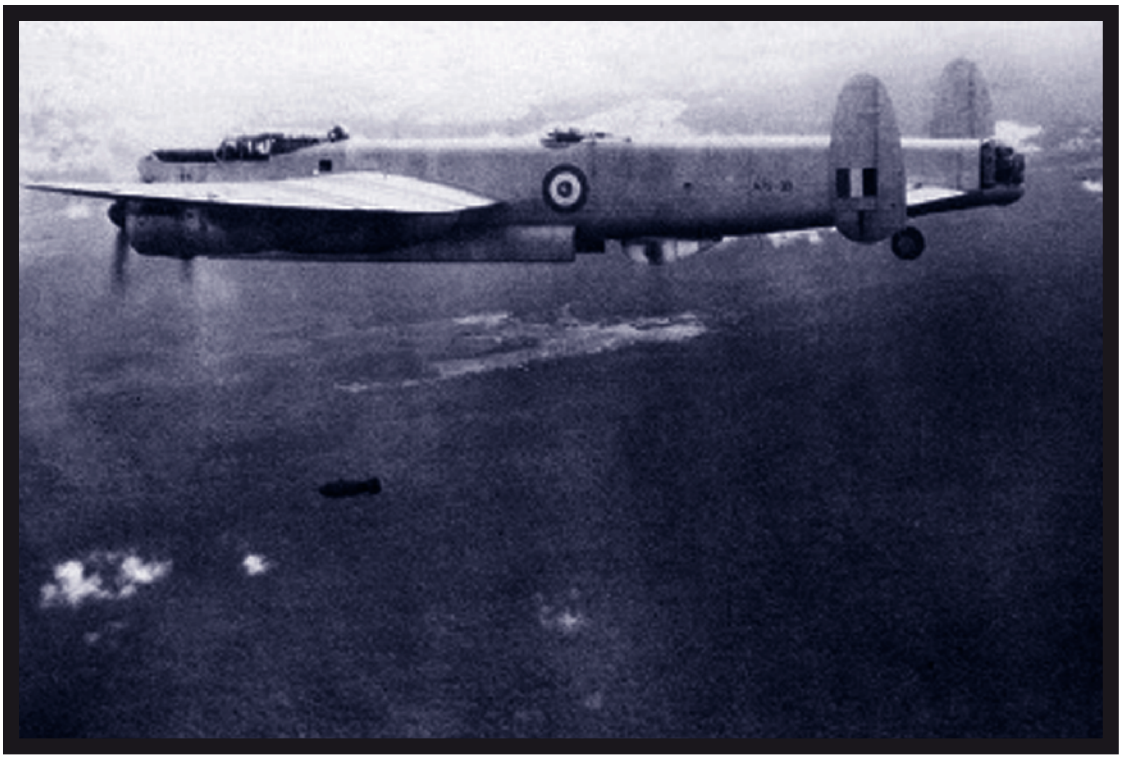


An Avro Lincoln bomber from No1 Sqn RAAF on a bombing mission over the Malayan jungle, drops two 500lb bombs

Air Power and Psychological Warfare Operations Malaya 1948–1960

By Wg Cdr Bryan J Hunt

In 1948 Communist insurgents launched a major terrorism campaign to topple British rule in Malaya and sought to establish a Peoples' Republic. The initial civil and military response was disjointed and largely ineffective until the development of a joint civil and military campaign plan that, inter alia, placed considerable importance on psyops and intelligence operations alongside constabulary policing and social reforms. This paper considers the role of air power in support of psychological warfare operations during the campaign and compares its effectiveness alongside the bombing campaign.

After the attack on our cultivation area we fled to another area where we saw many Government propaganda leaflets and safe conduct passes. I picked up some of the leaflets intending to use them when coming to surrender. A few days later we heard voices coming from an aeroplane calling on us all to surrender and offering good treatment. We all agreed to this suggestion.

(Surrendered Enemy Person, quoted in FEAF/MIS Sep 1954, Pt II).

