, time, and supplies. The insurgent attempts to establish fixed bases as soon as the geopolitical conditions are favorable. Once established in a fixed area, a guerrilla base becomes the "core area" of the insurgent movement. Not only must the base area act as the headquarters for military operations of the movement, it must also provide the daily necessities and supplies for future military engagements. The base will also act as the genesis point for expansion of political ideas and influence. Guevara has described this transition from "mobile" to "guerrilla" war for the Cuban revolution:[8]

At the outset there is a more or less homogenous group, with some arms, that devotes itself almost exclusively to hiding in the wildest and most inaccessible places, making little contact with the peasants. It strikes a fortunate blow and its fame grows. A few peasants, dispossessed of their land or engaged in a struggle to conserve it, and the young idealists of other classes join the nucleus; it acquires greater audacity and starts to operate in inhabited places, making more contact with the people of the zone; it repeats attacks, always fleeing after making them; suddenly it engages in combat with some column or other and destroys its vanguard. Men continue to join it; it has increased in number, but its organization remains exactly the same; its caution diminishes, and it ventures into more populous zones. Later it sets up temporary camp for several days; it abandons these upon receiving news of the approach of an enemy army, or upon suffering bombardment, or simply upon becoming suspicious that such risks

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[7] Accounts of the Malayan insurrection can be found in Greene, *op. cit.*, footnote 6, and in *Challenge and Response in Internal Conflict, Vol. 1, The Experience in Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The American University, Center for Research in Social Systems, February 1968). The source for Figure 5 is Col. J. C. Murray, "The Anti-Bandit War," in Greene, *op. cit.*, footnote 6.

[8] E. C. Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1961), p. 74.

have arisen. The numbers in the guerrilla band increase as work among the masses operates to make each peasant an enthusiast for the war of liberation. Finally, an inaccessible place is chosen, a settled life is initiated, and the first small industries begin to be established; a shoe factory, a cigar and cigarette factory, a clothing factory, an arms factory, bakery, hospital, possibly a radio transmitter, a printing press, etc.

Just as key cities represent the economic and political cores of government power, so the guerrilla base represents the insurgent's core area. In contrast with the problems of "mobile war" and its constant movement over large areas, the base area is a point of concentration and the first tangible territorial representation of the movement and its leaders. It is the equivalent of a transition from nomadic to sedentary organization. Fixed guerrilla bases as an integral part of national revolution were first used in the Chinese Communist movement, 1927-1949 (Fig. 3).

It is obvious that each base represents a maximization of the locational elements considered ideal, as indicated above. First, there was the location at one or more provincial boundaries. This provided confused local political control and mixed police and military authority. Second, the border location meant that each base had access to more than one province from a single location. Third, the border areas all represented rugged terrain, dense vegetation, or the asset of swampy river, lake, and estuary locations. Fourth, each base had access to either a provincial capital or a key regional city. Finally, every base was in a position to harass major national transportation routes such as national railroads or the all-important Yangtze River.

When a large rural hinterland is not available, as in a small island country like Cuba or the island of Java, or where the total size of the state is small, as in Greece or Vietnam, some of the location elements may need to be adjusted to local national circumstances. Access to key targets and large concentrations of population, however, remain paramount.

In the case of the islands of Indonesia, none of which offered the territorial size of China, there was the advantage of the insurgents being indigenous natives fighting against the Dutch or nonindigenous people. Thus, the insurgents who could not hide in large numbers in the small mountain valleys of central Java could hide among the general population

without fear of detection. Even so the revolutionaries established physical guerrilla bases and operated them in a political and military manner similar to those in China.

This military and political pattern has become so effective that it has been consciously applied in national revolutions such as those in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cuba, and others. In the 1948 Indonesian revolution against return of Dutch colonial power (authority), the ability of insurgents to hide in the countryside on the relatively small, but critical, island of Java was limited. Those who could not mix with the general population (owing primarily to Dutch knowledge of their involvement) established bases in relatively secure mountain locations. Actually the small size of the island and its jungle-covered mountainous core were a boon to the insurgents. No city on the island was far from such a base, and the number of bases meant that all cities and transport lines were threatened by the guerrillas (Fig. 6). The most immediate problems following the establishment of the bases, however, was their organization and coordination (see below, the Federal State).

