

CHAPTER I

SUBVERSION IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Introduction

This chapter will mainly deal with the background of subversive activities in South East Asia. Part A of the chapter will deal with the South East Asia position. The Malaysian position will be dealt with in Part B of the chapter. But before going into the South East Asian position, it is necessary to look at subversion at the international level briefly.

International Subversion

There is a universal need to define subversion at the international level. However, subversion at the international level more often than not involves violence and terrorism.¹ There is a sudden and alarming increase in international terrorism among the Western nations. These acts are considered as political terror, that is to say, "the use of coercive intimidation by revolutionary movements, regimes or individuals for political motives."² Therefore, it can be said that political terrorism can be considered as an act of subversion with the aim of creating a radical change of

¹ Robert Moss in his book Urban Guerrillas, Temple Smith, London 1972 at p. 32 defined terrorism as "the systematic use of intimidation for political purposes."

² Paul Wilkinson, Political Terrorism, The Anchor Press Ltd. Tiptree, Essex 1974 at p. 11.

either the form of government or a political compromise between the terrorists and the government.

An international declaration against terrorism was made by the General Assembly by adopting a resolution on December 18, 1972. The General Assembly expressed deep concern over acts of international terrorism which are occurring with increasing frequency and which took a toll of innocent human lives. Inter alia, the resolution condemned the combination of repressive and terrorist acts by colonial, racist and a lien regimes in denying peoples their legitimate right to self-determination and independence and other human rights³ and fundamental freedoms.

³It is interesting to note that in recent lectures given by Asbjorn Eide of International Peace Research Institute, Oslo on Liberation Movements, Resistance Organisations and the Law of Armed Conflict at the 7th study session of the International Institute of Human Rights held in France, the United Nations was criticised for being negligent in examining the conditions of individual human rights during the struggle for self-determination and particularly after independence has been achieved. At the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in armed conflicts, the Committee adopted various draft provisions for the protection of civilian population. Among other things, draft article 42 provides for the due process of law both in determining whether a person is entitled to prisoner of war status, and also in cases when he is not found to be so entitled and is brought to trial for offences arising out of the hostilities. The article if accepted by the Committee, will represent a considerable departure from existing law of armed conflict and significantly improve the protection of liberation and resistance movements in accordance with their military necessity. Hence the members of Liberation Movements and Resistance Organisations are given protection on humanitarian ground. This is a step towards the recognition of the status of these members who are fighting only in legitimate struggles.

The General Assembly also made a resolution on the measures to prevent international terrorism which endangers or takes innocent human lives or jeopardises fundamental freedoms. It also called upon nations to study the underlying causes of these forms of terrorism and acts of violence which lie in misery, frustrations, grievances and despair and which cause some people to sacrifice human lives, including their own, in an attempt to effect radical changes.⁴

These radical changes are often effected by holding hostages. An example of these acts was reflected in Holland where a group of South Moluccan terrorists held a trainload of prisoners in 1975 and demanded the independence of their State from the Central Government of Indonesia under the Regime of General Suharto. Their demand was turned down and it ended up with bloodshed when several hostages in the train were killed.

Measures are being taken by various countries at international level to combat international terrorism which could lead to countries being subverted. The search for fresh solutions to growing international terrorism began in 1974 in the aftermath of the Munich murder of the Israeli Olympic Athletes. The European Economic

⁴International Legal Materials Vol. XII
March 1973 at p. 218.

Community (EEC) came to an agreement in setting up a central law enforcement structure to combat international terrorism.⁵ The idea is to bind the police forces of the nine European Common Market countries in a single co-operative structure to combat international crime, particularly terrorism.

The South East Asian nations have also taken a similar step akin to that of the E.E.C. by forming an organisation called ASEAN.⁶ These nations have added a new objective to the existing socio-economic goals, that is, collaboration against Communist insurgents.⁷ However ASEAN is not a military alliance or political bloc, neither is it against any state or ideology.⁸

⁵New Straits Times. 23 February 1976.

⁶Association of South East Asian Nations.

⁷Asean Review 13 February 1976 at p. 7.

