

**C**ounter-  
**G**uerilla  
**O**perations

in the

**PHILIPPINES**

**1946 – 1953**

Counter-Guerrilla Seminar  
Fort Bragg, 15 June 1961

I.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS  
ON THE HUK CAMPAIGN

By

Edward G. Lansdale  
Brigadier General, USAF

We have met here today to talk about a counter-guerrilla campaign which has become a classic in our time -- the Huk campaign in the Philippines. It is classic in the way it demonstrated economy of force. It is classic in its lessons of the strategy and tactics that win.

Rather than bring you these lessons in the usual way -- through lectures and books -- we are going to try something a little different. The five of us up here on the platform are fellow gremlins. We shared many experiences during some 8 years of the Huk campaign, even though we are from different services and from different nations. It is simple justice that, when the school here asked me to speak to you, I decided to share the dangers of the speaker's platform with them.

We have split up the subject matter between us. Colonel Lapus and I will take the first period. My stint will be to introduce you to the campaign and note some of the major lessons. Colonel Lapus, who was head of MIS and later G-2 of the Armed Forces of the Philippines during critical phases of the campaign, will describe the Communist Huk enemy.

Then, Colonel Valeriano, whom I believe was the outstanding combat commander during the campaign -- particularly for the way he led the Nenita Unit and later the 7th BCT -- will describe the military operations.

He will be followed by Major Justiniano who will talk about the intelligence operations of the campaign. "Justi" had years of experience in leading combat patrols, in the collection of combat intelligence, and in understanding special missions.

Then Major Bohannan will talk about some of the unconventional operations of the campaign. As a combat infantryman in the Philippines,

as a counter-intelligence officer in the early days of the Huk campaign, and later as an adviser to the Philippine forces with JUSMAG during the most critical phases, he speaks from considerable experience.

Now, I know that a number of you here this morning are familiar with the Huk campaign. Some of you know from first-hand. You will want to ask questions and contribute to the discussion. I am going to ask you to be patient and give us the morning up here. The afternoon is for you, your comments, your questions. I hope you will write down some points during the morning, to bring them up this afternoon. We would welcome a good discussion with you this afternoon to wind up our session.

The reason we want the morning session for the five of us up here is simple. Each of us knows different aspects of the subjects that the others will talk about. When one of us gets through talking, we hope that the rest of us will remember further incidents to help illustrate the points made. It's a way of bringing out a lot of tactical examples which may help you some day when you face your own guerrilla problems in the field.

Fifteen years ago, the Philippines became an independent nation. I guess that the five of us were about the first people in the Philippines, outside of the Communists, to note that the Communist Huks were going to challenge the right of the new government to govern the people. It was natural that we should note this. Each of us then was assigned to Intelligence duty with our forces, and it was part of the job to spot potential trouble early. I say "our forces," because we had all been in the Army of the United States until that first Independence Day in the Philippines. When the Philippine Army and the Philippine Constabulary also became independent, we continued our close association.

Most of the lessons we learned, we learned the hard way. We made mistakes, but kept on trying until we found something that would work. Then, because some of the lessons were highly unorthodox, we had to fight off interference from more conventional people for the right to apply these lessons that win. We were pretty junior at the beginning and took some lickings. Later, we were able to prove our points.

The real combat phase of the Huk campaign lasted about 8 years. That is, 8 years is about the period when the Communists were able to field units of guerrillas whose objective was to overthrow the elected Philippine government by armed force. The Communists admitted

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**COUNTER-GUERRILLA OPERATIONS  
IN THE PHILIPPINES, 1946 - 1953**

**A Seminar on the Huk Campaign  
Held at Ft. Bragg, N.C., 15 June 1961**

1. "Introductory Comments on the Campaign," by Brig. Gen. Edward G. Lansdale, USAF, who served as JUSMAG liaison with Secretary of National Defense Ramon Magsaysay in the campaign.
- II. "The Communist Huk Enemy," by Colonel Ismael Lapus, AFP, who served as G-2, Armed Forces of the Philippines, at the critical period of the Huk campaign.
- III. "Military Operations," by Colonel Napoleon Valeriano, AFP Ret., who commanded the Nenita Unit and the 7th BCT during the campaign.
- IV. "Combat Intelligence," by Major Medardo Justiniano, AFP, who conducted special operations for the Nenita Unit and was S-2 of the 7th BCT.
- V. "Unconventional Warfare," by Major Charles Bohannan, USAR, who was JUSMAG advisor to the AFP on unconventional operations at critical phases of the campaign.

defeat by deciding to give up the idea of what they called "armed struggle" in favor of trying to win by what they call the "legal struggle." This simply means that the Communists suffered military defeat and turned to subversion to gain their ends. They are still patiently at work in the Philippines.

Much of the action of the campaign took place in Central Luzon -- so much so that the newspapers took to naming the area "Huklandia." There were actions in other parts of the Philippines, but Central Luzon remained the hot spot. It offered an agrarian population which felt, with some justice, that it was not getting a fair deal out of life. It offered swamps, two mountain ranges, and jungles ideal for guerrilla bases. It had ample food supplies. It was close to major population centers. And, just to round out the picture, it had American military bases in the area whose personnel were under strict orders to keep out of the domestic affairs of the Filipinos. They were there to help defend the Philippines from external aggression. The secretive operations of international Communism, of which the Huks were part, somehow never seem to be labelled as "external aggression" even when it is so entirely foreign to the local scene.

Actually, what happened was that the Communists fomented a civil war. Like most civil wars, it was bitter and savage, splitting families, turning neighbor against neighbor. The Communist Huks used Mao's guerrilla warfare doctrine for their operations. This doctrine was little known or understood in the free world in those days. Most of the free world thought that Mao and the Chinese Communists were simply "agrarian reformers." In reality, Mao's guerrilla doctrine was the major export item from China to the Communist cadres all over the world.

The Communists were able to field about 15,000 armed Huks in guerrilla units. These were supported by a claimed million sympathizers among the population, whom the Communists dubbed as their "mass base." This million was a big chunk of the 17-20 million total population at the time.

Opposing this Communist armed force of 15,000 which often was able to hide in among the population, were the Philippine Armed Forces of around 50,000. I mention these figures so that you might compare them with other counter-guerrilla campaigns. These Philippine government forces were not enough to defeat the Communist guerrillas by conventional military tactics.

The first years of the campaign, from 1946 to mid-1950, saw the Philippine military using tactics right out of the good text-books. Their small-unit combat techniques were well done. They made excellent use of fire-power. They were well-equipped and well-trained. According to the usual military doctrine, they should have won. But, they didn't.

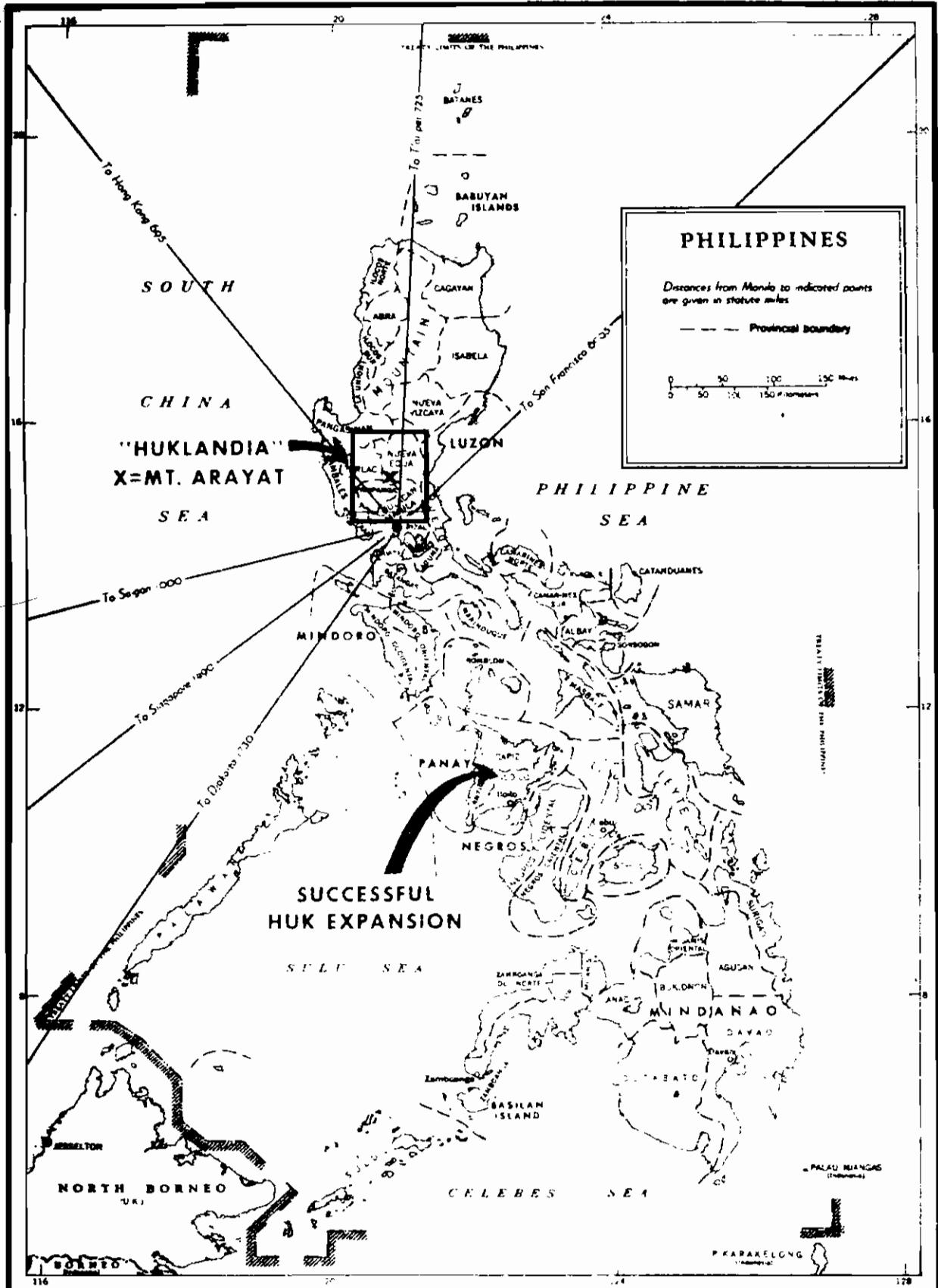
In this same period of strong, aggressive military action, the Communist Huks were able to increase the strength of their forces in the field, extend their areas of influence and control, and greatly increase the numbers of population supporting them. They were so heartened by their success that their leaders were predicting victory in one year.