Introduction

The murder in Malaya of three European planters in June 1948 precipitated the declaration of a state of emergency by the British-led colonial government. The insurgency was the culmination of an increasingly brutal campaign sponsored by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) that had its origins in the expansion of Soviet influence into South East Asia in the 1920s. Although the colonial authorities – most notably Police Special Branch – had penetrated the MCP during the 1930s and was able to curb many of its activities, the Japanese occupation in early 1942 resulted in the MCP cooperating with Britain in a clandestine war against the Japanese, forming the self-styled Malay Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).[1]

After the sudden capitulation of the Japanese in August 1945, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, Lord Louis Mountbatten, authorised the MPAJA to maintain order before colonial authority was re-established. Britain remained determined to retain control of post-war Malaya as it was the single largest overseas source of US dollar earnings through the export of rubber and tin and provided a considerable boost to the beleaguered British economy. Although the Secretary-General of the MCP Lai Tek discouraged direct confrontation with the British authorities, there was increasing industrial unrest in Singapore and Malaya, as MCP activists gained prominence amongst the Trades unions. After Lai Tek was unmasked as a long-time British agent in late 1947, the MCP, which was 90 per cent ethnic Chinese,[2] became galvanised to launch a direct challenge to the Malay Federation and the de facto British rule, and sought to establish a Socialist Democratic Republic.[3] [4] The MCP challenge to colonial authority was spurred by a number of recent and concurrent events: the humiliation of European defeat at the hands of the Japanese, the emergence of a Communist China under Mao Zedong, a 'call to arms' at two Moscow-sponsored conferences held in Calcutta in February and March 1948,[5] and lobbying by an Australian trade unionist and COMINTERN member, Lawrence Sharkey.

Outbreak of Insurgency

Intelligence

At the declaration of the Emergency, the colonial authorities were hampered by lack of actionable intelligence about the insurgents; indeed for several months it was thought that the violence was perpetrated by Chinese nationalists, the Kuo Min Tang (KMT), who were the arch-enemies of the Communists. The small and under-resourced internal security organisation, the Malaya Security Service (MSS), had warned of Communist intentions but these were largely ignored by the High Commissioner Sir Edward Gent and his Commissioner of Police. After the declaration of a State of Emergency, the MSS was disbanded (to be reformed as Police Special Branch), Gent was recalled to London to face questioning about the debacle, and the Commissioner of Police was replaced by the mercurial Colonel W Nichol Gray, fresh from the British mandate in Palestine.[6] The initial response by the police and military forces was disjointed (and indeed competitive), occasionally brutal and not particularly effective; however it was understood by all that the insurgency could not be defeated by military action alone. The essence of success lay in winning the confidence and the loyalty of the bulk of the Chinese population and to stimulate amongst them a positive reaction against Communism; similarly exploitation of events and intelligence required a depth of knowledge of the landscape, the culture of the target audience and 'human factors' of those involved. Accordingly, Psychological Warfare Operations (Psyops), hitherto unknown in SE Asia, required a specialised form of intelligence not readily available through single military, police or political channels.

Organisation of Psychological Warfare Operations

At the start of the Emergency, information and directives to the public were disseminated through the Emergency Publicity Committee of the Department of Public Relations, however in June 1950 this task, as well as that of propaganda, was taken over by the Emergency Information Services, which were part of the Federal Police HQ in Kuala Lumpur, with representatives at State, Settlement and District levels. In October 1952 the Emergency Information Service was separated from the joint civil/military Director of Operations

Chinese communist terrorists

Staff and placed under the Director-General of Information Services, only for the responsibility for the psychological offensive to pass back to the Psychological Warfare Section of the Operations Directorate some month later.[7] Although General Sir Gerald Templer (High Commissioner and Director of Operations 1952-54) had regarded intelligence operations and psyops as his 'right and left hand gloves' his Director of Intelligence, Jack Morton, regarded that the outcome of intelligence operations was more predictable, and invested resources in delineating Army and police intelligence

responsibilities and developing Special Branch operations at the expense of the Psychological Warfare Section.[8]

The main aims of the 'war of words' were to induce surrenders amongst the insurgents, by breaking their morale and causing disaffection within their ranks, and to win the battle for the minds and loyalties of the uncommitted population in the face of propaganda offensive that was launched by the MCP. In a 2005 interview with a Chinese former senior Special Branch officer, Leong Che Woh described that the role of the Federal authorities was to convert the insurgents; a death of an insurgent was 'regarded as a failure'.[9] This view was in stark contrast with the military approach of using kinetic means to defeat the insurgents – patrols, battery shoots and air attacks, - and this would remain source of friction between the colonial police and the military and air authorities. The main problem faced by the information staff was in promulgating the message to an elusive enemy whose primary tactic was to avoid contact with the security forces. The local Chinese were indoctrinated by the Government through the press, radio, films and itinerant information teams (often comprising of surrendered enemy personnel (SEPs)) and the local Masses Organisation or Min Yuen (who supported the communist insurgency) could be relied upon to relay some of the information to those insurgents taking refuge in the jungle.[10] However, as they withdrew deeper into the jungle, messages to the insurgents were spread primarily through leaflet drops and voice broadcasts from aircraft; indeed this was often the only means of making contact with them and without these means of disseminating information much of the effect of the psychological warfare campaign would have been nullified.[11] Once again, Air power demonstrated ubiquity – largely unconstrained by terrain or enemy presence. Communist propaganda was limited to political indoctrination and hectoring, and the promulgation of Marxist publications; indeed the MCP leadership regarded printing presses as their strongest weapon and the colonial authorities went to enormous lengths to stop the production and distribution of communist propaganda newspapers and leaflets.