⁸See per. President Marcos in Asiaweek no 10/1976 at p. 9.

PART A

1. South East Asian position

Introduction

Subversive activities started in South East Asia with the rise of Communist movements. This has proved to be one of the important but little understood political developments of the post war era. One important feature to note is that subversive activities in the South East Asian countries are not only confined to revolutionary nature but also covers non-revolutionary challenges. Apart from Liberation Movements and Resistance groups, there are other non-revolutionary challenges by ethnic or religious movements with little or no concern for social change, especially where they are exploited or supported by outside powers.

Background of Subversion

(1) INDONESIA

The main threat of subversion to Indonesia are the Communists. The revolutionary challenge comes from the Indonesia Communist Party, better known as P.K.I.⁹ which claimed a membership of more than 3 million in 1965.¹⁰ Besides the PKI, Indonesia also faced resistance from Muslim religious groups. These groups consisted of Muslim fanatics.

⁹ Partai Komunis Indonesia was banned in 1966.

¹⁰ Brian Crozier, Annual of Power and Conflict, London Institute for the Study of Conflict, New York National Strategy Information, 1972 at p. 54.

Two of these groups are called Darul Islam and Masjumi Party. Darul Islam had since independence terrorised large areas of West Java, the Southern Celebes, and Northern Sumatra in an effort to turn Indonesia into a theocratic State. In May 1962 the members made an abortive attempt on President Sukarno's¹¹ life. Sukarno later outlawed the Masjumi Party for refusing to co-operate with the Communists.¹² It can safely be said that subversion in Indonesia was in some way stimulated by President Sukarno himself. He accepted Communist support unequivocally shortly after the Communist show of strength in 1955 elections.¹³ It thus opened the door for subversion.

The Communists had secretly set 1970 as the date for a complete takeover of Indonesia. However, events took a dramatic and unexpected turn in the early hours of October 1, 1965. The PKI went into action, along with some radical left wing politicians and some Communists who had infiltrated the army.¹⁴ On the night

¹¹ He was the first President of Indonesia elected for life but was ousted and succeeded by General Suharto on 27 March 1968.

¹² It was indeed a strange decision taken by Sukarno, not knowing that showing favour to the Communists was to lead to his downfall.

¹³ Dan Kurzman, Subversion of the Innocents, Random House, New York, (1963) pp 372-373.

¹⁴ Wilfred T. Neil, The Twentieth Century Indonesia, New York, Columbia University Press (1973) p. 353.

of September 30 - October 1, six of the most senior general officers of the army were abducted and murdered during a coup attempted by Communist - influenced army and airforce personnel and members of the Youth's and Women's Organisations. The officers were captured alive and the bodies of the slain were trucked to 'Labang Buaya'¹⁵ near Halim airbase 15 miles from Jakarta.¹⁶

In the changed political atmosphere, previously repressed Muslim elements supported by the army, proceeded toward a ruthless extermination of the Communist movements. The PKI's part in the abortive coup was fateful. Counter-action by the security forces led to the massacre of nearly all the hardcore Communists. Between 150,000 and 300,00¹⁷ people lost their lives.

Taking advantage of the breakdown of legal process, due to the coup, civilian anti-Communist groups proceeded to kill large numbers of people, who were believed to be associated in some fashions with the PKI or its mass organisations. On the other hand the government took a very arbitrary action. Thousands of

¹⁵
Crocodile Hole.

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For a detailed account of the coup; see the report by President Suharto to Parliament in Bahtiar Djamily, Anak Pa' Tani Jadi Presiden, Utusan Melayu Bhd., Kuala Lumpur (1969) pp 64-99.

¹⁷
Figure given in Annual of Power and Conflict op. cit. at p. 204.

Communists were detained without trial for various lengths of time, and several thousands still remain under arrest, without hope of early trial or release.¹⁸

There are no immediate threats to the security of Indonesia except in 1971 when a PKI remnant attempted to renew armed activity in the South Blitar but was defeated by the security forces.¹⁹ Factions of the PKI are most active along the Sarawak - Kalimantan border. The remnants were in disarray. Its leaders were dead, or imprisoned or abroad and a large number of PKI followers and sympathisers were in detention. Therefore, it can be assumed that the PKI will not play a significant overt role in Indonesian political life for sometime to come. This is based on the fact that no reported activities of the subversives. However, the Indonesian authorities believe that they might make a come back in a different way or different banner.