The reason for this situation can be stated in basic terms: the Huks were running a revolution and the Philippine government was fighting the Huks as though they were formal enemy armed forces. This is hard truth -- not easily seen at the time, still recognized by too few responsible people, and the point of honest similarity between the Huk campaign and other modern counter-guerrilla conflicts in other lands.

The Huks said they were fighting for popular causes. The Communist politburo had carefully analyzed the people's grievances, adopted the righting of these wrongs as their rallying slogans, and then exploited the situation with great skill. The fact that this was directed from the top in a rather cold-blooded cynicism -- to win a popular revolution which would put a handful of Communists in power, to run the country afterwards as ruthless dictators -- simply didn't permeate down to the people. Their eyes and ears were on the popular slogans.

In mid-1950, Ramon Magsaysay was appointed Secretary of National Defense. He was from the people, loved and trusted them, and understood the full danger to the people's welfare of the Communist Huk movement. We five had the privilege of his friendship and worked closely with him in this critical period. Under his leadership, the Philippines found the ways and means to defeat the Huks.

The most urgent need was to construct a political base for supporting the fight. Without it, the Philippine armed forces would be model examples of applied military doctrine, but would go on



**losing.** The Huks had popular support, because they had espoused the needs of the people. The people make the nation. A national Army can hardly win a fight against the very things that give it life, give it a reason for being.

The people of the Philippines have two documents which give them their own government, their own armed forces. These documents are the Philippine Constitution and the Philippine Electoral Code. In 1950, the trouble was that these documents had been turned by political and economic factors into almost worthless pieces of paper. There had been exploitable cheating in the 1949 election -- so obvious that the people were made to feel that the government was no longer their own. If ballots no longer counted, then -- the argument went -- there might be truth in the Huk plea to use bullets instead of ballots to change the government.

The Philippine defense forces took the initiative to construct a true political base for their fight. They shunned the temptations of a coup, which would have brought chaos to a literate, idealistic people by further destroying the legality of the Constitution. Instead, they set about to make the Constitution and the Electoral Code working, realistic, living documents for the people. As they did so, they and the people emerged on the same side of the fight. The Communist Huks lost their own political base. As popular support was lost, the Huk forces lost their dynamic role, and had to go on the static defensive. There was no longer a population to hide within.

The Philippine defense forces constructed this political base legally, within the Constitution. Under instructions of the Electoral Commission, the armed forces policed the 1951 elections, insuring freedom in electioneering and voting, as well as an honest count of the ballots. Since the freedom of elections is also a firmly-held ideal in the United States, the United States government openly backed this concept of making the elections free, as promised by the Philippine Constitution. The 1951 and 1953 elections, with the protection of the armed forces, in essence, gave the government back to the people.

As further moves in constructing a political base for the fight, the Philippine armed forces undertook a wide range of social operations -- from something as basic as military discipline and courtesy on up to humanitarian and social justice measures. Troop behavior at check points and on patrol was improved. Civilians accidentally wounded in the cross-fire of combat were given the same hospital

treatment as wounded soldiers. Poor farmers were given legal assistance in the land courts in tenancy cases. Even the enemy, when captured, was given a fair chance at rehabilitation. As Magsaysay put it, the armed forces offered the Huks the choice of receiving either "the hand of all-out force or all-out friendship." Remember this expression of "all-out force or all-out friendship." It's good tactical doctrine for the free world.

With a true political base being established on sound principles, the way was opened for military victory. The military actions then were pushed with great energy. In my opinion, the success of the resulting military campaign was due mainly to four factors:

1. - the strong, dynamic, and understanding leadership of Magsaysay; he was always suddenly present, in surprise visits, when the troops were facing danger; the troops had someone at the top who really cared.

2. - the improvement of combat intelligence collection and use; this was the result of better relations with the population, an upgrading of the importance of the intelligence function, more realistic organization, and making use of techniques proven in the field.

3. - the step-up of aggressive patrol actions; troops were taken off static defense of towns, taken out of their barracks, and led into active patrolling in the jungles, mountains and swamps, day and night; they gave the Huk enemy no rest, kept him on the run.

4. - the strong support of psychological warfare; it was used as an infantry weapon in combat, as a civil affairs means of bringing troops and people together, as a debunker of Communist propaganda, and as an instrumental part of the program of rehabilitation of prisoners; the EDCOR projects were part of these enlightened psychological operations.

The climax of the campaign came in 1951. The 1951 election, which was made a free election largely through the work of the military, established the needed political base for the operation. Two days after that election, when the results were known and it became obvious that the ballot count had been honest, the Huk forces

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**MATTO DEL CASTILLO**  
alias Villapende, Pando,  
Cavite, Orlando. 60 yrs.  
old; 5 ft. 4 in.; grey  
hair; wears eyeglasses;  
dark complexion; smokes  
cigarettes and sometimes a  
pipe; slight built.



**MARIANO BALGOS**  
alias Bakal, Peccé, Tom,  
Culentes, Bell, Balti-  
more. 54 yrs. old; 5 ft.  
2 in.; brown hair; worn-  
looking; fairily  
built; pipe-smoker.



**JOSE DE LEON**  
alias Dimasdeang, Dim 1



**CASTO ALEJANDRINO**  
alias Torres, Gauyek,  
Gv. 36 yrs old; 5 ft. 6  
in.; light-complexioned;  
straight black hair;  
well-groomed; aloof



**ALFREDO B. SALO**  
alias Fren, Elias. 36 yrs  
old; 5 ft. 3 in; straight  
black hair; wears sun-  
visor cap with jacket, ci-  
garette and pipe-smoker.

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OF THE FOLLOWING HUK  
RECO COMMANDERS:**

**TEOFILO MALABANAN**

alias Filo, Tommy, T.  
22 yrs old; 5 ft. 6  
in.; slender built;  
dark complexion;  
black hair parted on  
side; wears bush hair;  
has 3 gold teeth in  
upper set; wears  
jacket.



**SILVESTRE LIWANAG**

alias Linio Bie, Pet,  
Pet's 17 yrs old; 5  
ft. 1 in.; long wavy  
hair, oval face, fair  
complexion, slender  
built; sharp eyes.



**ALEXANDER VIERNES**  
alias Stolia, Mirando,  
Jero, Armando Villc



**TOMAS CALMA**  
alias Sol, Tom, Tommy,  
Mag-angip, Almose, Alta-  
ro. 36 yrs old; 5 ft. 7  
in.; light complexion;  
thinely built; wears eye-  
glasses.



**PEDRO CACUIN**  
alias Samonte, Salcedo  
36 yrs old; 5 ft. 7  
in.; brown complexion; black  
hair; cigarette smoker;  
wears combat boots.



**BARTOLOME CUBIDA**  
alias Sonny, Sonny Alu-  
day, Jockey. Alupay 33  
 yrs old; 5 ft. 2 in  
brown complexion; black  
hair. Tuberculosis.

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**ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES**

lost their popular support. As guerrilla forces, they had to switch from the offensive to the defensive. From then on, they got weaker every day. By 1953, only small remnants were left, to be mopped up by police actions.

In sum, then, when the Philippine defense forces had a sound political base -- defending a government of the people, by the people, and for the people -- and used this political base to mount a bold, imaginative, and popular campaign against the Communist guerrillas -- the Huks were defeated.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DISCUSSION

**Query:** How is the situation today in the Philippines? We know that the Communists always are ready to take a step back, but I know they will always come again. Perhaps by twos and fours. What about Communist efforts in the Philippines today?

**Answer:** (Gen. Lansdale). I believe that Major Justiniano should answer that. He is most recently from the Philippines and, as the public information officer in the Philippine Department of National Defense, he probably is ready with the answer.

**Answer:** (Maj. Justiniano). That is a very interesting question, which I would like to answer under three different headings. First, I would like to answer your question from the psychological point of view. Psychologically it would seem, as a newspaperman recently told me, that for a Communist agent directing operations in the Far East the Philippines should be a first objective. This is not only because of the strategic location of the Philippines from a military point of view, but even more because of the psychological effect which the failure of Communism in the "show window of democracy in the Far East" must necessarily have on other countries.

The second heading under which I would like to answer your question is that of operational facts. The Communist Party, which never admits permanent defeat, has realized

that the successes which we gained against them were the result of our adopting a new approach and new techniques. Certainly they are studying and developing new techniques which will not be vulnerable to ours. I might say that there are perhaps 300 Huks still active in the field in the Philippines including one of their old top leaders.

Thirdly, I should like to answer your question from the historical point of view. We know the Communists always keep trying, that infiltration no matter how many infiltrators are exposed, is one of their standard operating techniques. They succeeded in infiltrating one of their top brass into a high echelon in our Department of Foreign Affairs. I am sure that some of you have read the headlines here in the United States in the last few days about infiltration of the U.S. State Department.