British troops on patrol in the Malayan jungle

During the first two years of the Emergency – until mid 1950 – access to day-to-day intelligence suitable for exploitation was lacking, as competition for new material was fierce. Firstly, after the disbandment of the MSS in August 1948 the security forces lost what few reliable Chinese sources of human intelligence (Humint), as there had been over-reliance on Lai Tek as a single source of intelligence on communist intentions. Secondly, the newly reconstituted Police Special Branch was grossly under-resourced and contained few officers who could speak Chinese dialects or had experience of

the largely rural Chinese population in Malaya, amongst whom the communist insurgents operated. Military units initially ran their own network of agents and informers, often in competition with Special Branch operations. The police usually gained the first news of exploitable events, such as surrenders or major defections and although such

Chin Peng, communist leader

events could be exploited by the Psychological Warfare Section to create a 'snowball' effect, Special Branch tended to conceal such events in order not to jeopardise other covert operations. Such was the parochialism that the Psywar Section took the view that secrecy and security were often imposed for no better reason that to gain credit for the police, and Special Branch in particular, leading to bitter arguments resulting in the Psywar Section deliberately exploiting intelligence material that Special Branch had embargoed [1,2] Interestingly, the Psywar section ensured that the material in sponsored publications (leaflets, newspapers and magazines) and films was factually accurate; there is little evidence of the use of 'Black' propaganda during the campaign.

The emergency Information staff had few guidelines; Psychological Warfare was a new art and experience was largely limited to the European theatre of World War II and the policies – such as the adoption of the rewards scheme – was largely the work of a future Director-General of the BBC, Hugh Greene, who was appointed as Director of the Emergency Information Service in 1950[13.] Furthermore, the pysops campaign had to act within the civil penal code and could not urge, for example, that insurgents kill their leaders, even though this happened on an increasingly frequent basis as the financial rewards grew. It also took several years for the Government to realise that two thirds of the Min Yuen and a significant percentage of the insurgents were illiterate; accordingly leaflets and newspapers had to be understood by all. The psyops campaign gained greater momentum and traction by the later appointment of an influential Chinese businessman, 'Harry' CC Too, with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Chinese society and intimate understanding of senior MCP figures. Conflated with an overall improvement of intelligence from the Police, in part due to the concerted recruitment of Chinese detectives into Special Branch, by late 1951 the initiative had passed to the Security forces, a point that the MCP acknowledged in an evaluation that was soon to fall into Government hands.[14] This was in spite of 1951 being regarded as the darkest year of the Emergency by British settlers in Malaya, with spectacular successes scored by the insurgents such as the assassination of the High

An RAF Valetta drops propaganda leaflets over the Malayan jungle

Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, in October 1951.

Psychological Warfare Operations – Techniques and Dissemination

Leaflets and broadcasts were prepared in simple vernacular languages for distribution to the scattered villages and estates where the majority of the sympathetic Chinese and Min Yuen lived. Leaflets were usually dispatched from a supply-dropping aircraft and occasionally by bombers of the offensive support force at the conclusion of an air strike. Valettas, Dakotas, offensive aircraft – such as Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Lincoln bombers at the completion of bombing missions - and in later years of the Emergency, from the fearsome Bristol Freighter of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF), carried loads of up to 800,000 leaflets at a time. Experience showed that a good distribution was achieved in an area of 1,000 yards square by dispatching 50,000 leaflets at a time at the end of a static line.[15] If accurate drops of a limited quantity of leaflets into small pinpoint targets were required, usually when the need to exploit rapidly a success achieved by the security forces, Austers of 656 Squadron RAF (later, Army Air Corps (AAC)) and occasionally Harvards of the Malayan Auxiliary Air Force (MAAF) were employed. Throughout the campaign leaflets remained the chief medium for disseminating information and propaganda to the insurgents in the jungle and to the Min Yuen. Although the maximum number of leaflet sorties was in 1951, the peak of leaflet delivery was achieved in 1955, when the psychological warfare operations were achieving greater successes than direct military operations. Initially leaflets were of a strategic nature, advising populations of emergency regulations and extolling the virtues of surrender, although there is little evidence of this being a successful method. As the campaign progressed, tactical leaflet dropping was used to exploit successes of police and military operations and to publicise the rewards scheme, whereby