(11) THAILAND

Compared to Indonesia, Thailand faces two major threats, revolutionary as well as non-revolutionary challenges to her internal

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Guy J. Parker, Indonesia "Gestapu Affair" in Problems of Communism Vol. XXIV Nov - Dec 1975 at p. 57.

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Annual Power of Conflict op. cit. p. 55.

security. Firstly, the threat comes from the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) with its military wing called the Thai Peoples Liberation Armed Forces (TPLAF). This anti-government threat mainly in the North is causing great concern to the Central Government in Bangkok.²⁰

The second threat which is less worrying to the government comes from the Muslim separatists in the South of Thailand. In an area where the majority of the inhabitants are Muslims a band of 3,000 armed Muslim insurgents have set out an objective to create their own autonomous State of 'Pattani'.²¹ These 'Pattani' rebels, mostly Malays, are carrying out a small scale, but persistent, terrorist²² campaign against the government representatives sent from Bangkok.

Another less immediate threat lies along the southern border with Malaysia are several hundred Malaysia Communists devoting themselves to the subversion of Malaysia.²³ They use Thailand as a

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Time, February 9, 1976.

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Far Eastern Economic Review, June 27, 1975 at p. 27.

22

Paul Wilkinson in Political Terrorism, op. cit. at p. 12 writes that "political terrorists always resort to political murder in order to induce the psychic state of terror."

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Annual of Power and Conflict, op. cit. at p. 66.

place for retreat.

Communism was introduced into Thailand by Chinese immigrants. It was not until 1942, that the CPT was officially formed. Initially the CPT was able to operate legally. A Trade Union Federation was created in 1944 in Bangkok and was expanded in 1947 into a National Trade Union Federation.²⁴ However, following a military coup in November 1947, the first repressive measures were taken against the trade unions although the CPT was not forced underground.

In November 1952 the government decided to deal severely with the CPT by outlawing it and arresting a number of its members. Many militant party members went underground in furtherance of their subversive activities. The government repressive move resulted in heavy losses of the party ranks. The Thai authorities discovered a printing house in Bangkok organised by the subversive elements. Many party documents and propaganda materials were seized and destroyed. In 1962 the chief of the underground machinery and his deputy were arrested and executed in April.²⁵ The CPT began to enhance its underground subversion with terrorist and insurgent activities.

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Witold S. Swerakowski, World Communism, a hand
1918 - 1965, Hoover Institution Press at p. 427.

25

Ibid., p. 428.

In 1973 the insurgents took their subversive activities from the thick jungles and hills of Thailand out into the urban civilisation. They changed their directions towards new targets in the south. They had managed to infiltrate the minds of students. In the same year a student revolution toppled the military regime. Student activists, moving out of Bangkok and the southern provinces, indoctrinated the peasants.

The new direction of the Communists is to start subversive activities in the city and open attacks on the security forces. They had managed to infiltrate every part of Thailand including the labour and left wing groups.²⁶ This shows how difficult it is to exterminate the insurgents who give the impression that Thailand is under a state of emergency. This is supported by the fact that out of 71 provinces, no fewer than 34²⁷ are under some sort of immediate insurgent challenge.

(111) PHILIPPINES

The Phillipines faces somewhat similar threat to her internal security as Thailand. It faces revolutionary challenges from Communist insurgents and Muslim minority population. At the

²⁶
Time February 9, 1976 p. 7.

²⁷
Ibid.

time of writing this paper, Southern Phillipines is the scene of South East Asia's largest and bitterest insurgency. In justification, the President of Phillipines, Ferdinand Marcos, declared a state of emergency by enforcing martial law in 1972.