I believe that answers the question. It would be wrong to assume the Communist threat in the Philippines or in any country is finished. We, all of us in the free world, must work patiently to maintain the gains which we have made. The problem in the Philippines is not ours alone, it is the problem of every nation in the free world.

**Answer:** (Gen. Lansdale). I think that answers the question, and it is an answer which is important. As you defeat the Communists some place, you can be sure that their objective -- ultimate victory -- remains unchanged. When you defeat them, they patiently devise new methods which they hope will be more successful and then they come back to try again. For myself, I feel certain that this is the case in the Philippines.

**Query:** I would appreciate receiving your personal impressions concerning the inter-relationship of Communist movements in these countries. Are they home-grown operations or are they truly branches of an international effort?

**Answer:** (Gen. Lansdale). I gather that what you are really asking is about the relationship between the Communist movement in your own country of Vietnam and the Communist movements in China, in Laos, the Philippines, and elsewhere. As you know, Vietnam is very close to my heart. I would love to sit down and talk with you at length about its problems and compare them with those of other countries.

As our time is so very limited here, I will limit myself to say simply this: Communism is, of course, an international effort. In each country, its expression, its activities, are tailored to the local situation. If those directing it are clever, the Communist program becomes so well adapted to local conditions, to local issues, local grievances, and local people that it appears to be a home-grown product. You will find some seeming differences among the programs in different countries, but you will find many, many more points of similarity. No matter in what portion of the world you choose the countries for comparison, the pattern is substantially the same everywhere. Many of you here today face, or possibly will face, the problems which were substantially solved in the Philippines and which today are critical in such countries as South Vietnam and Laos.

II.

THE COMMUNIST HUK ENEMY

By

Ismael D. Lapus  
Colonel, AFP

The Congress of the Philippines passed a law in 1957 known as the Anti-Subversion Act.

Section 2 of this Act reads:

"The Congress hereby declares the Communist Party of the Philippines to be an organized conspiracy to overthrow the government of the Republic of the Philippines for the purpose of establishing in the Philippines a totalitarian regime and place the government under the control and domination of an alien power. The said party and any other organization having the same purpose and their successors are hereby declared illegal and outlawed."

President Carlos P. Garcia, in signing the Act in June 20, 1957, said:

"With this law, our people have not only officially made the fight against Communism a matter of national policy, but we have also acquired a potent weapon in the fight against subversion . . . . Under the circumstances, it is clearly the right and the duty of this government to invoke the police powers of a sovereign state to protect itself and the institutions entrusted to its care from criminal attack. I shall not only see to it that the anti-communist program of my illustrious predecessor, Ramon Magsaysay, will remain intact, but I shall also push it through with the same dedication and with unrelenting vigor."

It took eleven years since the first armed encounter between the Huks and the government forces in May, 1946, to convince Congress that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military arm, the Huks, were conspiring to overthrow the government.

The story of the Huk rebellion in the Philippines is a long and complicated one. Although it followed the same pattern as any Communist-led and inspired revolt, circumstances that contributed to the rise and fall of the movement in the Philippines evolved lessons that may prove useful in dealing with people and areas affected by Communist uprisings.

My talk this morning is to give you a quick run-down of the history of the CPP and its military arm, the Huks, its organization, their aims and methods, and the atrocities committed by them, which led to their being outlawed and declared illegal.

This movement may be better understood by presenting to you the events in sequence, i.e., before World War II, during World War II, and after World War II.

#### 1920 - 1941

As early as 1920, shortly after the Third International or the Comintern was formed, Communism started taking roots in the Philippines. Intellectuals like Isidoro de los Reyes, Dominador Gomez, Crisanto Evangelista, and Antonio D. Ora, through their readings of Karl Marx and contacts with foreign agents like William Janequette alias Harrison George, American Communist from San Francisco, succeeded in organizing Philippine labor leaders to attend the Comintern-sponsored labor conference in Canton, China. In 1925, the Indonesian Communist, Tan Malaka alias Elias Fuentes, infiltrated into the Philippines disguised as a Filipino.

Conditions in the Philippines then offered a fertile ground for Communism to take root. The colonial status of the country offered excellent propaganda for agitators. The antiquated land tenure system served to emphasize the class struggle between the rich landowner and the poor peasant. The crop-sharing system and the usurious rates of interest prevented the peasants to rise above their deplorable low level of living.

Capitalizing on these conditions, Tan Malaka, a Comintern agent, succeeded in stirring the Filipino workers and the labor leaders to accept an invitation to attend the Moscow conference. On their way to Moscow in 1928,

Evangelista and Bognot attended the Shanghai conference first and met Communist delegates like Chou en Lai, Earl Browder and others from Europe. In Moscow, they met Stalin himself.

On his return in 1929 to the Philippines, Evangelista lost no time in organizing the Anti-Imperialist League, the Congress of Philippine Workingmen, and formed a working class party "to direct and lead the workers in their struggle for political and economic independence."

A year later on August 26, 1930 (Cry of Balintawak), the birth of the CPP was ushered in with Evangelista guiding its development along the pattern set by the Comintern. The first Politburo was composed of Evangelista, Ora, Manahan, Feleo, Caguin, Arcega and a Chinese referred to as "Comrade C." The official launching of the CPP on November 7, 1930 was made to coincide with the 13th Anniversary of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution with the following aims: (1) Fight and overthrow American imperialism in the Philippines; (2) Direct the movement for immediate and complete independence; (3) Establish Communism under the authority and direction of the masses; (4) Fight against the exploitation of the masses and to defend their rights and liberties; (5) Fight and overthrow capitalism; and (6) Use the dictatorship of labor to expedite the move for early independence of the nation and for redemption of the masses and for the practice and adoption of Communism. The hammer and sickle emblem emblazoned against a red background with the phrase "Communist Party of the Philippines" around it was adopted.

The CPP pursued its aims vigorously. Potential leaders like Maclang, Galvez, Brios, Bambao, Liberio were sent to Moscow to train in Comintern schools; the CPP organ called 'Titis' was circulated; propaganda leaflets were distributed with inflammatory slogans such as "Down with this government for this is a government of the dominant American imperialists," "All friars are liars in heaven," "There is no God; God is a mere illusion," "Blood, blood, and only blood can wash away the corruption in the country." After a series of violent and bloody demonstrations, the CPP leaders were arrested in 1931, tried and sentenced to prison.

The remaining free members of the CPP went underground and continued their illegal activities. During the period that the CPP was undergoing severe trials, the Socialist Party under Pedro Abad Santos, brother of a Supreme Court justice, former representative of the Philippine Legislature and member of the Quezon-Osmena Independence Mission to the United States, was gaining considerable influence. Agitations on land reforms were launched by the Party but the movement promoted class struggle in its activities. Its members killed

landowners, burned sugarcane fields and rice fields, slaughtered work animals and used threats to recruit followers. President Quezon then instituted land reforms, but the CPP had by then gained control of the Socialist Party and violent clashes between landowners and socialists worsened. At this time, 1938, James Allen alias Dr. Sol Ouerbach of the U. S. Communist Party appeared on the scene and convinced Quezon to pardon Evangelista, Capadocia, Balgos, and others.

The CPP leaders lost no time in gaining control of the Socialist Party and on November 7, 1938, the CPP and the Socialist Party formalized a merger. Abad Santos believed it would be beneficial to the working class. A political committee instead of a politburo was adopted with the following members: Evangelista, Abad Santos, Capadocia, Balgos, Castro, Feleo, del Castillo, Taruc, del Rosario, Cruz, Arogante. The merger added the phrase "affiliated to the Communist International" in Art. VIII of the new constitution and adopted the United Front tactics. The merger ushered in problems that caused differences of opinions among the leaders, petty quarrels and internal splits, which later caused purges in the leadership.

#### 1941 - 1945

Eleven years after the formal launching of the CPP, the Philippines saw itself in the violent clutches of another menace, that of Japanese imperialism. Recognizing perhaps that the battle was one of survival, the CPP leaders initiated steps to win the alliance of the Commonwealth of American high officials by pledging "Loyalty to the governments of the Philippines and the United States." These overtures were, however, ignored by President Quezon and Commissioner Sayre because of the anti-government activities of the CPP.

On the whole, the war was a blessing to the CPP. Aside from acquiring the name of patriots, the CPP was afforded the rare opportunity of setting up a miniature "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" complete with a civil branch in the form of the BUDC (Barrio United Defense Corps) and a military arm in the guise of the Anti-Jap Army. Furthermore, the Japanese invasion forced a closer tie between the Filipino and Chinese Communists thru the activation of the Wachi, Chinese squadrons of the Hukbalahap.

The early Japanese victory in the Philippines, however, proved to be a blow to the CPP. The leaders' failure to convince their followers to surrender led to the arrest of Evangelista, del Rosario, Abad Santos, Capadocia, and others. Evangelista later died of torture, Abad Santos succumbed after illness suffered at Fort Santiago, del Rosario was liquidated and Capadocia escaped.

The remaining free leaders were quick to retaliate. They met in March, 1942 and organized the Anti-Jap Army called Hukbalahap, (a contraction of "Huk labang sa Hapon" or 'Army Against Japan'), on suggestion of "Comrade C"; with Taruc as CinC and Alejandrino, deputy. Initially, five squadrons with 100 men each were activated. Abandoned arms in the battlefields of Bataan were gathered, deserters from the Jap-sponsored BC with their arms swelled their ranks, arms from ambushed Jap-patrols became a source of more arms. Later, Taruc, after contact was made with Colonel Claude M. Thorpe, was able to get American arms and supplies.