Once fixed base areas are established and the revolutionary movement begins to experience success in its effort to gain support, it faces a situation in which its own followers and military forces become too numerous for a single or small base. Increasing demands upon existing supplies and the concentration of people and equipment make discovery and attack by government troops easier. It now becomes necessary either to expand the size of the guerrilla area or to disperse some of its followers to new locations. There is no quantitative measure as to when this change must occur. It is a purely subjective matter that depends upon the objective realities of any given geographic and political situation. There now occurs a dramatic change in the political geography of the movement. As Guevara wrote about the Cuban experience:[9]

A moment arrives when its radius of action will not have increased in the same proportion as its personnel; that moment a force of appropriate size is separated, a column or a platoon, perhaps, and this goes to another place of combat. The work of this second group will begin with somewhat different characteristics because of the experience that

[9] Guevara, op. cit., footnote 8, pp. 74–75.

it brings, and because of the influence of the troops of liberation on the war zone. The original nucleus also continues to grow; it has now received substantial support in food, sometimes in guns, from various places men continue to arrive; the administration of government, with the promulgation of laws continues; schools are established, permitting the indoctrination and training of recruits. The leaders learn steadily as the war develops, and their capacity of command grows under the added responsibilities of the qualitative and quantitative increase in their forces. If there are distant territories, a group departs for them at a certain moment, in order to confirm the advances that have been made and to continue the cycle.

The creation of new guerrilla bases represents a process roughly analogous to the creation of colonies and parallels the process found in the evolution of any state or body politic. However, in an insurgent movement it is not only an expansion of territorial control and identity, but it is also the means whereby attacks on government control and territory may now be spread over a wider area and also coordinated from several directions at one time. Each base now acts as the nodal point (core area) from which both political propaganda and military influence may be expanded, directed, and implemented. They provide the geographic and military advantage of a physically secure haven; they also act as the source of supply and site of small factories, hospitals, and schools that serve the needs of the insurgents and eliminate the need for reliance on supplies and services from the government-controlled areas. In addition each base acts as a demonstration of the realities of life under the insurgent's social, economic, and political programs. Base areas thus provide a major propaganda weapon in the struggle for support of the general population.

Boundaries

With the creation of guerrilla bases and of guerrilla-dominated areas within the state, the political geography of any country undergoes an important change. The countryside is now divided between government-controlled areas, insurgent-controlled areas, and the intermediate zones between them. "Frontiers" and "boundaries" are created between the opposing political-military forces. It is impossible to define accurately how these boundaries expand or when they do so; expansion naturally depends upon the local
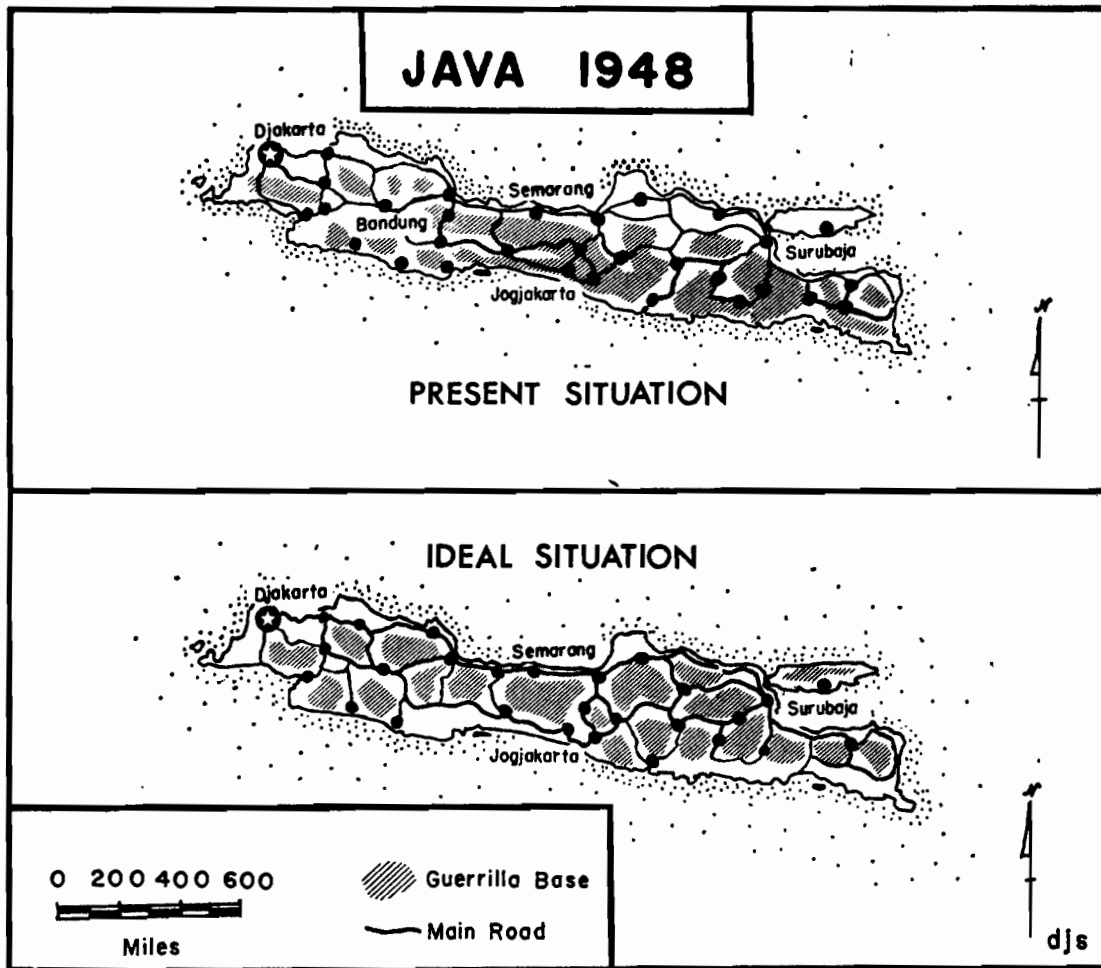
Fig. 6.