Titled: Now is the time to save yourself – it was reported that 207 terrorists surrendered with this leaflet, No 256

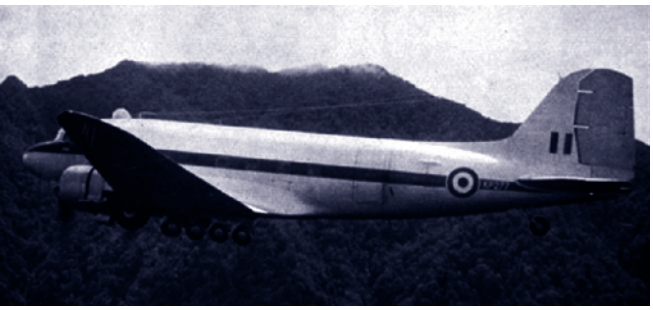
the authorities would pay substantial bounties for insurgents to surrender or to 'bring in' weapons and MCP leaders.[16]

The air power commitment in 1955 – the peak of psychological operations – saw 141 million leaflets dropped on 365 leaflet dropping sorties and 906 hours of voice broadcast over 922 sorties. In September 1955, the Federal Government announced an amnesty prior to the peace talks in Baling, when 21 million leaflets were dropped in seven days.

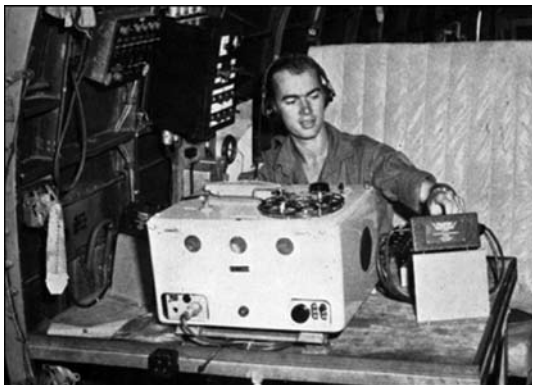
The broadcasting of recorded messages from aircraft was not introduced into the Malayan campaign until October 1952 when General Templer arranged the loan of a US Air Force C-47 Dakota aircraft from Korea for experimental purposes, through his personal friendship with General Mark Clark, the commander of US forces in Korea from May 1952.[17] The Dakotas had proved to be of little use in Korea due to a sophisticated air defence system in the North, whereas air power had supremacy in Malaya.[18] As a result of experiments conducted by the Far East Army Operational Research Section (Psywar), two RAF Valetta aircraft of Headquarters Far East Air Force (HQ FEAF) were fitted with voice broadcasting equipment and began operations in early 1953. Excessive engine noise – rebroadcast over the loud speakers – resulted in the Valettas being replaced by two ex-Malayan Airlines Dakotas (which were, in turn, ex-RAF) in December 1953 and March 1954. The Dakota transport aircraft, although obsolete in the RAF by that time, was more suited in the voice-broadcasting role as the engine noise was less and the lower cruising and loiter speeds enabled longer broadcasts to be made.

In January 1954 an Auster was equipped with loud hailing equipment for use over small targets on the fringe of the jungle or adjacent to roads, where accuracy was important and when the employment of larger aircraft was uneconomical.

The Voice Aircraft (VA) broadcasting equipment consisted of a diesel generator and four modified 'Tannoy' under-wing mounted speakers, offset to port. Broadcasts were normally made at 2,500 or 3,000 feet at about 75 knots and in good weather conditions the broadcast could be heard 2,500 yards left of track. The equipment could be jettisoned in an emergency, unlike the original US fit, where banks of speakers were mounted in main doorway. Typically VA flew a 2,000-yard offset box pattern to ensure adequate ground coverage. The Austers, fitted with only one speaker, could be heard some 1,000 – 1,500 yards left of track when flying at 40 – 45 knots at between 800 and 1,500 feet, but aircraft performance was hampered by the equipment weight and the need to carry a 'voice operator'. An endless loop tape system was introduced in April 1954 which obviated the requirement for the extra crew member; however the work load on the single pilot was immense. The pilot operated the equipment by hand, using his feet and knees to manage the flying controls, whilst flying at low level in mountainous tropical terrain. Any turbulence, aided by a draughty cabin, would result in the 20 feet of recorded tape breaking loose and winding itself around the pilot and his controls. Changing the endless loop cassettes was a very difficult task and it is to their credit that they achieved the many successes which reports from the ground gave them.[19] By 1955 the 'Voice'