One squadron after another began to be activated and as their army increased in strength, the need for training and indoctrination began to be realized. The CPP established the Stalin University in Mt. Arayat and in the Sierra Madre Mountains, manned by Chinese military and political experts from the Red Chinese 8th Route Army. An all-Chinese guerrilla force, the Overseas Chinese 48th Detachment of the Philippine Anti-Japanese Forces known as the Wachi commanded by Uy Kiat and Wang Keu, was organized. With the support of the Philippine Chinese community, the detachment rapidly increased to six squadrons of 200 men each, operating in Bulacan and Laguna.

To insure their control and get cooperation of civilians, the Huks organized the BUDC (Barrio United Defense Corps) with membership of 5-12 depending on the size of the barrio on the pretext of protecting the people from looting and banditry. They actually were engaged in recruiting, drilling, intelligence and supply activities. The BUDC performed as courts of justice, and performed marriages among the barrio folks. By December, 1942, the Huk Army with Taruc as CinC, Balgos as Political Commissioner, Alejandrino as Vice CinC, swelled to 5000 well-armed troops. Encouraged by the Chinese Wachi troops, they became bolder and attacked Japanese garrisons, engaged patrols, Japanese convoys and raided BC troops and installations. By March, 1943, they had an Army of about 10,000. The Japanese Imperial Army retaliated and put Mt. Arayat, the Huk stronghold, under siege for ten days, killing and capturing many of the Huk leaders, and drove the Huks deeply underground.

The Huk Army was reorganized. Military districts were dissolved and regional commands were formed. Political organs, to guide fighting units and to see that orders were complied with, were formed down to squad level. Efforts to contact other guerrilla units under Peralta, Montelibano, Confessor, the USAFFE guerrillas under Colonel Merrill, were undertaken by Jose Lava but failed due to misunderstandings and confusion. A new politburo, with Arogante, Castro, Feleo, Comrade "C", Balgos, Taruc, del Castillo, Lava as members, were formed to do away with leaders who advocated the retreat policy and to prepare for the coming of the Liberation forces and proposed a peacetime coalition with the Osmena government. Regional commands were disbanded and provincial committees, provincial boards and regional staffs were activated in the provinces. The Military Committee was raised to a department.

When the Liberation forces came, they found Alejandrino governor of Pampanga, Feleo governor of Nueva Ecija, Jesus Lava governor of Laguna. Osmena refused to recognize the Communist local administration and the U. S. Army disarmed the Huk Force sent to Manila. The CIC arrested Taruc, Alejandrino, Cayanan, de Leon, and others. They were later released on appeal by the masses but, because of their defiance, they were re-arrested and sent to Iwahig Penal Colony in Palawan. The people of Pampanga then petitioned General MacArthur and President Osmena to recognize the civil officials and the local government set up by the Communists. As expected, the petition was ignored. It was estimated that out of the 25,000 killed by the Huks, only 5000 were Japanese. Another petition ignored was that made by Balgos who succeeded Luis Taruc as CinC to induct the Huk Army as a whole unit into the Philippine Army.

1945 - 1953

So far as the CPP was concerned, the struggle was resumed when Osmena repudiated the local government set-up by the Communists in Pampanga and the U. S. Army arrested Huk leaders and disarmed Huk squadrons. President Roxas, a sworn enemy of the Communists, defeated Osmena in the first post-war election and promised to solve the peace and order problem in sixty days. Troubled by the herculean task of national reconstruction and harassed by charges of collaboration with the Japanese and subservience to the United States by the Communists, Roxas died without fulfilling his mission.

With the Pacific campaign drawing to a close, the Huk soldiers wanted recognition by the U. S. Army for their guerrilla service. Their die-hard leaders opposed the idea so much so that only the Banal regiment presented itself for recognition. Embittered, the unrecognized Huks kept their arms laid low. In March, 1945, the Politburo transferred its headquarters to Manila and concentrated their efforts towards winning labor and peasantry. Thus, the CLO and PKM were taken in. A new political party was formed in July, 1945, called the Democratic Alliance with the aim of ridding the country of political confusion, economic insecurity, and to put up an honest, efficient and progressive administration. It did not take long for the Communists to control this organization. As their first offensive move, a huge demonstration demanding release of Huk leaders, Taruc and Alejandrino, was effected in September, 1946. Following their success in having the Huk leaders released, the coalition of the DA and NP was effected and Huk leaders, Lava and Taruc and four others, were elected to Congress. They were, however, not allowed to seat due to charges of fraud and terrorism in their respective provinces. Lava and Taruc returned to their Huk bands in the mountains.

The peace and order situation worsened with the unseating of Taruc and Lava. The Huks geared for the offensive. With their mass base then numbering about 54,000, they stationed guards in strategic places to warn the troops of approaching government troops, and provide shelter and food for Huk troops. The links between the Huks and the PKM were carefully hidden to preserve the status of the former as a respectable peasant organization. The Communist leaders had an excellent propaganda line. They had a good cause to fight for, arising from discontentment against the government. Most of those who collaborated with the Japanese, the Communists observed, were now in high government positions. The members of the Japanese-sponsored BC were now with the MPC. Their ranks swelled to about 15,000 experienced guerrilla fighters with a strong base support from the masses. On the other hand, the Army at the time was beset with problems of demobilization and collaboration. It was forced to demobilize 95,000 officers and men and keep only 37,000.

The initial encounter between the Huks and the government forces occurred in May, 1946 when a group of Huks ambushed a patrol of the 10th MP Co in Sta. Monica, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija, killing 10 soldiers, capturing and beheading its leaders. Soon the Huks went on lightning raids, recruited followers by force, kidnapped, murdered, and burned homes and fields. President Roxas then felt that agrarian reforms could solve the problem. The 70-30 crop-sharing law was passed and signed in consideration for the Huks laying down their arms. This did not stop the Huk rampage while negotiations for surrender were going

on. Two hundred Huks under Commander Viernes alias Stalin raised the hammer and sickle flag in Nueva Ecija, robbed the people of their crops, chickens and work animals, and threatened the townpeople to support the Huks or else.

The town of Norzagaray, Laguna, was sacked and the municipal building robbed of all the Huk raiders could carry. About this time, Feleo disappeared and the Huks accused government troops of having kidnapped and killed him. Roxas then enunciated the mailed-fist policy in place of the policy of attraction.

The Communists met this policy with a combination of legal and armed struggle. In actual implementation, these tactics became an armed struggle for the Huks and a legal struggle for a group of Communist leaders led by the Secretary General, Pedro C. Castro. On April, 1947, the Huks ambushed another patrol of MPs, killing its leader and wounding six others. A month later, 100 Huks raided Laur, Nueva Ecija, and robbed the treasury of \$600.00, kidnapped a policeman and looted the town. Another ambush followed in San Miguel, Bulacan, killing two officers of the 115th PC Co. While all these ambushes were being carried out, Taruc was building up his forces in Mt. Arayat. Upon learning this, Operations Arayat was launched with 2000 troops of the PC. Twenty-one Huks were killed, six wounded, several sacks of rice, medicine, 43 MGs, 34 rifles and 10,000 rolls of ammunition captured. Taruc was able to escape. Several more bloody encounters crystallized public clamor for general amnesty, which was rejected by Roxas for the reason that the Huks had their chance but did not take it. The situation turned from bad to worse with the unexplained death of Manuel Joven, a radical labor leader. Even PKM members, the civilian arm of the CPP, openly participated in the ambuscade. This led Roxas to declare the Huk and PKM illegal and seditious in March, 1948. A month later, Roxas died of heart attack at Clark Field, leaving the cleavage between the government and the dissidents at its worst.

A grave conflict inside CPP ranks occurred in the face of government mailed-fist policy. Castro, Secretary General, claimed that a "revolutionary situation" was non-existent and therefore, set his foot against the resumption of the armed struggle. On the other hand, the Huks now in fighting spirit and led by more radical leaders like Lava, Taruc and Balgos disobeyed Castro's order and eventually ousted Castro. The Lava faction at this time was beginning to assert its leadership and through a series of purges over disagreement on top policies, the Lava brothers succeeded in power.

The ascension of Quirino to the Presidency after the death of Roxas brought a new approach to the Huk situation. He felt that the strong-arm policy should be changed to a conciliatory one. Quick to grasp a new development to their advantage, Taruc sent word to President Quirino, offering his cooperation and that of the Huk organization in the restoration of peace and order. After a series of exchange of notes, Taruc came out of hiding to see President Quirino. Taruc pledged loyalty to the government and promised to live up to the pledge. He regained his seat in Congress and collected his backpay. The machinery for mass surrender was slow in forming and meanwhile, both sides started accusing each other of bad faith. Then came the day, August 29, 1948, when Taruc, instead of showing up as one of the speakers in a rally to convince his men to lay down their arms, sent a letter to President Quirino, accusing the government of bad faith. He had rejoined his troops to resume the armed struggle.

The failure of the Amnesty Proclamation led to a resurgence of Huk activities. In November, 1948, the CPP leaders changed the name of their military arm to Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan (HMB), "People's Liberation Army," this time making their followers believe they were engaged in the liberation of the Filipino people from "American imperialism." Soon the catchy preamble to their new constitution was attracting new recruits. The Katipunan red banner with the 3 K's replaced the letters HMB. Then began new raids on PC detachments, army camps, government installations, and ambuscades of government troops.

The most publicized of dissident activities was the ambuscade of Mrs. Aurora Quezon by Alexander Viernes alias Commander Stalin with 200 Huks. Killed were Mrs. Quezon, her daughter, Aurora, Mayor Bernardo of Quezon City, Filipe Buencamino, III, the San Agustin brothers, and many others. This was a serious setback to the Communist propaganda activities, since Mrs. Quezon was widely beloved by the people. Noticing the nation's feeling of condemnation, the Communist leaders tried to wash their hands by declaring that the perpetrators were not under orders to do so.