political and military conditions of each base and not upon any "stage" per se. The direction of expansion, however, is clear. Since cities and key transport-communication lines are the major objectives, the expansion of guerrilla controlled territory and, thus, of its boundaries will be greatest in the direction of population concentrations. New areas of insurgent control are generally divided into two categories. First, are the areas immediately contiguous to each base area. Often called "liberated areas," they are the result of a natural expansion of revolutionary ideas and control from the base area. Here insurgent political and military control are absolute. The second type is termed a "guerrilla area" and is located in the hinterlands of important political-military targets such as

cities and key towns and along major transportation-communication lines. Owing to their proximity to concentrations of government troops, such areas generally do not contain large or complex base areas. Insurgent control in these areas is weaker, but their location gives them a political and military significance often exceeding that of the "liberated" areas.

The actual "boundary" between insurgent and government territory may be marked with signs or even booby traps. This is certainly the case in South Vietnam where signs proclaiming National Liberation Front (NLF) control are posted and the need for a pass to enter safely is openly advertised. In the absence of such direct and obvious markers, there are indirect but certainly as

effective means of determining the "boundary." The presence or absence of government services and/or officials is one. Those areas where government troops and civil servants are able to move with safety both day and night, where the government is able to collect taxes and to assign its representatives without fear of their assassination are clearly within the boundary of maximum government control. Conversely, those areas where the insurgent is able to prevent the extended operation of government forces both day and night, where the government is unable to collect taxes on a regular basis, and where few government servants are assigned, these are areas within the insurgent's "boundary." The observation made for the Philippines was that:[10]

> There were extensive areas in the provincial hinterlands that were considered Huk territory. In these places the Huks constituted the final source of authority. They made and enforced laws, collected taxes, and organized the lives of the people in support of the revolution. Even in the areas where the government troops patrolled during the day, the Huks took charge after dark. It became an axiom of the struggle that whichever side controlled peace and order after dark controlled the loyalty of the people.

Between the government and insurgent "boundaries" is a transitional zone or "frontier." Such frontiers are characterized by government control during the day and insurgent control at night, or by government control of the cities and major transport-communication lines and insurgent control within fifty meters of these areas. Often these "frontiers" or "contested areas" are the most important arenas of struggle between the two forces. It is into the frontier zone that the insurgent attempts to expand while the same area is viewed by the government as the area in which to hold the line against further insurgent advances. The struggle is not over the land itself, as in a purely military battle, but rather over the population concentrations. The result is that the local populations in such "contested" or "frontier" areas become politically neutral; anything else would lead to immediate suppression by one side or the other. Such neutralization actually works to the advantage of the insurgent and disad-

vantage of the government. Even if the local population should not believe in or support the cause of the insurgent, its failure to report his activities and sabotage to the government means that the government will fail to detect the insurgent's presence, will walk into booby traps, and will gradually be forced to withdraw from the area as an effective presence. Such areas then come under insurgent control.

"Equilibrium:" The Creation of the Insurgent State

The transition from "guerrilla war" to the stage of "equilibrium" is the result of substantial changes in both the military and geographic position of the insurgent movement relative to the government. Militarily the insurgent has been able to force government troops to concentrate in the larger cities, to meet government troops in open battle. and to protect the areas he controls from government attack. His evaluation of his military position relative to the government is one of equality or "equilibrium." Geographically the insurgent has been able to expand the number of guerrilla bases and even to expand insurgent control into the areas around them. In addition, large numbers of civilians have now either joined the movement or have been included in the areas under its control.