The Communist insurgents' activities started with the formation of the Communist Party of Phillipines (PKP) in 1930.²⁸ It emerged as a popular force after World War II because of the guerilla struggle against the Japanese invaders. In 1942 the PKP merged with the Hukbalahap or Huks (People's Liberation Army). By 1969 ideological rivalry divided the PKP into factions; a Maoist faction called New People's Army (NPA) and the pro-Soviet faction.²⁹

When the PKP was outlawed in 1932, its members went underground. With the Communist out of the legal scene, however, it was able to use the small left wing Socialist Party to carry out its subversive activities.³⁰ When the PKP reappeared in the open in 1938 it merged with the Socialist Party and the Chinese Bureau, a branch of the Communist Party of China.

In 1946 the PKP founded the Democratic Alliance to

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Swarowkowski, op. cit. p. 359.

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B. Crozier, op. cit. p. 62.

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D. Kurzman, op. cit. pp 395-6.

enable its candidate to stand for elections. Six of its members were successful but were barred from taking office on charges of fraud and corruption. The members immediately undertook intensive insurgent activity against the central government. The government in turn took repressive measures and was successful in putting down the insurgents. In 1957 an anti-subversion law was passed. The PKP and its allied organisations was outlawed.³¹

Turning to the southern island, where a more serious threat was launched by the Muslims, the Phillipines government considered it as a festering sore which existed from the early days of Spanish rule. The Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) formed in 1968 was the major force behind the Muslims of Cotabato province in the southern island of Mindanao³² in their fight against the Christian majority. The Muslim grievance is that their land had been wrested from them by Christian settlers. This conflict between the Muslims and the Christians involved a struggle for an autonomous Muslim State but not a seperation from Phillipines.

A new driving force behind this up rising is the Bangsa Moro or the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), fighting for the 1.5 million Muslims in Phillipines to re-establish their own

³¹ Swarokowski, op. cit. p. 359.

³² Grezier op. cit. p. 62.

republic in Mindanao. Attempts by the government to negotiate a peace settlement with the Muslims have proved almost totally futile. A peace conference between the two sides at Jeddah³³ in January 1975 ended in a deadlock when the Muslims refused to drop their demands.³⁴

In the meantime, the Communist groups were involved in regrouping and re-establishing their influence especially in Central Luzon where they had undertaken intensive recruitment of cadres for subversive activities. According to a source³⁵ the NPA is preparing a big offensive in Luzon. If the party were able to persuade the Moros to unite with them the result would be calamitous for both the Phillipines and South East Asia. This is a very serious threat to the internal security for Manila to handle.

(iv) SINGAPORE

Subversion in Singapore were and are being carried out in a different manner as compared to the other ASEAN countries. Singapore was not the scene of armed insurrection in the post war period. This is due to the geographical difference of the state. In contrast

³³ A city port of Saudi Arabia.

³⁴ Far Eastern Economic Review June 27 p. 21.

³⁵ Ibid.

with other countries having insurgent threats, Singapore is void of thick jungles, where the subversive elements could retreat and hide. Hence subversion in Singapore is confined to extensive urban underground activities or urban guerilla warfare.

Historically, Singapore did experience substantial unrest, much of it fomented by Communists in the Labour Movements and in Chinese middle schools. There was no official Communist front in Singapore but the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) operating in Malaysia mainly directs its subversive activities on the peninsula and in Singapore.

It should be noted that subversion by subversive elements in Singapore are mainly directed on students and labour movements. For instance in 1960, the politically active section of the student body at Nanyang University was largely controlled by Marxist elements who were reputedly in touch with Communist underground elements.³⁶ As far the trade unions, the government froze the fund of three largest trade unions in September 1963 because the leaders holding top executive post were implicated with the Communists.³⁷

Subversive activities in Singapore was ably controlled by

³⁶ Government White Paper, Communism in Malaysia and Singapore, March 1971, p. 30.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 31.

the authorities. This is due to the increasing police surveillance. Many would attribute Singapore's relative quietness to the very strict and effective security regulations.³⁸ This was proved in 1976, when the Singapore police with the assistance of Malaysian authorities, unearthed plans for a new phase of subversion and terrorism by the CPM. Fifty people, ten out of them Malaysians, were arrested under the Internal Security Act, 1960.³⁹ In the police sweep a businessman, sales manager, naval officer and a few members of the armed forces were arrested. This shows that no income group, no sector of Singapore is out the scope of the Communist designs. The Communist objective is no longer confined to the trade unions and students but also tries to reach all strata of society.