The elections in 1949 provided an excuse for the Communists to declare the existence of a revolutionary situation. Terrorism, fraud and abuses were rampant. Then, a new Politburo came into being with Jose Lava as Secretary General. Military discipline was stricter, financial problems were remedied, attacks were well planned. The 3th Anniversary of the Huks was celebrated with an attack on San Pablo City by 100 Huks, and the Communist flag was hoisted in the town hall. Another group raided the PC barracks at San Mateo, Rizal. The town of Montalban was attacked and the mayor kidnapped. The PC

barracks in San Rafael, Bulacan was attacked. Other raids were staged in Paete, Nagcarlan, Rizal; Pangil, Lilio, Calamba and Los Banos, Laguna; Lip Tanauan, Batangas; Guimba, Aliaga, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija; Apalit, Mexico Pampanga. On March 29, in a coordinated military attack, Luis Taruc reported that R. C. 2 ambushed and killed Captain Dumlao and several soldiers and another attack on San Simon and Mabalacat, Pampanga. Total losses for this anniversary celebration were more than 30 killed, many of them civilians, and more than 50 wounded.

In towns attacked, Huk leaflets were left, enjoining the people to give all possible aid to the Huks. A Presidential order relieved the PC from operational duties and turned the work over to the Army. Army troops reporting to their new stations were being ambushed whenever possible. May 1, 1950, 100 Huks attacked Aguilar, Pangasinan and twice that number attacked Laur, Nueva Ecija. Troops on the way to Laur were ambushed.

To intensify their intelligence work, the Intelligence Division of the MD was created by the Politburo to gather military, political, and economic intelligence for use in their Armed Struggle. The CPP finally formed two sets of Politburo: PB In - with Jose Lava, Maclang, Espiritu, Bautista, Rodriguez, to stay in Manila; PB Out - with Jesus Lava, Luis Taruc, Castillo, Alejandrino, Balgos to direct field activities. Plans were prepared to increase cadres from 3,600 to 56,000; party members from 10,800 to 172,000; organized masses from 30,000 to 2,430,000 for a period of one year beginning July, 1950. A strategic plan for the national seizure of power was drawn, which called for a general uprising as soon as a revolutionary crisis existed in coordination with trade union strikes and seizure of strategic industries. On May 1, 1952, the government was expected to fall and power would be in Communist hands. Thirty-five Huk Divisions of 3,329 men each or a total of about 116,480 men were planned for the job. R. C. 5 was designated to be their GHQ.

To step up the revolutionary movement, the CPP reorganized their forces. GHQ was composed of Jesus Lava, Chief of Staff, Luis Taruc, Vice Chief of Staff, Alejandrino, Chief, W/Plans, etc. Regional arrangements were effected too.

The next coordinated attack was launched August 26, 1950 to celebrate the Cry of Balintawak. Camp Macabulos in Tarlac was the target. 200 HMBs under Silvestre Liwanag alias Linda Bie killed 5 officers, 18 EMs, 7 civilians (nurses were criminally attacked), 4 bystanders wounded. Attackers released 47 prisoners from the provincial jail of Tarlac, looted the Army camp before setting it on fire. Patients in the hospital were among those murdered in cold blood while lying helpless in bed.

Sta. Cruz, Laguna, was another target on the same day. 300 HMBs under Pedro Caguan alias Commander Samonte attacked the town at 2:00 A.M., looted and burned the town. 3 killed and 8 wounded on IPC side, 15 HMBs killed and their wounded loaded in trucks and escaped towards Pila, Laguna.

To implement their plans for technical training and special warfare, the Special Warfare Division was created in September, 1950 with Angel Baking as Chief. Mission was to teach HMBs the technique of making homemade bombs, booby traps, land mines, use of wireless.

Expansion plans were being implemented full blast. Balgos with 200 HMBs went to Bicol, Briones to Ilocos, Sawit for Cagayan Valley, Manaoag to Batangas and Cavite. A special force under Pamintuan was sent to Manila. Capadocia spearheaded expansion in the Visayas.

At its height, the Communist revolt counted with about 15,000 organized strength with about 13,000 firearms of assorted types.

The fast deteriorating peace and order conditions aroused public sentiment. Congress and the President were blaming each other for the deplorable situation. Manila's population was swelling by hundreds of thousands who sought protection from Huk raids and attacks in isolated towns. Barangays and civil guards were being organized to help defend the towns and barrios.

On September 1, 1950 the President appointed Ramon Magsaysay as Secretary of National Defense. He was a man from the masses, who understood the problem thoroughly, an experienced guerrilla fighter, humble, courageous, and dedicated to the cause of freedom and democracy. His first move was to clean the Armed Forces of incompetent, abusive and corrupt personnel in order to restore the confidence of the people in their Army. To this end, he was quick to reward the brave ones with either decorations or spot promotions.

He placed the Army in the role of helping the economic social development of rural areas and get the assistance of the ECA (U. S.) in the work of bringing prosperity and social justice to the poverty-stricken people. Desiring to know the facts firsthand, he traveled extensively, talked with soldiers in the field, directed operations, talked to civilians in far-flung barrios, slept and ate with them whenever he could. He initiated the giving of rewards to surrendered, captured or killed Huk leaders and protection to those who affect such feats. He encouraged civilians to come to him and report directly or by letter and telegram collect. He organized the Psywar effort that counteracted Communist propaganda with tangible offers, such as land for the landless.

In less than two months in office, Magsaysay achieved his first big success on October 18, 1950, when the Politburo (In) was completely broken with the arrest of all the members, in a daring raid conducted in the city of Manila by the Military Intelligence Service under his supervision. In the words of William Pomeroy, this is how the news was received by the Huks in the field: "One evening, a few days after the end of the school Reg (Taruc, brother of Luis) who had a radio, burst into our hut and stood there looking at us, his face a picture of pain. 'Comrades,' he said, in a particularly strained voice, 'bad news.' He stood there silent for a moment while we jumped to our feet. 'The whole city organization has been smashed. All PB members in Manila have been captured.' He stood. No one spoke for a long time."

Taken in the raid were many of the keenest minds and best organizers in the whole Huk movement and two truckloads of documents containing complete plans of their activities, files of previous activities and drafts for the whole period of the preparation for the national seizure of power. The PB (Out) took over leadership and they abandoned plans for the 20th anniversary celebration of the CPP on November 7, 1950 with the seizure of plans for the coordinated attack. In retaliation, and to restore morale among the rank and file, the Huks launched a series of holdups, arson, killing, kidnapping. Among these were: Commander Amat and his flying Squadron held up MRR at Binan, fled with cash loot of \$76,000. 100 Huks attacked San Marcelino, Zambales, burning 34 houses, kidnapped 10 civilians and butchered 22 residents. 50 Huks surprised a PC garrison at Palawig, Zambales, got 21 rifles and killed 2 soldiers. The Hardie Farm near Antipolo, Rizal was raided by Huks, killing Mr. and Mrs. Hardie and the foreman.

The AFP intensified its campaign, using the information gained from captured documents and revelations made by captured Politburo members. One after the other, Huk commanders hiding in the city of Manila and neighboring towns fell into the dragnet of the MIS. Huk lairs and hideouts in the city were raided. With the capture of Maclang, Liaison Officer with the CB, and secret documents linking the CB with the movement, the Chinese began to be apprehensive. Not long after the capture of the PB, the MIS staged another raid and apprehended the members of the Chinese Bureau. The remnants of the CPP and HUKs went in hiding deep in mountain lairs where they are now trying to recoup.

The tide had changed. Magsaysay initiated vigorous economic programs to rehabilitate the suffering masses, as well as surrendered and captured dissidents and continued his Strong-Army policy against the Communist die-hards who had chosen to pursue their Communist objectives.

To give time to prepare cases against the PB, CLO and the CB, the President issued Proclamation No. 210, suspending the writ of habeas corpus. The CPP reacted quickly by getting the pink newspapers to voice their indignation and accusations that the government was trampling on the democratic rights of citizens. The CLU joined in the protest but was silenced after a hurried document, made public, revealed that the CLU action was Communist-inspired. The legal battle in court started with the accused CPP leaders presented by legal luminaries such as Recto, Araneta, Barredo, Baisas, Tonga, Laurel, Teehankee, and Villanueva. After three long years of trial, PB members were convicted, sentenced. Sentences ranged from death to long terms in prison. Up to the present, the cases are on appeal in the Supreme Court.

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#### DISCUSSION

Question: What was the military organization of the Hukbalahap? Did they organize in three forces, such as mobile columns, local or regional guerrilla units and a home guard?

Answer: (Col Valeriano). Yes. They did have all these units, but under different names. For instance, the mobile units. Their version of mobile units were called "Striking Forces." These were actually the Huks' principal fighting forces for major operations, and employed very mobile tactics. They operated directly under the Huk commander, Luis Taruc.

The second thing that you asked was about area or static guerrilla units. As Colonel Lapus mentioned, the Huks had area or regional commands in which they maintained active elements of approximately company size, which were called squadrons.

Home guards, yes. They had what they called the Barrio Unit Defense Corps units, formed from local residents activated on call. These units were commonly known in the Philippines as the Huk home guard.

**Query:** What was the organization of the mobile columns? Did they have battalions, regiments, and so on? Did they carry heavy weapons?

**Answer:** (Col Valeriano). In the Philippines, we found that the striking force strength varied. A striking force would move out of its redoubt area and move towards its target, gathering strength along the way. In this way, by the time it reached the target area, the basic element of the striking force would be augmented by two or three times its size when it left its redoubt. This augmentation was principally by area squadrons. There was a time when a striking force could gather as many as 500 well armed men. Armaments varied. There was no standard armament, but we did find that the best arms in the hands of the Huks were carried by these striking forces. The squadrons also varied in strength and in equipment.