The increased number and size of guerrilla bases and the ability to meet and defeat government troops in open battle provide the appearance of legitimacy to the movement, particularly in the eyes of local populations. The ability to force the government to concentrate its troops in large towns also creates the impression of limited government authority and of the government's inability to protect its own citizens.

During the 1946-1949 insurrection in Greece, the insurgents gained both internal and even some external support when they were able to create numerous uprisings scattered throughout the entire country. Once their bases in the Peloponnesus and the southern areas of the Pindus mountains were eliminated, however, this support evaporated. Eventually their only remaining bases were concentrated in the Gramos and Visti areas of northern Greece. Not only were these areas far removed from the national core of Athens, but their location along the Albanian-

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[10] A. H. Scaff, *The Philippine Answer to Communism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 31.

Yugoslav border and the support they received from these "outsiders" further reduced their effectiveness as a "national" movement.

In Cuba, the image of a countryside controlled by Castro's guerrillas and, eventually, of even the major cities being unsafe, created a substantial psychological barrier to reassertion of government control. This image was used by both insurgent and foreign propagandists to demonstrate that the Batista government was not in fact in control of Cuba.

The National Liberation Front (NLF) of South Vietnam has also used the existence of guerrilla bases to "demonstrate" government weakness and the government's ineffectiveness as a national political force. Maps can be found in NLF propaganda as well as in contemporary United States news media purporting to illustrate the widespread extent of insurgent control of the countryside and the government's concentration in only the major cities and along the national transportation routes. The implication is clear. If this is an accurate representation of the situation, the insurgent must in fact control the country and thus be the legitimate political party if not the *de facto* government of the entire country. The important point is that it is precisely because of the psychological power of this image that the revolutionary movement places so much stress on the creation of bases and the territorial expansion of political control.

At this point the insurgent has the following advantages in his political contest with the government:

1) A cause, or *raison d'etre*, that attracts support among the population;
2) a guerrilla army that forms the basis of his own system of power and force;
3) a series of political-military bases that act as "core areas" and from which the movement is directed and expanded;
4) control of an increasingly larger geographic proportion of population and resources within the state;
5) the creation of relatively distinct boundaries and frontiers between government-controlled and insurgent-controlled areas.

The assets are not all on the side of the insurgent, however. This pattern of geographically separate bases scattered over the countryside and often lacking effective means of communication or coordination creates substantial new problems for the movement. From an external insurgent versus government point of view, the larger the number of bases and the greater the size of the area controlled, the easier it is for the government to interdict these, stopping logistical supplies and gaining valuable intelligence information.

Internally, for the continued political solidarity of the revolution, the existence of many geographically distinct bases poses an even more critical set of problems. There is the problem of the local orientation of each base. Base areas may become identified with local power cliques and thus lose association with the national goals of the revolution. Under these circumstances local bases may devolve to become merely regional factions of the movement. Second, the transition from the essentially military considerations of the "mobile war" and "guerrilla war" stages must now give way to predominantly political considerations. Simple destruction of government buildings and equipment is no longer sufficient to attract the following and support necessary for a truly popular revolution. Failure to make this transition may lead to a dissolution of the entire movement.

It was precisely because of the lack of base coordination and the existence of multiple power centers vying for control of the revolution that the Chinese Communists were defeated in their initial attempt to establish a revolution in Central China. It was possible for Chiang Kai-shek gradually to pick off each base separately and eventually to force the remaining groups to retreat on their "long march."[11] Recognizing this problem, Mao Tse-tung wrote several articles dealing with the ideological as well as practical failures involved. In his "Problems of War and Strategy" Mao pointed out that:[12]

Every Communist must grasp the truth; "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." Our

[11] R. W. McColl, "The Oyüwan Soviet Area, 1927–1932," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 27 (1967), pp. 41–60, provides additional details on this period of Chinese Communist history.

[12] Mao Tse-tung, "On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party," and "Problems of War and Strategy," in Mao, *op. cit.*, footnote 2, Vol. 1, pp. 105–15, and Vol. 2, pp. 267–80, respectively.

principle is that the Party commands the gun, the gun will never be allowed to command the Party.