The subversive elements have even gone to the extent of subverting the minds of Singapore students studying in Australia.⁴⁰ With the breakup of the Communist movements in Singapore, once again the Singapore Government has succeeded in bringing into light the threat of subversion actively operating underground. The government is still detaining a number of its citizen if freed can be a threat to the public welfare.⁴¹ Whether this is a valid reason depends on the authorities.

³⁸ David Hawkins, The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore, (The Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies) London 1971 p. 59.

³⁹ New Straits Times, May 30, 1976.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ New Straits Times, June 9, Wed. 1976.

PART B

West Malaysian Position

Subversion in Malaysia started after the World War II. These subversive element are mainly members of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) formed in 1930. The CPM was given the single aim of establishing a Communist Republic in Malaya.⁴² Preparing to seize power after the defeat of Japan, the CPM ordered the formation of secret Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) units and the creation of armed caches. In 1948 the legal struggle of the Party was abandoned.

As early as in 1948, the Communist Party turned to violence and bloodshed. It murdered contractors of labour on estates and mines; it threatened British planters and miners with death and killed several of them. It attacked, isolated police stations and terrorized the countryside. All these acts were carried out by 'mobile killing corps' formed from the party's secret force which had been living inside the jungle since the end of the Japanese War.

Before the Communists embarked on the use of violence, they have already infiltrated into various organisations. The CPM took advantage of labour unrest to build up the essential basis of

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Government White Paper, Communism in Malaysia and Singapore,
March 1971 p. 5.

support among the workers, first through the General Labour Union and then, from 1946 onwards through the Singapore and Far-Malayan Federations of Trade Unions. By the end of 1947 the party controlled some three quarters of the organised labour force.⁴³ They used extortion, threats and violence against unco-operative workers. To control this the government introduced the Trade Unions (Amendment) Ordinance⁴⁴ in May 1948, preventing intimidation and making it more difficult for Communist to take over unions.⁴⁵

Another problem that was faced by the government during that time was the disarmament of the anti-Japanese guerillas. Of the 6,800 guerillas demobilised, less than 500 failed to turn in their weapons. As a result of the reluctance of the guerillas to hand over their arms, the government made an order on 1 February 1946, making it mandatory on the entire population to return their arms.⁴⁶ The British ordered the death penalty to be introduced for those found guilty of illegal possession of arms.⁴⁷

The CPM's policy of peaceful struggle was abandoned in

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ For details of the provisions of this Ordinance refer Chap. III.

⁴⁵ Lucian W. Pye, Guerilla Communism in Malaya, Princeton University Press (1956).

⁴⁶ Gene Z. Hanrahan, The Communist Struggle in Malaya, K.L. University Press 1971 p. 91.

⁴⁷ Straits Times 1 February 1946.

March, 1948. At a Central Committee meeting, it was decided that the greater part of the party's organisation should go underground leaving only a few front groups in the open.⁴⁸ The first act of terrorism was committed on 16 June, 1948 when 3 British planters in the vast rubber growing district of Sungai Siput were murdered by 3 separate groups of terrorists.⁴⁹

The High Commissioner in Malaya, Sir Edward Gent on the same day of the outbreak of terror, declared that a state of emergency existed in certain districts in Perak and in Johore, where the worst outrages had occurred. The emergency was declared only on a limited way, but due to the public pressure he extended the state of emergency to the rest of the country on the following day. The government began to take immediate steps to counter the guerilla open rebellion. The government instituted a special static defence system by organising special police and militia forces and setting up a national registration and identity card system.⁵⁰

Throughout the Emergency, the government faced various kinds of difficulties in putting down the rebellion. One factor which is

⁴⁸ Harry Miller, Menace in Malaya, Harrap 1954.

⁴⁹ Harold Smith, Jungle War in Malaya, Arthur Barker Ltd.- London 1972
p. 37.