**Answer:** (Gen Lansdale). I'd like to comment to the Vietnamese officers here that the Huks in organization, tactics, and strength were very similar to the Viet Cong you are now facing down in your Fifth Region. They are not similar to the Viet Minh organization against the French. In that campaign, the Viet Minh had more formal organizations.

**Query:** Can you give me the relative strength of the Huks and of your armed forces in one of their major operations?

**Answer:** (Col Valeriano). I will tell you about a particular case, the ambush of Mrs. Quezon, the widow of our first President. The Huks, with a strength of 250 men, ambushed her party along a lonely road, killing her, several members of her family, and a number of military personnel who were with the party. There was a tremendous public reaction, a demand that the Philippine Constabulary produce results. I was placed in command of a force which ultimately numbered 3,000 men, with orders to achieve and maintain contact with the ambushing force until it was destroyed. After seven months of continuous operation in wild, virtually unexplored mountains, I was able to report to GHQ that the five squadrons involved and their 250 men had been wiped out or captured.

**Query:** Did the Huk have outside assistance? If so how was this rendered?

**Answer:** (Gen Lansdale). Colonel Lapus touched on some international aspects, in the description of the Communist Party in the Philippines.

how it was formed, with the fact that some of the Communists there went to Moscow, went to Peking, were in with both the Chinese and the Russian Communist Parties.

However, during the Huk campaign, the military campaign, there was no substantial outside assistance in a large material way, no assistance with arms or supplies. There were no regular submarine or air supply routes operating. They did receive some funds at times, and so on. Couriers did come in, of course, but usually through normal routes of travel. I believe that is about all we can say in a general discussion.

**Query:** Did I understand you to say that the Huks were never established on any of the other islands except Luzon? Is this true and is there any reasonable explanation?

**Answer:** (Maj Justiniano). This is not true. From 1946 through 1951 the Huks were actively pushing an expansion program. They had in fact what they called their expansion force, with a primary mission of initiating Huk movements in other islands. They met with very considerable success on Panay Island. However, through troop action and a very daring and successful infiltration operation under the direction of Colonel Lapus here, we were able to crush the movement entirely, killing its leader, a high ranking member of the Politburo.

**Query:** Why was the expansion movement unsuccessful?

**Answer:** (Maj Bohanan). As I see it, there were two principal reasons for failure. One was that the Huk propaganda line was not sufficiently flexible. It was not well adapted to conditions prevailing in localities other than Central Luzon. The other reason is that expansion activities were usually recognized and vigorously repressed by local authorities, by the constabulary, and even at times by citizen leaders in the communities.

Incidentally, in that Panay operation masterminded by Colonel Lapus, the infiltrators never revealed themselves until the commander was killed. After the second in command learned of his leader's death, he turned to his two principal staff officers, asking: "What do we do?" Their answer was to tell him that he was under arrest.

### III

## MILITARY OPERATIONS

by

Napoleon D. Valeriano  
Colonel, AFP, Retired

Gentlemen, for the purpose of my discussion covering military combat contributions to the final subjugation of the Communist movement in the Philippines, I have divided the operations into four phases.

The first phase covers the period from 1945 until early 1947. This was the period when the Commonwealth Government of the Philippines, which was in exile in the United States during the period of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, returned with General MacArthur. This transition government was not too well prepared to face its problems, especially the problems of national security. It was informed about the subversive movement in Central Luzon, but it did not understand fully the implications of the Hukbalahap movement. After it became the government of the Philippine Republic in 1946, these same people still refused to accept the intelligence reports repeatedly and consistently furnished. But, since this movement really was Communist inspired, the military policy during this period was inadequate, and proved most costly to the country from 1946 up to 1955.

The Hukbalahap movement as discussed by today's speakers so far has concerned military organizations called regional commands. These commands have varied strengths. But for my discussion, I will speak about the fighting units called the Hukbalahap squadrons. These squadrons varied in strength, varied in armament, varied in the quality of their leadership. Some of these squadrons were led by blood-thirsty types. That is quite common in guerrilla warfare. Some of them were lead by such inoffensive leaders that we did not give them operational priorities until much later. However, during the Japanese occupation period, under the cover of being anti-Japanese guerrilla units, they all were able to accumulate armament and equipment.

Now, in this transition period the armed forces of the Philippines were being demobilized slowly to peacetime status. We started organizing units to take over the functions of the pre-war Philippine Constabulary

which was a military organization with national police functions. The new post-war organization was called the Military Police Command, Philippine Army. During this period, General McArthur's headquarters authorized the organization, training and equipment of some 13 military police companies, with the necessary headquarters organizations, in order that these companies when deployed would be properly coordinated supervised and controlled.

Again, the attitude of the Commonwealth government was reflected in the training of these units, in the equipment of these units, in the armament of these units. Most of the units, as I saw them in the field, were armed with patrolmen's billies and whistles to be policemen. They were issued white painted helmets, white painted jeeps, and the heaviest weapon that I saw for these military police companies were carbines. They were pitted against experienced Huk guerrillas who were armed with the heaviest infantry armaments available, including bazookas. So that in several incidents in 1945 and 1946, we found military police companies or formations either being beaten back or overrun by Huk-balahap units. Again in 1946, the total number of government formations actually deployed in the field with semi-constabulary combat missions had an effective strength of about 11,000 officers and men.

The second phase was from 1947 through 1949, beginning at the time the young Republic had already been responsible for its own defense for about a year. By this time, we in the field had been able to convince several key members of the government in Manila that the Huk movement, and the Huks themselves, were mistakenly dubbed agrarian reformers or persecuted peasants, that they were actually guerrillas with Communist inspiration and direction. Accordingly, a reorganization of the Military Police Command in the Armed Forces of the Philippines was effected. It was redesignated as the Philippine Constabulary and the strength was increased to 17,000. This, they believed at the time, would be more than adequate to destroy the Huk guerrilla formations which were then practically controlling the rural areas of Central Luzon.

During this period, we in the field who saw the Huks at close range were impressed not only by their military capabilities but also by their non-military activities which were well integrated with their military program. Specifically, we were impressed by their efforts and success in cultivating a closer liaison with the villages or, in other words, in building a guerrilla support base. Quite a few of us

made lengthy reports about these developments to GHQ (General Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines). Unfortunately, we were reporting to military men who clung too stubbornly to the ideas of conventional warfare which they had learned in staff schools there and here. Naturally, civilian leaders in government were influenced by the attitudes of the Army brass in Manila, and our reports were often ignored.

During this period, normal operations of the Philippine Constabulary were largely routine patrol and constabulary missions. Too often, patrols were sent out to execute purely constabulary duties, such as serving search warrants or warrants of arrest, and accomplished nothing else. Constabulary groups were dispersed in zone and provincial commands and further broken down into small village garrisons of platoons or less. In actual fact, these detachments either established a more or less tacit modus vivendi with the Huks in their area, or were forced to devote most of their efforts to supporting and protecting themselves.

A few large operations were mounted. I would like to discuss these operations from the standpoint of their motivation, their execution, and the results obtained.

A task force operation was usually initiated after some Huk outrage had prompted headlines in the newspapers claiming that the Philippine Constabulary was asleep. The Chief of Constabulary would answer the headline with an announcement that already the Constabulary was planning an operation, which he would personally command, that would end for all time the Huk menace.

Plans would be made, troops assembled, from the provincial and zone commands (leaving those areas virtually unprotected) and a thoroughly conventional "sweep" of an allegedly Huk infested area would be underway. The operations were well planned in accordance with conventional doctrine. We had lines of departure, we had phase lines, we had zones of action, and we had priorities of support.

The results were usually no hits, some runs (non-scoring) and many errors. The troops would be exhausted, our gasoline supply for the next month would be exhausted, but the Huks themselves would scarcely be tired by the effort necessary to draw out of the path of the sweep.

Once the previously announced objective had been reached, the operations would be considered successfully terminated and the troops would return to their normal stations. The guerrillas would also return to the area which had just been swept, confident that they would be free of molestation for some time to come.

However, during this period, being a very curious individual, I started germinating a few ideas of my own on how to meet these Huk guerrillas on equal terms. Time prohibits me from describing to you the organization of a team from Headquarters consisting of four officers and 50 enlisted men, known in the Philippines as the Nenita unit. We found out many things that we did not learn from text books. We learned the Huk technique of getting supplies, the Huk technique of getting information, the Huk technique for ambuscades, for raids, interrogating captured government personnel. As we learned, in this period of 1947 to 1949, we tried in our small way to evolve useful counter-measures. One case history concerning these, I will describe later in this period. Before discussing our efforts, I would like to give you additional information about the tactics and practices of the Philippine Constabulary and of the Huks during this period.

I have already mentioned our Constabulary patrol missions. These patrols often were ambushed or would be forced into meeting engagements with guerrilla formations. Sometimes the patrols were decimated, sometimes they were able to force the guerrillas back. Despite occasional setbacks, the guerrillas gained strength throughout this period. Campaign analysis reveals that these patrol actions did not seek to cultivate the sympathy of the people in the area. As I recall those days, it was very normal for a company commander in the field to dispatch a patrol from squad to platoon size to serve a warrant of arrest in an isolated village. This patrol would reach the village, locate the individual (if he were surprised and found there) and would return to town without further action. Junior leaders of these formations did not attempt to stay long enough in this village to get friendly with the people, find out what were their problems, and if their patrol could assist them in any manner.

The guerrillas were doing exactly the opposite. They would sneak into these villages, stay with the people, play with them, work with them, but at the same time in a very subtle method indoctrinate them in Communism. This was the secret of the whole thing.