Similarly in Indonesia, although the smallness of the island of Java and the essentially military nature of the 1948 revolution would seem to provide a built-in coordination, the following observation was made by Col. Nasution:[13]

> There are units which no longer feel that they belong to a command, because there is not enough or no instructions and news, because their superior commanders are "too mobile, ...

In the Philippine revolution the problem of isolation and separatism among the various bases was overcome by the mobility of the leaders.[14]

> A traveling headquarters, knitted to the other organizations by a courier system, was established. We devised a schedule of one week organizing trips which were divided between Castro Alejandrino and myself. He traveled a circular route through the barrios (villages) surrounding Mount Arayat, while mine was a wider circle encompassing Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Tarlac.

The administrative solution most commonly used, however, is the creation of a formal state system. Geographically expressed administrative and military units parallel to, but distinct from, those of the government are created. This change is usually announced through the proclamation of a "Free" government, a "People's" government, or an insurgent "Republic."

The geographic distance between bases, the complexity of regional motivations for supporting the movement, and the continual attack by government forces often prohibits the creation of a unified political structure. What is demanded by the political geography of the movement is a federal organization. One of the guerrilla bases is chosen as the "capital." Other bases and the liberated areas then become analogous to "states" or "provinces." Although this change represents an increased centralization for the direction and coordination of overall insurgent actions, it is also a form of decentralization. Each base or "province" remains free to meet local or unique problems on a day-to-day basis. This permits continued tactical flexibility yet maintains the political discipline and organization necessary to prevent the movement from fracturing into its geographic parts.

Civil Administration Organization

Politically, the increased size of purely civilian population creates a need to provide the services normally provided by the government. In the case of China, Cuba, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Greece, administrative councils were created to coordinate military and civilian participation. Such organizations replaced the legislative and judicial functions of the state. They also organized the farmers, workers, youth, and women into political and work organizations. Councils were also responsible for the collection of taxes, public health, supplies, and the various reform laws as well as the punishment of "criminals."

Geographically the size and composition of each administrative unit was determined by factors such as terrain, the size and nature of local civilian population, and natural resources. As existing administrative structure and units are already familiar to everyone, the insurgent structure parallels this in terminology, if not in size and area.

During the war against the Japanese, the Philippine Huk movement formed Barrio United Defense Corps (BUDC). These were primarily military in orientation but contained the necessary civil organization to maintain security and control.[15]

> A BUDC council, in a large barrio, had up to twelve members; smaller barrios had as few as five members. The size of the governing body was determined by both the size of the barrio and by its importance in our area of operations.

The most specific guidelines for the creation of administrative units I have found are those of the Chinese Communists. Based upon the premises that:[16]

> The old administrative areas in China are too extensive and while they are appropriate for feudal rule, they are not adequate for the system of democratic centralism of the Soviet.
> Due to the uneven development of the struggle,

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[13] Col. A. H. Nasution, *Fundamentals of Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), p. 194.

[14] Taruc, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, p. 80.

[15] Taruc, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, p. 117.

[16] *Ch'ih-fei fan-tung wen-chien hui-pien* (Collected Documents of the Reactionary Communist Bandits) (Wuch'ang: no publisher listed, May 1935), Vol. 3, pp. 659–63.

the war, and special geographic conditions, the development of soviet areas in many places has included only portions of a whole province, county, or district, or portions of different neighboring provinces, counties, or districts. The old divisions are thus not conducive to leadership of the struggle.

The Chinese Communists then proceeded to organize the areas under their control so that size and composition would balance political effectiveness with topographic conditions. Each area was divided into its functional parts, namely villages, cities, rural districts, counties and provinces. Each unit was organized upon the basis of its terrain (hilly land or plains), and the size of the population that could effectively be controlled by each unit. These considerations were spelled out in detail:[17]

> Villages and Cities.
> *Hilly land*: each village shall not be more than 15 *li* (approx. 5 miles) in length and breadth, the population shall not exceed 3,000.
> *Plains*: each village shall in principle control an extent of only 5 *li* (approx. 1¾ miles) in length and breadth, and in no case more than 10 *li* (3.3 miles). The population shall not exceed 5,000.
> *Cities*: regardless of their terrain, were not to control an area more than 1 mile beyond their perimeters.

For larger administrative units such as counties and provinces, terrain and the size of population were again the critical factors determining the size of the unit. In hilly land where communications were difficult and the population more dispersed, county government was not to include more than twelve district soviet areas. In the plains this limit was expanded to fifteen sovietized districts. For each unit there was a directive to move the administrative seat to the geographic center if the original seat was not already centrally located. Often the major administrative units were not geographically contiguous, and government troops might even be present in the intervening areas. Each unit was thus designed to be as self-sufficient as its local circumstances would permit.