⁵⁰ G. Hanrahan op. cit. p. 112.

worth mentioning is the fact that the Communist auxiliary civilian organisation called Min Yuan. During the Emergency, the Min Yuan provided guerillas with food, money and information; despite the harsh security measures imposed, such as preventive detention of suspects⁵¹ Chinese squatters⁵² proved most receptive to Communist propaganda.

By 1954 the CPM showed a sign of defeat General Tamplin, reviewing the whole situation of the emergency declared the elections to the Legislative Council in 1955. In the July election the Alliance under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman gained 51 out of the 52 elected seats after Tunku became Chief Minister, Chin Peng, the secretary general of CPM was offered amnesty for all Communists to surrender. The peace talk was held in Baling but ended in a deadlock. Chin Peng and his men retreated to the jungle on the Malayan - Thai border where they launched their subversive activities in a sporadic manner.

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D. Kuraman, op. cit. p. 10

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These were impoverished Chinese labourers and farmers, uprooted during the Japanese Occupation from the old houses and residing in small shanty villages. The squatters, for economic and social reasons were most prone to give assistance to the Communist insurgents; and their villages, located in inaccessible areas bordering the jungle, proved favourable liaison points for guerilla forces.

The 'confrontation' launched by the Indonesian government was another milestone for the Communist struggle in Malaya. It was during this time that the subversive elements embarked on a new kind of subversion, that is, to win the heart of the Malays by masquerading as the protectors of Islam. A Central Department of Malay work was set up with deliberate preaching in rural areas that Islam and Communism share similar ideals, they were successful to a certain extent, especially the Malays in Kelantan by masquerading as members of PMIP.⁵³

Subversive activities were further intensified in Malaysia by Indonesia infiltrators and their collaborators, mainly found in the Malayan Peoples' Socialist Front (MPSF) and Pan Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) which consisted of nearly all Malays. The Indonesian subversion began with the arrival of R.M. Soenita, a senior Indonesian Intelligence Officer, on 29 March 1963, in Kuala Lumpur. He was sent to augment staff at the Indonesian Embassy of subversive and intelligence operatives. According to a source,⁵⁴ extremist political personalities were involved in various aspects of conspiracy to subvert and bring the then Federation of Malaya under the domination of the Sukarno regime. One of those extremist arrested was Ahmad

⁵³ Pan Malayan Islamic Party.

⁵⁴ "Indonesian Intention Towards M'asia" Govt. Publication April, 1964.

Boestaman Chairman of Partai Rakyat Malaya (Peoples Party of Malaya). He was arrested and detained on 13th February, 1963, while planning an escape route from Malaya to Indonesia.⁵⁵

An agent of The Indonesian Government, Hussain Ya'acob⁵⁶ was recruited to help to merge the eleven Malay States of the former Federation of Malaya with the four Southern Provinces of Thailand under a new government conforming with President Sukarno's concept of Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia). According to a Government White Paper⁵⁷ the Pattern of Indonesia aggression can be classified under five main categories namely military, diplomatic, subversive, economic and Psychological. Subversive activities were intensified and consolidated in Malaysia by pro-Sukarno politicians, among other things were to divert subversive activities in Malaysia and co-ordinate these activities with Indonesian infiltrations and landings, and create internal disorder and chaos by sabotage, assassination and inter-communal riots and finally to stage an armed revolution with the aim of setting up a government under the aegis of the Sukarno regime.

55 'A plot Exposed' Govt. Printers, 1965.

56 A Pattani Malay working as a reporter for 'Utusan Melayu' which is regarded as the organ of Malay extremist movement.

57 A plot exposed. 1965 Govt. Printers. A detail description of pro-Sukarno politician in Malaysia is written in this paper.

The subversion by the Indonesian infiltrators and their sympathisers was comparatively unsuccessful. This was due to the fact that it did not receive popular mass support⁵⁸ and also can be attributed to the excellent work of the intelligence. At the same time, the Communist insurgents also failed to take advantage of the subversion. It was unable to provide any assistance to the infiltrators or to exploit the situation. The Indonesian 'Confrontation' came to an end in 1966 after President Sukarno was ousted.