A 2,000-watt loudspeaker system on a Dakota of the Voice flight detachment of 52 Sqn RAF



A crew member prepares to make a broadcast to the terrorists in the jungle

Flight of 267 Squadron RAF had three Dakotas and two Austers; sadly the one remaining Valetta crashed in February 1954 in NW Jahore with loss of seven crew.[20]

Typically, voice broadcasts did not exceed 28 seconds; indeed many were shorter, and a considerable amount of scripting was required to compress a meaningful message into the allocated timeframe. There were also instances where live broadcasts were given from the aircraft although the usual speaker was the principal woman announcer from Radio Malaya, 'Mrs Tan', who could speak English, Malay, and the four principal Chinese dialects.[21] She carried out her own translations and made her own recordings between regular Radio Malaya broadcasts. On several occasions, General Templer gave broadcasts in heavily-practised Chinese and Derry, in his unpublished account of Psyops in Malaya, noted that these broadcasts had a major effect on the insurgents. The greatest challenge was in preparing recordings to be broadcast to the indigenous Orang Asli people - the so-called 'aboriginals' - who lived in the deep jungle and were exploited by the insurgents as an intelligence screen. The broadcasts were heard by the Orang Asli but were regarded as 'wind in the head' ie a mental aberration, because of the dense jungle the aircraft were rarely visible and thus the source of the voices could not be determined.

Tasking

Requests for loud hailing or leaflet dropping sorties emanated through police channels (typically Special Branch, or State-level 'Voice Area Committees') and were passed to the Joint Operations Centre (JOC) in Kuala Lumpur, where the mission was prioritised and deconflicted with air strikes and supply drops. By 1954, the average time between a request for a voice mission and take-off time was about four hours; technical advances in tape production meant that by 1957 the request-to-launch time was reduced to two hours. Although mission coordination could result in differing voice missions being carried out during the one sortie, it was typical to saturate an area in voice broadcasts for several days, effectively tying up one – possibly two – VA in order to achieve the maximum psychological effect. Although not a regular practise, VA did sometimes operate in conjunction with

bombing and artillery engagements, although the Psywar Section believed that the insurgents were not particularly receptive to messages after such bombardments, who they thought were paralysed by fear and could not make rational decisions to surrender.[22] This is in contrast with techniques later used in Vietnam and in Iraq in 1991, where leaflet dropping followed intense 'softening up' by B-52 aircraft.

Operational Tempo

From 1956 onwards the number of contacts with the insurgents reduced as their numbers decreased and it was hoped that psychological operations would play an increasing role in defeating the insurgency. As well as the tactical leaflet and voice broadcast role, strategic leaflets were used to publicise both Merdeka (Malayan independence from Britain in August 1957) and the intention of the Federal Government to prosecute a long term war against the insurgents. Although the increase in the number of insurgent 'eliminations' had a cumulative effect, they were not immediately publicised to avoid prejudicing ongoing Special Branch operations in Northern Jahore and Southern Perak. This had the net effect of reducing the number of leaflet drops and VA sorties. Additionally, the Dakotas were rapidly aging in the tropical conditions and coupled with additional positioning time as the insurgency was confined to the border with Thailand, the average number of broadcasts made over an area were reduced from five to three in order to conserve remaining airframe hours.[23] Furthermore, political constraints of operating near, and sometimes over, Thai territory meant that there were delays in obtaining over-flight clearance. By the end of the Emergency in 1960, Commonwealth air forces had delivered nearly 500 million leaflets on more that 2,500 sorties and conducted nearly 4,000 hours of voice broadcast during 4,500 sorties.