Military Units: "Regular War"

Along with the stage of political and military "equilibrium," there gradually develops

the entrance into the stage of "regular war." This transition is associated with the political administrative reorganization and is also characterized by the creation of formal military districts. This military reorganization is part of the preparations for the final battle for complete control of the state.

The entire country is now divided into military units approximating war zones. Each zone is designed to complement the administrative units as well as meet the essentially military considerations such as the location of key targets, terrain, and the extent of popular support in both the guerrilla and government controlled areas. The size and composition of each division is the result of the insurgent's evaluation of his strength and the government's weakness. Conscious attempts are made to combine natural regional identification of the population with the presence of a local guerrilla army.[18]

> Our continual expansion, and the coming into being of new squadrons, soon made our original set-up unwieldy. By November the Military Committee, which had functioned well as an organizing body, found that it was difficult to supervise the numerous and scattered squadrons. Therefore, as part of our general program of tightening our organizational forms and methods, we divided Central Luzon into five Military Districts. The districts were determined by geography, by the size of our forces, and by the livelihood and general life of the people in the given areas. They were: The First Military District, comprising Southern Pampanga and its swamp and fish pond regions, under Banal; the Second Military District, embracing Baliwag, Apalit, San Ildefonso, San Simon, San Luis, Candaba, Santa Ana, and part of Arayat, under Dayang-Dayang; the Third Military District, roughly governing the area north of Arayat Mountain, under Aquino; the Fourth Military District, including all of Nueva Ecija, at first under Capuli and Briones and then under Jose "Dimasalang" de Leon; and the Fifth Military District, containing West Pampanga from Mexico through Bacolor to Lubao and Bloridablanca, under Abelardo Dabu, the pre-war president of the Pasudeco Workers' Union.

Under certain conditions each "zone" may even operate under different "causes." This is certainly the case in South Vietnam. The NLF promises political autonomy to the various *montagnard* tribes of the Central Highlands and unity to the Vietnamese rice farmer of the Mekong Delta and coastal lowlands. Likewise, in Greece the EAM/ELAS created the

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17 (Collected Documents of the Reactionary Communist Bandits), *op. cit.*, footnote 16, Vol. 3, pp. 659–63.

18 Taruc, *op. cit.*, footnote 3, p. 80.

issue of an "autonomous Macedonia" in an attempt to gain local support for their cause. In other countries and instances these issues may be based upon traditional regional antagonisms or local feelings of inadequate government attention to local problems. Regardless, the issue is found or created that will give additional support to the political and military forces of the insurgent. The result of this added geopolitical division of the country is a pattern representing insurgent priorities. Regions geographically remote from key military targets tend to be larger in size and less stringently tied to a central command.

This point can be illustrated with the current situation in South Vietnam. It is well known that the NFL has its guerrilla bases and has even controlled large portions of the South Vietnamese countryside for years. Less well known is that the NLF has also divided the entire country into their own provinces and military regions.[19] Figure 7 provides a contrast of the two systems.

Where the Government of Vietnam (GVN) has forty-four provinces, the NLF has only thirty-five. The difference is based upon the political necessities of the two groups. Reference to any ethnic and topographic map will demonstrate that the NLF has based its divisions upon terrain, the concentration of such social groups as the Hoa Hao, and the distinction between the lowland-dwelling Vietnamese and the various *montagnard* tribes of the uplands. This becomes essentially a process of guerrilla gerrymandering. Whereas the NLF is free to choose and change the size and composition of its administrative units, the Saigon government is not. The GVN must respect the traditional units and political associations they represent, often to its own political disadvantage. Militarily the NLF has eight military regions, the GVN has four. Again, a political necessity is the basis for the large number of NLF units in South Vietnam. Still, they provide a significant advantage in that GVN military commanders must often face the military planning and actions of two or more NLF commanders.

[19] A. E. Palmerlee, "Viet Cong Political Geography" (Saigon: *Viet-Nam Documents and Research Notes*, Document No. 23, March, 1968, published by the Joint United States Public Affairs Office in Saigon).

They in turn can concentrate upon a single GVN commander.

THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT
Political Factors

Well-known revolutionary writers such as Mao Tse-tung, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Che Guevara have continually stressed the importance of establishing base areas and liberated areas as the path to revolutionary success. It was in the process of trying to establish such a base in Bolivia that Che Guevara was finally captured and killed. Also, journals such as *Revolution,* devoted to the record of contemporary revolutionary movements, continually stress the size, nature, and significance of territory already controlled by such movements.