Another important milestone in the constitutional development of Malaysia was the racial riot in 1969, which is often quoted as the 'May 13 Incident.' A state of Emergency was declared for the third time, after the outburst of communal clashes between Chinese and Malays after the National elections. The trouble lasted for three days. The subversive elements were quick to grasp this opportunity to subvert the people.

According to a very reliable source⁵⁹ Nacist agents, secret societies and communal extremist elements were responsible for the fomentation of racial unrest. The National Operations Council which was created to cope with the National Emergency and to return the

⁵⁸ G. Hanrahan. op. cit. p. 145.

⁵⁹ May 13, 1969, A report by National Operations Council, Govt. Publication. p. 77.

country to normalcy stated that these groups posed a constant barrier to the return of Parliamentary rule. With regard to the Maoist agents the report stated that "they have gone underground, but are currently busy recruiting fresh supporters and planning to stage more showdowns as part of their "softening up" process in their final bid for power. This statement by NCC later materialised into a fact.

The Communist insurgents, after exploiting the fear and tension extant in the country launched into terrorism. On 24th July the Communist guerillas committed their first murder on Malaysian soil since the end of the Emergency. They went to the isolated village of Sintok, Northern Kedah, and shot a Chinese woman, probably a police agent, in front of a crowd that they had gathered. They described it as 'vengeance killing.' Three days later terrorists ambushed a small security force which was on its way to investigate the murder.⁶⁰ Six soldiers were killed.⁶¹ The authorities decided that the village was completely controlled by the CPM and the whole population of 117 people was removed and placed in a new village. The insurgents attempt to exploit the May disturbances was abortive.

⁶⁰ See H. Miller, Resurgence Ten Years After.

⁶¹ David Hawkins op. cit. p. 55.

A very prominent factor to be noted of the Communist 'comeback' is the change of tactic. They are using subtle methods of subversion by propoganda and infiltration into political parties and institutions of higher learning. A disturbing factor, which needs mentioning, is the extention of their activities from the jungles in the border of Malaysia and Thailand into the country. Evidence shown that the Communists are operating in the urban areas of the country. This is exemplified by a series of acts of terrorism and atrocities committed in big towns. To justify the seriousness of these attacks the late Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Haji Abdul Razak declared in late 1971 that "the Communist threat is very real in several states."⁶² Tun Razak's deputy and Minister of Home Affairs, Tun Dr. Ismail, had earlier said that the Communist "had learned a great deal since 1960 and were more efficient and employed more sophisticated methods."⁶³ This is very true indeed.

This changed in strategy can be attributed to a split within the CPM. Documents released in 1974 revealed a breakoff between the CPM Marxist-Leninists Faction and the CPM Revolutionary Faction. According to a New Straits Times report, 12 members of the CPM were killed in a clash with the breakaway Marxist-Leninist group in South

⁶² H. Smith op. cit. p. 14

⁶³ An interview with Arnold Dibble reported in Malaysian Digest, 31st July 1970.

Thailand on February 23, 1976. Both of these factions are trying to prove to the other how 'revolutionary' each is. However, it is difficult to obtain information on these activities and to be sure of the accuracy of the information behind the facts because much data comes only from the government.

To prove that the guerillas are turning their attention to urban terrorism, they launched a number of subversive activities in big towns as well as Kuala Lumpur itself. 1975 was an active year for the guerillas. On April 1, 1975/^{armed} forces camps and airbase were bombed in Kuala Lumpur. Later on September 4, in what was a principally psychological exploit, they tossed grenades into the police field force parade ground, killing two and wounding forty-one then they blew up the National Monument in Kuala Lumpur.⁶⁴ The aim behind these activities were to create anxiety and apprehension among the population. 1975 was also marked for the killing of Special Branch detectives.⁶⁵

Another area of subversion was the students in Institution of Higher Learning. A Government White Paper⁶⁶ published in 1974

⁶⁴ Time, February 9, 1976.

⁶⁵ Malaysian Business Feb. 1976 gives the events of subversive activities of the guerillas, throughout 1975.