Impact of the Air contribution to the Psychological Warfare Campaign

In 1949, when the Psychological warfare campaign was in its infancy and the insurgents had the upper hand militarily, 48 of the 207 insurgents who surrendered between September and December did so after reading leaflets outlining the surrender terms.[24] The first measured impact of the leaflet campaign was apparent in Penang in 1951 – arguably the darkest year of the Emergency when the greatest numbers of insurgent killings took place, including the High Commissioner – when leaflets advertising cash rewards for information on the whereabouts of insurgents resulted in a five-fold increase of actionable intelligence received by Special Branch.[25] After 1952 SEPs also stated on many occasions that voice broadcasts influenced their decision to surrender; additionally by 1955, 70% of those who surrendered used safe conduct passes that were routinely attached to information leaflets. Although the official RAF history is vague about the effectiveness of the psywar campaign, the Operational Research Section (Psywar) (ORS(PS) conducted a detailed analysis of the motivation of surrendered insurgents in 1956, noting inter alia, that of those who heard the VA broadcasts clearly, 91% considered them to be 'highly effective in destroying CT [Communist Terrorist] morale, convincing the terrorists of the futility of continuing the armed struggle and [thereby] inducing surrender.' A further 73% of SEPs also listed voice broadcasts as a factor precipitating their own surrender.[26] The ORS(PS)

also collated numerous statements from SEPs illustrating the propaganda effectiveness of VA eg 'Voice aircraft should be more used. The pamphlets [leaflets] are forbidden to be read whilst broadcasts from Voice Aircraft can be heard by all'.[27] The MCP Secretary-General Chin Peng issued an order that any MCP member found in possession of a leaflet would be summarily executed; however there was no means to block out voice broadcasts that were frequently addressed to individuals within known groups of insurgents.[28] The personalising of broadcasts was likely to be a key factor in success: hearing messages telling who you are, where you are, and what you should do next would be a powerful inducement to surrender. Later in the campaign, weaknesses of the MCP position were ruthlessly exploited by the Emergency Information Service. The failure of the September 1955 peace talks in Baling were portrayed as a lost opportunity for the MCP – Merdeka was proceeding and the Federal Government had made it clear that the MCP would not be legitimised and therefore would not have a role in the new government. Chin Peng had previously announced that the MCP would disarm if Merdeka took place; and although independence was granted on 31 August 1957, the Communist struggle continued, but with considerably less resolve.[29] Mass surrenders took place in 1957 – 1958 and although these cannot be ascribed solely to the psychological warfare campaign, the leaflets and broadcasts supported the firm line that the Federal Government had taken – such as resettlement of the Chinese squatter population (thereby removing the Min Yuen support), continued food denial programmes in 'black' areas (areas with active insurgency) and successful penetration of the highest levels of the MCP by Special Branch.[30] In 1960, in a captured document the MCP – now based in a relatively benign southern Thailand, with the connivance of the Thai Government – offered the opportunity for MCP members to leave guerrilla operations if 'they had lost faith in the present struggle, were sick or old, or they wanted to marry'.[31]

Conclusions

Much has been written about the offensive actions of the air forces during the Malayan Emergency but few comparisons with the non-lethal effect of the air power contribution to the psyops campaign have been made. Kinetic targets were invariably in dense jungle thus attacking them was problematic and bomb damage assessment was a speculative pastime. At the commencement of the Emergency the lack of adequate charts, maps and photographic coverage limited the accuracy and therefore the effectiveness of the bombing and strafing campaign. Tim Hatton, a Special Branch officer throughout much of the Emergency, and who rose to be Deputy Director of Special Branch in the mid 1960s, reported on the catastrophic impact collateral damage had on the 'Hearts and Minds' campaign; such loss of support and actionable intelligence from otherwise neutral populations needed to be weighed up against the resources expended on ordnance.[32] During the campaign some 35,000 short tons of bombs were dropped during 4,067 air strikes, with expenditure on ammunition and explosives alone exceeding £1.5 million per annum by 1951. There were few measures of effectiveness of the air campaign. During the first 18 months from June 1948 to December 1949 intelligence reports of questionable reliability

reported 98 insurgents killed and a further 22 wounded during air strikes; in contrast, during the same period security forces killed approximately 1,000 insurgents in ground contacts. Other reports, quoted in the official account of the air campaign, reported that 126 insurgents were killed by air strikes with a further 141 injured. In a 1963 symposium on the role of air power in Malaya, sponsored by the US Air Force, it was reported that the heavy bombing campaign conducted by the Royal Australian Air Force (eight Lincoln aircraft dropping roughly half the total ordnance – 17,500 short tons) eliminated only 16 insurgents and between 20 and 30 camps were destroyed.[33] Overall, Postgate in the official RAF history of Operation Firedog, assessed that the air campaign contributed to less than 10% of the total casualty count. This is in stark contrast with the empirical evidence obtained from insurgents who 'self renewed'[34] as a result of the relatively economical psyops campaign. Perhaps if the RAF had focussed on a non-kinetic campaign of psyops support, air re-supply and helicopter operations, even greater successes would have been achieved. Such a strategy would have to have been weighed up against the need to provide close-air support to security forces. Nonetheless air strikes clearly had a deleterious effect on morale. Chin Peng reported the effect of an intense bombardment of his headquarters in March 1953.