Another important factor which entered into our failure, and which I still cannot forget, was the poor support we received from higher echelons. Particularly significant was the inefficiency of our logistic system. Support was so poor that troops in the field were often forced to live off the country. As you know, gentlemen, when there is no other way for the troops to eat, commanders are virtually forced to tolerate troopers going to the villages and demanding food. It's either they go hungry or we go hungry. That was the theory of the average government trooper in the field. This, of course, worsened matters.

As the troops lived off the people, the Huks naturally exploited the situation. Their propagandists hammered constantly at the theme that these practices were an exact reflection of the attitude of the government in Manila towards the "persecuted masses."

That general situation was bad enough. Even worse, there were, as might be expected, instances of officers involved in matters definitely unworthy of one who is by definition an officer and a gentleman by the act of our Congress. Instances, including demanding bribes for the performance or non-performance of duty, occurred in all ranks. Each, of course, was magnified by Huk propagandists and their sympathizers. Few of the offenders were punished appropriately and publicly. We had quite a few big scandals in Central Luzon during this period. In a general statement, we can say that troop behavior was so low that it cultivated an antipathy by the masses for the man in uniform.

The third phase of the operations against the Huk is what I like to call the "phase of enlightenment." This is the period of the new approach which started in 1950 and lasted into 1952. The turning point of the whole campaign occurred in 1951, right in the middle of this period. This, as General Lansdale stated, was the election of 1951. In 1950, the situation in the Philippines and the representations of the Philippine Government awakened and invited the concern of our American brothers. Philippine President Quirino installed as Secretary of Defense a vigorous new man, a man of the people, Ramon Magsaysay. He had adequate guerrilla background; but, more important, is the fact that as a man of the people, he understood exactly and instinctively what was happening in the homes and the minds of the people of the villages and the farms. He knew their problems, he knew what the mistakes of the Armed Forces were. As soon as he got into the office of Secretary of National Defense, things started happening so fast that right now it's very hard to recall the exact order or sequence of the actions during this period.

As soon as he took office, we started feeling the punch of new, vigorous, inspired leadership which made its effect felt in every aspect of our fight against the Huks. I well remember his first visit to me, when he said, "I want you to turn out public relations men from every private, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant and officer of your command. I want every enlisted man of the Philippine Army in uniform to serve as a public relations man for the Army and for our government." That was the substance of his statement, and accurately reflected his policy.

In speaking of the new formations and new activities which were strange to the Hukbalahaps, I want to cite first the effectiveness of the Scout Ranger teams that were thrown into the field. These were conventionally trained enlisted men, thoroughly screened personnel of the AFP, who were taken to Fort McKinley and given special instructions on ranger tactics. They formed deep penetration units which went far into the guerrilla redoubts or safe areas in the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Zambales Mountains. From the accumulation of reports from these Scout Ranger teams, we were able to determine the location of the enemy's long-established refuge areas.

It was largely from the reports of the Scout Ranger teams and from the invigorated Military Intelligence Service in the operational area that the intelligence was secured which was the basis of large, well coordinated, well directed, and well led task force operations such as Operation Four Roses, Operation Omaha, and others. I want to stress that we no longer started large unit operations because of a newspaper headline. We were now in a position that before we attempted a big operation we made sure that we had a good basis for it.

Ninety percent of our time in the field was devoted to small patrol operations. This time the patrols were properly instructed, properly oriented, and properly prepared. They were not only prepared to deal with the enemy as soldiers should, they were also prepared to talk to the people as individuals from villages themselves and coming to the village as friends and helpers.

The turning point of the whole campaign was in 1951, when the people were dramatically impressed with the desire of the armed forces to have clean elections in the Philippines. You can imagine, gentlemen, the effect of young students from the ROTC units being sworn in on temporary duty status with the armed forces. These

youngsters, ranging from the age of 14 up to about 18 at the most, were given weapons, were given AFP insignia and were assigned to guard the polling places, with strict orders to insure honesty and compliance to the letter to the election law. The repercussions felt by the people in the rural areas in Huklandia were tremendous. For the first time they were convinced that the government was sincere in eliminating the Communist movement. This operation proved also to every man in army uniform in the field that abuses, misconduct, graft would no longer be tolerated with the new approach to the campaign.

The fourth phase was the consolidation phase. This was when Huk squadron units started disintegrating slowly but surely. This was when the government formations started pushing and pushing, when we applied constant pressure and did not allow the Huks to rest. Within a short time, because they had lost the sympathy of the masses, it was an easy matter to isolate these units up in the mountains. There they ran out of food and some of them came down from the hills to surrender en masse, in groups sometimes practically dying of thirst or hunger.

This alienation of the people from the Huk was completed when the Secretary of National Defense became our President in the 1953 election, so that he had the whole government under his control and direction, to press his campaigns for the welfare of the people and against the Huk.

The surrender of Taruc was virtually the surrender of the Huk movement. But we did not stop after the surrender of Taruc. We recognized that there were certain mop-up operations that were needed. These were criminal bands disguising themselves as Huks who tried to out-live or escape the notice of the armed forces. We swung our attention to these criminal bands, criminal guerrillas, or shall I say bandit guerrillas. By 1955, even a very critical Congress recognized that after all the AFP, the men in uniform, had done a good job.

At the height of the campaign, the troop build-up of Government formations against the Huk guerrilla finally reached a total of 34,000 officers and enlisted men deployed in the field as combat forces. Of these 34,000, I would say that a good ninety percent were in combat units which had civic and social welfare missions as well as combat missions. During the last two phases of the campaign, we added to our combat units civil affairs officers and civil affairs units and kindred units. These greatly assisted in realizing Secretary Magsaysay's objective of building up acceptance of the Armed Forces by the civilian population.

In my command, which was typical, the civil affairs officer served as the liaison officer of the civil government on my staff. He was the man who was my link with the provincial governor and with the other civilian government officials in that province. He also served as my liaison officer with the civilian armed bodies that we had in my area of responsibility. These included police forces of the local governments and also home guard units, commonly known as Civilian Guards, which were formed in almost every town in the area. Such integration, such cohesion of all government and semi-government agencies was achieved that I was able to accomplish my purpose, which was to separate the armed guerrillas from the local population, and the destruction of active guerrilla units. Actions of all agencies were this well planned, well co-ordinated, well directed, and well supervised.

I would like now to discuss with you some actual case histories. Time prohibits detailed discussion of every device which we in the Philippines found effective in combatting these guerrillas. Actually, in the various commands which I held, about thirty different ruses, strategems, types of unconventional operation, were found to be successful. Now we will cover one particular activity which was the result of a lot of study on our part and which was successfully used. It is one which I hope may be found useful by some of you.

This activity is what we in the 7th Battalion Combat Team called "Large Unit Infiltration." The basic idea was to infiltrate a specially trained counter-guerrilla force in enemy guise deep into enemy territory. This force, it was felt, should be able to fraternize with the local inhabitants, gathering intelligence and making contact with enemy armed units, until the most favorable opportunity arrived for striking with maximum effect, and then withdrawing to friendly territory.

We felt that this activity was one partial solution of the major problem of counter-guerrilla warfare, that of finding and finishing enemy units in large force. Usually, guerrilla enemy intelligence and warning systems are too efficient to permit major encounters.

To recapitulate, the two major objectives of this activity are to effect surprise contact with the enemy in force and to take advantage of this contact to destroy him by close combat. There are many other obvious objectives. First in importance is to gather

intelligence, especially verification of enemy order of battle. Second is the penetration and study of existing enemy systems of security. Third, the study of enemy signal communications and the extent and nature of civilian support and liaison methods. Fourth, is the appreciation and study of enemy supply methods and extent of local area support to enemy units. As a special appendix, there might be added the final identification of local government officials secretly in collusion with the enemy.

The advantages which may be gained from the adoption of this activity, which we call Force "X," are obvious from a recital of its missions. There are also disadvantages which must be considered, problems which must be solved, prerequisites which must be met. Assuming that the personnel are available, they must be screened for suitability and carefully trained until they know enemy procedures and personalities as well as the members of the enemy unit which they are to impersonate would know them. This means that before their training is finished, a favorable situation for their employment must exist and must be known in detail.

What is a favorable situation for the employment of such a unit? It is a situation when communications between enemy units are not yet well developed, or have been thoroughly disrupted for a long period. It is a situation where the enemy to be contacted knows less about the unit to be impersonated by your men than you do. Such situations most often arise when the enemy is expanding his organization vigorously, when there is as yet little contact between different centers of expansion.

Above all, the entire operation must be planned and conducted, from the start to the moment of the final strike, in absolute secrecy. Information must be given only on the strictest need-to-know basis.

I regret to say that several BCT commanders in our Army failed to give adequate consideration to the problems of employment of such forces and learned a sad lesson from their efforts.

Once the tactical opportunity has been determined to exist, an appropriate cover plan must be developed. Most often, we found, the cover for the infiltration unit will be that of being a known unit from a distant area with which communications are poor which has come on a liaison and reconnaissance mission. Needless to say,

every man in the unit must know the cover story in great detail, must know more about his supposed unit than any enemy with whom he may come in contact.

To some extent the cover story will depend upon the target, or targets selected for the operation. Targets can be only tentatively designated and assigned priorities in advance. Much should depend upon opportunities encountered. The killing of leading enemy personalities may be far more important than the destruction of a certain enemy unit. A system of priorities may be established, in which the priorities may be: One - the killing of enemy leaders or outstanding fanatics; two - the destruction of enemy elite organizations; three - the penetration and destruction of especially devoted or effective enemy support elements.