⁶⁶ Activities within The University of Malaya Chinese Language Society, Kementerian Hal Ehwal Dalam Negeri. 19 Dec. 1974.

exposed the activities of students of University of Malaya, especially the members of the Chinese Language Society as "work that are bent on converting the country's cultural fabric into a vehicle for the dissemination of subversive propaganda." The government gave evidence to show that subversive elements have gained control of the society and are using it under the guise of culture to promote subversive activities on a national scale exclusively in support of the CPM. On 9th December, 1974 police raided a house occupied by members of UNCLS in Petaling Jaya and seized printing blocks, imitation rifles, boots and other propaganda instruments.⁶⁷ The Communist had to a certain extent succeeded in infiltrating into the student body to satisfy one of their requirements by putting emphasis on youth because the CPM desperately needed young, educated, intelligent executives. In the same White Paper it is questionable whether the mass student demonstration in protest against the government for its alleged incompetence to eradicate social injustices was incited by these subversive elements.

Many believed that the Communist subversion cannot succeed unless it receives mass support from various races and all strata of the society. One factor which lends a hand in the insurgents previous defeat is the lack of Malay supporters. An article⁶⁸

⁶⁷
Ibid.

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New Straits Times. 16 April, 1976.

written in one of the local newspapers states that the Communist terrorists are using the 'soft tactic' in trying to win Malay support. The method of subversion used is through the Islamic religion. They have set up Parti Persaudaraan Islam (Islamic Solidarity Party) aimed at exploiting religious issues and twisting Islamic Principles. This is a tactic which religious officials believe could be equally dangerous. Villages along the Thai - Kelantan border have become the main target of this subversive.

At present, the threat of subversion can be considered as serious. This is reflected by the words of the new Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn when he declared that "the political development in the Asian Mainland coupled with the Communist success in several operations in West Malaysia and in Sarawak are sufficient to convince us all that the threat to our security is worrying."⁶⁹ On the other hand, the government claimed that they have all the vital information of the guerilla's activities as well as the Communist strength. The Home Affairs Minister, Tan Sri Ghazali reiterated that the Communist threat in Malaysia was serious but could be contained.⁷⁰ He said that currently the terrorists were fully occupied in 'masses' propaganda work for overall support and occasionally ambushing security

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New Straits Times Wed. 30 June, 1976.

⁷⁰

Malaysian Business February, 1976.

forces patrols and soft targets on remote government projects as well as carrying out minor sabotage and the assassination of intelligence personnel with the help of underground elements. The Minister of Home Affairs gives the strength of the terrorists as follows.¹ The total strength in and without Malaysia is 2054 personnel. Below is tabulated the breakdown in racial composition. Figures of terrorist's casualties were also given by the Minister, from the period 1973 to 1975.

TABLE A

COMMUNIST TERRORIST STRENGTH IN MALAYSIA

Race	No
Malaysian of Chinese Origin	732
Malaysian Orang Asli	11
Chinese Muslim Converts	23
Thais	7
Thais of Chinese Origin	661
Thai Muslims	509
Japanese	2

TABLE B

COMMUNIST TERRORIST'S CASUALTIES (1973-1975)

Terrorist Killed	159
Terrorist Captured	96
Surrendered and Return Army Personnel	709
Terrorist Supporters and underground workers arrested including top officials	1868

¹Statistics obtained in an interview with Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie by Malaysian Business February, 1976.

Success of security forces in military operations tabulated below are the statistics showing Communist losses (excluding the underground elements/resources) resulting from security forces military operations during the period 1st January 1974 to 8th August 1976 in West Malaysia).¹

TABLE C

Type of Enemy Losses	1974	1975	1976
OT ² camps found	24	35	13
Weapons recovered	57	40	5
Ammunition recovered (rounds)	10,539	6,336	357
Booby-traps recovered	33	24	75
Arms dumps recovered	9	1	-
Food dumps recovered/destroyed	50	39	12
Engagements with SF ³	35	22	10
Surrenders	10	5	1
Captures	8	1	5
Kills	41	7	11

¹ Statistics obtained from the Ministry of Home Affairs in an interview conducted on 28 August 1976.

² Communist terrorist

³ Security forces