Although the RAAF Lincolns missed the well-camouflaged camp, a number of insurgents - including two of Chin Peng's bodyguards – were killed in the raid and his headquarters was rapidly vacated and command and control effectively neutralised because of the fear of follow-on security force attacks.[35]

The importance of the contribution made by the propaganda and information services to the successful outcome of the campaign cannot be underestimated. By the middle of 1951 it was clear that the cumulative effect of Security Force measures had increased public confidence in them, with a resultant improvement in co-operation and an increase in the flow of information concerning insurgent whereabouts.[36] It was soon identified that the preliminary to the final collapse of insurgency in a particular area was the realisation that the insurgents had lost public support (in many cases support that was built on fear of brutal reprisals) and it was at this point that psychological warfare techniques were most liable to be effective. Largely as a result of the offensive mounted by the Psychological Warfare Department, 254 terrorists surrendered during 1952, increasing to a maximum of 372 in the following year.[37] In 1954 and 1955 over 200 defections a year were recorded; thereafter the number declined as the Psychological Warfare Department was faced with a smaller and more obstinate group of insurgents who were largely immune to their appeals. Although propaganda appeals needed to be backed up by the threat of forces to be credible, it was a positive campaign based on rewards and appealing to the individual insurgent. It is argued that the Emergency in Malaya was the first modern campaign where psyops played a greater role in defeating the enemy than the use of force. Air power, because of its ubiquitous and timely nature, was pivotal in delivering the message to the individuals that made up the insurgency and without such means of delivery

there would have been far fewer defections and surrenders and it was likely that the campaign of violence would have continued for many more years.

Notes

1 Special Branch is thought to have handled a number of high level sources within the MCP. Their most notable success was Lai Tek, who was placed in the MCP in 1931, routinely denouncing comrades and rose to become Secretary-General from 1938 – 1946, collaborating with the Japanese during the war (resulting in hundreds of summary executions) and returning be a British run asset in late 1945. He was garrotted in Bangkok in early 1948 under the direct orders of his successor, Chin Peng (qv). Bryan J Hunt 'The Role of Intelligence in Countering Insurgency' Unpub MSS, University of Cambridge Centre of International Studies 2005.

2 In 1948 Chinese made up about 38% of the population of Malaya and comprised of two groups. The peasant squatters, who were generally illegal immigrants that had fled from China since 1900, led a semi-subsistence life on the jungle fringe working as rubber tappers and tin miners. The other group consisted of well-educated and successful Chinese bourgeoisie (shop keepers and traders), who had settled on the Malay Peninsula and Singapore in the 18th and 19th centuries.

3 Chin Peng: My Side of History, p 205. Malay Police Special Branch Basic Paper on the Malayan Communist Party 1950 Vol 1 Part 2 p 31.

4 Lucien W. Pye: Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its social and political meaning. Princeton: 1956, p 83, n 1.

5 Conference on Youth and Students of South East Asia Fighting for Freedom and Independence, and the Second Congress of the Communist Party of India – CPI, which were attended by delegates from various Asian communist parties, though not the MCP. Lawrence (variously Lance) Sharkey briefed the MCP in Singapore on his return from the conferences.

6 Sir Edward Gent, a career Colonial Office administrator, had devised the short-lived Malayan Union plan designed to enfranchise the Chinese population and to diminute the influence of the Islamic Malay Rulers. He appeared to be paralysed by indecision on intelligence matters and several documents have emerged recently, most notably from Commissioner John Dalley of the Malaya Security Service, suggesting that Gent had strong Communist sympathies. Others (Hatton, Bryden) suggested that he was simply naïve and incompetent. He was recalled to London in late June 1948, but died in a plane crash on arrival. Hunt p 95.

7 Malcolm R Postgate: Operation Firedog: Air Support in the Malayan Emergency 1948 – 1960, London, HMSO 1992 pp 11-12.

8 Riley Sutherland: Antiguerilla Intelligence in Malaya, 1948 – 1960. Memorandum RM-4172-ISA, September 1964, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, p 32. Prior to his appointment as DOI, Morton was in charge of the joint MI5/MI6 bureau in Singapore 'Security Intelligence Far East (SIFE). Hunt p 63.