The above-mentioned targets may all be found in the area of a single operation deep in enemy territory. Time factors involved in preparation of counter-guerrilla infiltration units are variable. Don't be tempted into throwing in half-trained units. In our experience, four to six weeks of intensive training was usually found adequate. Careful screening and selection of operating personnel is of paramount importance. Based on combat experience and physical condition, selected personnel are segregated in a secret training base. Training should stress physical conditioning and adopting to enemy "personalities" (of enemy units being represented), dress, speech, manners, customs, etc. Divested of any article of clothing identifying your own force, personnel are reissued captured weapons, equipment, articles and other materiel. This is an important item. Where it is possible, captured enemy insignias, uniforms, documents, ID cards, propaganda publications, song books, indoctrination booklets etc., are freely distributed to operating personnel.

Caution should be exercised on the issuance of enemy uniforms, as civilian clothing is normally being more representative of enemy guerrilla elements. There should be no uniformity of wearing apparel, possibly with the exception of the two or three ranking members of the disguised force. Armament and equipment must show signs of wear and tear, or poor upkeep, which is characteristic of guerrilla weapons. Well kept weapons and abundance of ammunition with the disguised force is a dead give-away. However, the newer and gaudier weapons, such as pistols with pearl handles, should be given to leaders. This is common with guerrilla units.

The maximum number of ex-enemy personnel are recruited. Through careful screening and tests to establish loyalties, services of this particular type of individual will be invaluable during the training and operational phases. During the training of the troops, these individuals are useful and instructive critics. With individual cover stories, they are assigned with command, security or advancements during actual operations. After training, the disguised force should be made to undergo rigid tests with unwitting friendly coop units. These tests will require special precautions to prevent mistaken encounters.

Now I would like to tell you about the first time we employed this device. First, you should know the basic situation at the time, which was in 1948 when the Huks were running freely all over Central Luzon. However, in the Huk ranks we had a division of authority. Those in Southern Luzon had been independent (they thought), but their commander, a Colonel Villegas, had just died. As a result, some of their units were trying hard to establish contact with the more developed forces up in Central Luzon, under Taruc, who was anxious to contact them. This was obviously a very favorable opportunity.

I designated the 16th Philippine Constabulary company as the unit to compose Force X. The Commander, Lt. Marana, after receiving his instructions, quietly screened his entire company, selected 44 enlisted men and 3 officers, and at night moved to a redesignated training base in the jungle around this area here. Force X was in existence and was isolated completely from the day they moved into that base. Only three officers from my staff were authorized to go into that secret training base.

The training the men received in that secret training base followed very closely the description I just gave. These men were invested of all items which could identify them as members of the army. They were dressed in civilian clothes, and when they arrived in camp they received all the captured weapons that had been accumulated by my S-2 section under Major Justiniano. They were given reading material, indoctrination booklets and propaganda publications of the sort carried by Huks. They were given the things generally found on Huk dead, soiled handkerchiefs, love mementoes from girl friends. During the period of four weeks, no rank was recognized except as conferred by predesignated enemy identifications, preassigned aliases and pet names commonly used by guerrilla

units. They were addressed as comrades, brothers, members of the proletariat. They were taught Huk songs. They were taught how to deliver speeches Huk-style.

They were taught the descriptions of the leaders of the Southern Luzon guerrillas. Some of them, whose physical appearances coincided with known guerrilla leaders, posed as these personalities. They were required to take on the appearance of hunted guerrilla individuals during those days. They became, and stayed, dirty, unshaven, badly in need of haircuts. Like the enemy, these soldiers were unhappily forced away from bathrooms, shaving creams, and razor blades.

Somewhere about the second week, Justiniano came back from our national prison smuggling in three ex-Huks who were captured in Southern Luzon. These had been tested, screened, and reindoctrinated to our side and were brought to the training base to serve as instructors. They became around-the-clock critics of mannerisms, speeches, customs. Huks were taught certain methods of addressing a superior, certain ways to eat, certain general practices for their daily ablutions in the river. These little things were taught to the men of Force X.

While this training was going on, my troops were making a reconnaissance of the area through which Force X would supposedly pass while en route for Southern to Central Luzon. A disguised patrol, led by a sergeant, actually covered the route. It noted the trails, noted the attitude of the inhabitants, and identified the obstacles which were encountered. All this was incorporated in the cover story of Force X to insure that force would be accepted in the proposed operational areas which was called the Candaba Swamp.

When everything was set, Justiniano was ordered back to Manila to recruit several walking, wounded men from our Army hospital. He had to go from one bedside to the other and finally found two rugged enlisted men belonging to different commands who wanted to join Force X in spite of their wounds. With the addition of these personnel, the operation was ready to roll, and the operation was launched at 1700 hours, 14 April 1948.

The force almost precipitated a pitched battle when passing near a PC company in another province, while en route to their line of departure for their operational area. The operational departure was

taken from a small town, about four miles east of the highway, where they fought a carefully staged sham battle with two of my uniformed PC companies. From this they withdrew in good order, carrying with them their two wounded. Four hours later they contacted the first Huk outpost, which was of course informed of their approach and very curious as to the identity of this unit which had been fighting the PC.

They were carefully interrogated as to who they were, where they came from, where they were going, etc. Their cover stories stood up well, and their wounded lent an invaluable authenticity to their accounts. They were given guides who took them on into the Candaba Swamp until they linked up with Huk squadrons 5 and 17, under Commanders Romy and Vergara. There they were again interrogated, asked about their route from Southern Luzon. Much interest was taken in them, and they were promised that top leaders, possibly the "Supremo," Luis Taruc, would see them. Force X and the 2 squadrons (estimated strength about 120) fraternized for more than a day and a half, exchanging experiences, boasting of their respective commands. Naturally Force X was talking about the prowess of the South Luzon Huks. Squadrons 2 and 17 were talking of the prowess of the Huk Supremo. During these conversations of individuals, Force X accumulated a lot of information. Preselected individuals deliberately engaged local visitors in lively discussions about local conditions, propaganda and supply systems, etc. They found that most of the town mayors and chiefs of police were in collusion with the enemy. They found there were enlisted men in the PC company on the other side of the swamps who were giving information to the Huks. They found out how supplies were left by women in selected spots along the road to be picked up at sun-down by Huks.

The fourth day after they crossed the line of departure, another two Huk squadrons joined the combined group. These two squadrons, 4 and 21, were special killer groups. One in particular, under Commander Bundalian, was unique in its organization and in its assigned mission. It was called the enforcing squadron, assigned by the Huk Supremo to enforce Huk justice. Actually, it was a band of well trained executioners; their specialty was kidnapping civilian individuals who were suspected of disloyalty to the movement.

By the end of the 5th day, Force X was outnumbered 1 to 3. During all these five days, the Huk squadrons showed no indications of suspecting that Force X was other than what it seemed to be. No one detected

that they had with them four 60mm mortars, two light machine guns, close to about 200 hand grenades and a complete voice radio, all hidden. How was this equipment hidden? Why, some enterprising enlisted man found that mortar tubes fitted inside bamboo water tubes and so did light machine guns. Others took delight in hiding grenades and mortar shells inside watermelons, papayas, etc. The radio was in a sack of rice.

About breakfast time on the 6th day, according to the version of the Force X commander, Lt. Marana, they noticed all of a sudden that the Huks, and I'm talking about the real Huks, started getting cool, so much so that breakfast was eaten in virtual silence. Lt. Marana decided that the time to strike had come. On a prearranged signal, the members of Force X unobtrusively segregated themselves away from the Huk groups, and Lt. Marana gave the order to strike.

There was actually a slaughter in the area. Two Huk squadrons were practically deactivated as of that moment. The mortars came into play within the first two minutes when the strike was ordered. The men were instructed to throw hand grenades before using their weapons. And, within five minutes, the radio was in operation and was in contact with me and with three Philippine Constabulary companies that were alerted around the operational area ready to move in.

At the end of the battle, when the Huk withdrew, we counted 82 killed in an action that did not last more than 30 minutes. Among those identified by the town mayor of that region were three commanders including Commander Bundalian, the commander of the assassin group. Two others were commanders sent by the Huk Supremo to make a personal screening of Force X.

Of course, as soon as I received word that the fight was on, I committed my two alert companies and all the other troops I could get. For two weeks the area was saturated with troops. This resulted in 21 Huks killed and 9 captured in seven encounters in the area. Out of more than a hundred local inhabitants detained for interrogation, 17 turned out to be members of the squadrons we had deactivated.

As an interesting aftermath, about three weeks later we learned of an intense fire-fight in the middle of the swamp. Investigation disclosed that a Huk squadron from the adjoining province, on a foraging mission, had met another squadron from my province. Each thought they had stumbled on another "Force X" unit, with a resulting casualty list of 11 dead and 3 seriously wounded.

We also learned, later, what gave our operation away to the enemy. The genuine Huks decided that Force X had too much bright shiny new ammunition for a legitimate guerrilla unit.

Gentlemen, there are no hard and fast rules that will guarantee success in an operation of this kind. I told you earlier of some of the things which I think are essential, which if not observed are likely to cause failure. Success, however, can only be achieved through the maximum effort to understand the local situation and adapt to it, avoiding the obvious pitfalls and exercising cunning, training, and ability superior to that of the enemy.

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#### DISCUSSION

**Query:** Did the isolated position of the Philippines help or hinder the campaign against the Huk?

**Answer:** (Col. Valeriano). The geographical situation of the Philippines, an archipelago of 7,000 islands surrounded by ocean, was of great assistance in the campaign against the Huk, only because we realized at the very beginning the extreme importance of securing our boundaries against the enemy. Had we not been aware of this, and reasonably successful, our infinitely long shore lines and our communications difficulties would have aided the enemy.

I realize that you in South Vietnam have the same problem of a long coast line as well as the disadvantage of being situated on the same land-mass as your powerful enemy.