In addition to the obvious internal advantages of creating an insurgent state, there are important external advantages as well. The ability to control even a series of small parts of the state serves to demonstrate the government's weakness not only to its own population but also to other world powers that may be watching the struggle for control. If insurgent control of territory can be made to appear widespread, it is possible to promote the idea that the revolution is a popular uprising of the "people" against the government. This image aids in attracting both passive and active support from outside. Such outside support was certainly an important factor in the success of Castro in Cuba. When the United States government decided to withhold additional support to the Batista government, it clearly was siding with the cause of the insurgents even if it gave them no direct aid. In the early stages of the Greek insurgency, the geographically widespread occurrence of uprisings made it appear as though the EAM/ELAS actually enjoyed substantial support among the population. Once the guerrilla bases in the south were eliminated and the insurgents forced to concentrate in the Gramos and Visti areas along the Albanian-Yugoslav border, the movement clearly lost its "popular" appearance, and its support and reliance upon Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria became apparent. From this stage on, the movement lost its image and became essentially a military struggle between the EAM/ELAS and the Greek army.
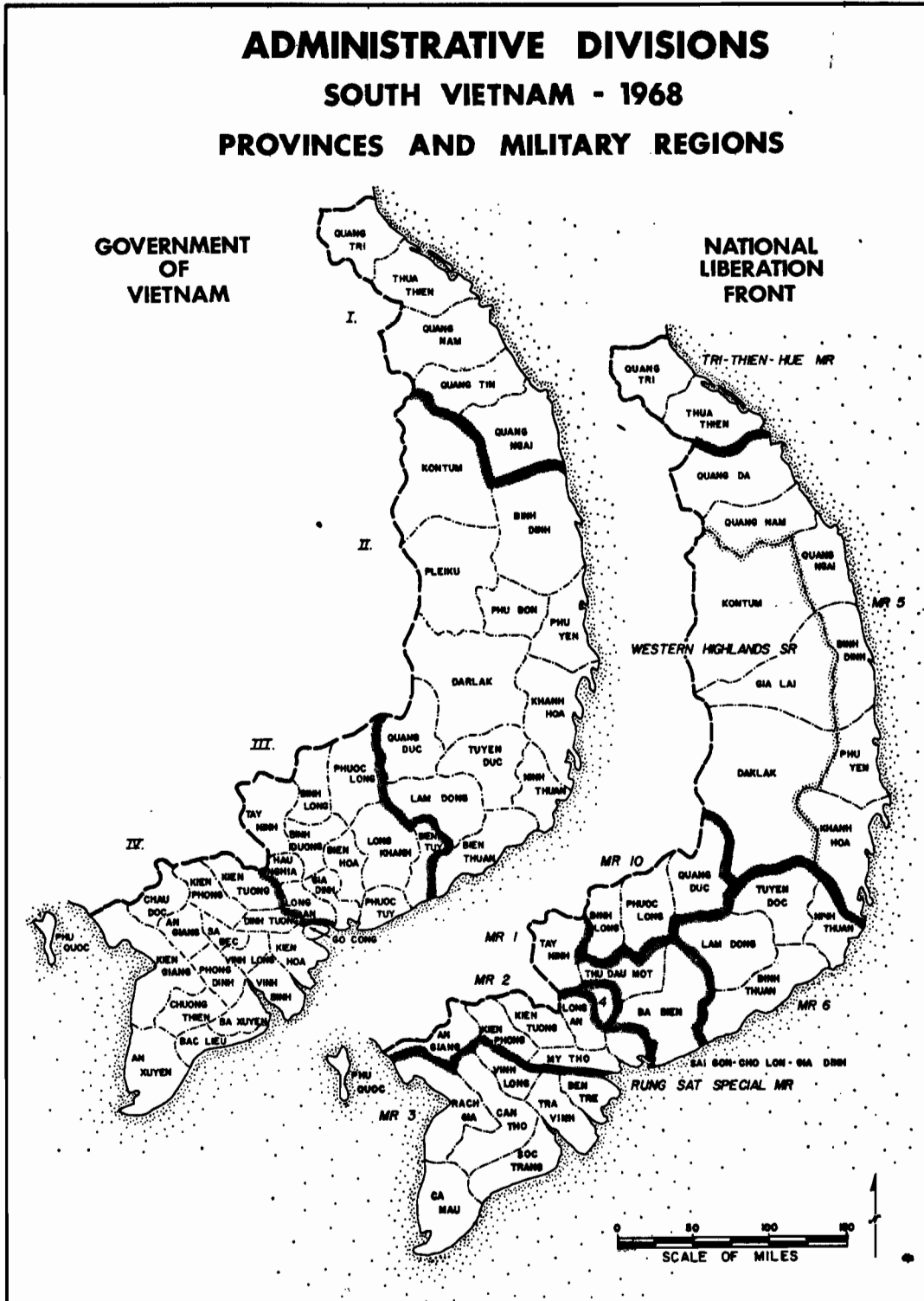
Fig. 7.