9 Leong Che Woh; former Assistant Commissioner of Police (Counter-Terrorism) Royal Malaysian Police; interview with author, Kuala Lumpur May 2005.

10 The Min Yuen or 'Masses Organisation' consisted of Chinese peasants, squatters and plantation workers who provided intelligence and sustenance to the insurgents, as well as providing personnel for specific operations, such as the 'Armed Work Force'. At the height of the Emergency, the Min Yuen numbered over 250,000 supporters.

11 Postgate pp 114 – 115.

12 Archie Derry Emergency in Malaya: The Psychological Dimension. Joint Staff College, UK 1982 p 5.

13 Later Sir Hugh Greene, Director-General BBC 1960 – 1969.

14 The MCP realised that it could not defeat the government forces and issued a Directive in October 1951 seeking to renew the struggle through subversion. This was separately analysed by the CIA, who ascribed the success to 'improved government intelligence, military operations and squatter resettlement'. Hunt pp 61-62

15 FEAF /MIS Sep 1954 Pt II

16 This was a less savoury aspect of the Emergency. Many insurgents were killed by their colleagues in order to claim the bounty; a head - generally sans

corps – was produced as evidence to support the claim. Such actions were contrary to the Malay Penal Code so Psywar material had to avoid recommending such action.

17 AOC(M) Fifth Report, Feb – Dec 1952 p6 (IIJ53/16/2); Derry 1982, Chap 6 p 1.

18 Derry reported one occasion - reported by an agent from the Kugang Kesum insurgent camp in 1953 - where the insurgents attempted to engage a voice aircraft with a Bren Gun LMG. As a result the ORS(PS) recommended that the VA should operate at a slightly higher altitude. Derry, 1982 Annex D-3.

19 Derry, Chap 6 p 2.

20 Renumbered 209 Sqn in November 1958; at that time the Austers were withdrawn from broadcasting duties. In November 1959 the Dakotas were transferred to 52 Sqn

21 Bill Bailey, former Special Branch (Research) Officer - interview with author, May 2005.

22 Derry, 1982 Annex C-3.

23 Postgate, p 117 – 120.

24 Other reasons for surrender are not given, however lack of commitment, familial pressures and disillusionment with communism were typical reasons cited during the early years of the Emergency.

25 FEAF/MIS Nov 1959 p 24.

26 These figures may have been distorted by the SEPs giving an answer that they expected the authorities wanted to hear.

27 FEORS/PW Memorandum 6/55 dated 8 August 1955, cited in Derry 1982, Annex D.

28 Chin Peng claimed that he later refuted this order in his ghost-written memoirs published in 2004, citing that the safe conduct passes were a 'lifesaver'. Chin Peng, 2004 p 404.

29 The conflict continued fitfully for another 30 years, characterised by violent disaffection and division with the MCP. Eventually the MCP survivors, led by Chin Peng, signed a peace agreement with the Malaysian Government in 1989. The few elderly survivors, including Chin Peng, now live in an 'international peace camp' on the Betong Salient in southern Thailand.

30 Riley Sutherland: Winning the Hearts and Minds of the People of Malaya, 1948 – 1960 RAND Corporation Memorandum RM-4174-ISA Sep 1964 pp 47 – 48.

31 This captured document lacked a Special Branch evaluation, so may have been a means by which the MCP could eliminate falterers; nonetheless, it is suggestive of the Communists' own view of the health of the Party at the time. Commander's Diary 1/3 E Anglian Jun 1 – 30 1960 cited in Sutherland, p 49.

32 Tim Hatton The Tock Tock Birds, 2004; interview with author May 2005.

33 A H Peterson, G C Rheinhardt and E E Conger Symposium on the role of Air power in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Malayan Emergency. RAND Memorandum RM-3651-PR, RAND Corporation July 1963, p XX

34 'Self-renewal' was the term used by the Malayan authorities to describe voluntary surrender. It avoided a grievous sense of 'loss of face' and did not imply betrayal of colleagues of the Communist cause, although betrayal of fellow insurgents frequently – and very rapidly – followed 'self-renewal'.

35 Chin Peng noted that the raid took place on 9 March 1953, 5 days after Josef Stalin died. Postgate, in the official RAF history, reports that the raid took place in November 1953. Chin Peng p 321; Postgate, p 66.

36 Coincidentally, the MCP realised that it could not defeat the government forces and issued a Directive in October 1951 seeking to renew the struggle through subversion; in the same month the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney was killed in an ambush.

37 Colonial Office Malaya Annual Report 1952 p 7; 1953 p 340.