Geographic Factors

A complex international boundary is an aid to any insurgent movement. An international boundary shared with a sympathetic neighboring state provides an ideal haven from hot pursuit as well as a potential source of continued supplies. When such boundary havens are suddenly denied to an insurgent movement, as happened in Greece in 1949 when Tito broke with Stalin and closed the Greek-Yugoslav border to the Greek Communists, the movement rapidly disintegrates or is eliminated by government troops. Still, it is demonstrable that insurrections have been successful without the presence of a friendly neighboring country. China, sharing a long border with Soviet Russia, received no direct aid or support other than advisory from the Russians during the Chinese Communist movement prior to 1945. In addition, insular revolutions such as those in Indonesia, Cuba, and the Philippines received limited external support, if any. Still, the presence of an international boundary is of great assistance in continuing a revolutionary struggle, particularly if its forces are suffering defeat at the hands of government troops.

Summary and Conclusions

The above study has consciously based its conclusions upon examples of both successful and unsuccessful revolutions that have occurred in a wide range of cultural and geopolitical conditions. Although not a total sample by any means, these countries did vary substantially. Greece and Vietnam experienced external support from friendly neighboring countries. China and Indonesia were examples of largely internally generated and supported movements, whereas Cuba and Indonesia provided examples of national revolutions under insular conditions. Regardless of the variables, a primary objective of each movement was the capture and control of state territory and the eventual creation of an "insurgent state" system. In addition the following consistencies were noted:

1) National revolutions occur when there is no other means of open or legal political opposition.

2) National revolutions by definition involve military violence (war), and this must necessarily be guerrilla in form and protracted in nature.

3) The objective of a national revolution is complete national control and social change. This means that all political and military activity is determined by the location of cities and concentrations of national populations and are not random occurrences.

4) As the size of geographic areas actually controlled by the insurgent expands, it becomes necessary to change the emphasis of action from a military orientation to a more political one. It is at this point that the insurgent state is created.

5) The insurgent state has the advantages of providing a demonstration of insurgent political and social programs in operation, of training their own administrative personnel, and finally of demonstrating the government's inability to control the national territory and protect its population.

Among the misconceptions associated with a purely military or political evaluation of national revolutionary movements is that it is the countryside or rural areas of the state that are its starting point; actually it is the cities. The insurgent is forced to the countryside only after failure to establish an urban base. Once in the countryside, however, the insurgent does not make a random selection of locations for his guerrilla base. Motivated by his political objective of total national control, he remains as close to the centers of power (the cities) as his own safety will permit. As the insurgent passes from the "mobile war" stage of running-and-hiding from government troops to the creation of fixed guerrilla base areas, he begins a process of what Mao Tse-tung has called, "surrounding the cities with the countryside." Often misconstrued as a rural-based and rural-oriented policy, the main objective is the capture and control of the important cities and market towns. Control of the country-side is merely the means to that end and not an end in itself.

Another misconception is that because of their frequency and often their success, there is some magic involved in the process of a national revolution and its three stages to success. It is forgotten that there have been unsuccessful national revolutions or that the

"stages" of the revolution are determined by the insurgent's evaluation of the situation and not by any objective reality. Despite advantages of hiding in small bases in difficult terrain and attacking isolated government positions, the movement is nationally important only as its areas and control of population expands as a truly national threat. Even if this occurs it is possible to defeat the process. This was demonstrated in Greece, Malaya, and the Philippines. Whereas the common result in each of these defeats was political, the basis of defeat was geopolitical. It was by preventing insurgent access to concentrations of populations and to critical core areas of the country that the insurgents finally were defeated. In Greece and Malaya this was accomplished largely by military means; in the Philippines the process was essentially political.

For the protracted revolution characteristic of today's "insurgent era," geography and location are critical elements in its success or failure. Regardless of the political circumstances that may provide the initial spark for a national revolution, without realistic consideration of such geographic factors as terrain and access to the key political-administrative pattern of the country, any revolution can be lost in a matter of hours.