

INTRODUCTION TO COUNTERINSURGENCY

24 September 1962

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NOTICE

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INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

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INTRODUCTION TO COUNTERINSURGENCY

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DR. REICHLEY: Admiral Rose, Gentlemen: I would like to call your attention to what I believe is one of the biggest counter-insurgency movements, a successful one, which occurred yesterday, with the Redskins up in Cleveland. I sure wish they would keep this up now for a change.

Before Dr. Sanders gives his lecture, I thought I would take a few minutes to outline the ICAF plan for handling the subject of insurgency and counterinsurgency during this academic year.

The Industrial College believes that it can fulfill its mission regarding Communist-inspired insurgency and U.S. counterinsurgency measures most effectively by treating it throughout its curriculum. So you will study in detail many facets of this subject, especially the managerial, the economic, and the social aspects, throughout the various units of the course.

In addition, however, as part of the general studies program you will hear special lectures covering such items as the environment conducive to insurgency, the counterinsurgency roles of various Government agencies--and you will also hear some of this in Unit II, which begins later this week--and the experiences of a number of foreign nations in regard to counterinsurgency. We also plan to have some panels appear here on this platform to discuss our own Government's program in this area. Five students have been designated to make oral presentations in this area, and I am certain that a number of the students will also write their theses in this area.

As part of the overall program, you will be required to read certain assigned literature, including an anthology being prepared by the College. Based on these readings there will be three faculty-led discussion periods based throughout the year, such as on the background of insurgency, the methods and the policy programs of counterinsurgency programs. Although the first of these is not

scheduled until December, I am going to suggest that you go to the library during the next few weeks and draw a book by Brian Crozier, called "The Rebels." The librarian is expecting to have a copy there for each one of you, and I suggest that at your leisure between now and December you begin reading it, making notes, so that by the time the discussion period comes you can refresh your memory and be ready on this.

There will be other assigned readings also. As you can appreciate, then, by the end of the school year, you should be generally familiar with the background of insurgency and counterinsurgency, and particularly in the management and socioeconomics aspects.

Now, to kick off counterinsurgency, here is Dr. Sanders.

DR. SANDERS: Admiral Rose, Fellow Counterinsurgents: During the year you are going to hear a good deal about something which we call counterinsurgency. Some refer to it as internal defense. Some of you may know more about the subject than others. My purpose today is to provide a common understanding of the subject. I do not intend to tell you how to flush out a guerrilla band. I do not intend to try to explain why that guerrilla band exists and the courses of action open to us in countering it.

In order to understand counterinsurgency, one must understand what insurgency is. In order to understand what insurgency is, one must understand what revolution is, and one must understand the role of power in a society.

Perhaps we can best begin with the official definition of insurgency. Insurgency--a condition resulting from a revolt or insurrection against a constituted government which falls short of civil war. In the current context, subversive insurgency is primarily Communist inspired, supported, or exploited. In point of fact, actions taken against governments fall within a spectrum from individual expressions of disapproval to conventional, positional armed conflict--our own Civil War being an excellent illustration of the latter type of conflict.

Insurgency, then, represents a band in a spectrum of actions taken against constituted governments, its distinguishing feature being the degree of physical violence. Below a certain level of physical violence, we term conflict subversion. Above a certain degree of violence we call the conflict civil war. While we have difficulty in identifying with precision the exact parameters of

insurgency, we can accept the official definition as adequate for our operational purposes.

Figure 1, page 15.--Now let me show you the spectrum of actions taken against constituted government. You will notice that they go from rather lily white to quite red. As I say, you may have the expressions of disapproval. As the situation gets somewhat hotter, you may have strikes, demonstrations, infiltration, sabotage, or civil disobedience. Then you may get into something called terror. This usually is the bridge between subversion, a certain level of violence, and insurgency itself. The shift to terror usually occurs before these other actions take place, not all the time, but quite frequently. The actions which constitute insurgency are guerrilla warfare, urban uprisings, and coups d'etat. Then, as the insurgents become more organized and gain strength, they move into what Mao Tse-tung called mobile warfare. This is somewhat along the same line as guerrilla warfare, only the forces operate in larger units.

Finally, if the actions progress to the full spectrum, you get conventional positional warfare; that is, normal warfare, which we experienced in World War II, including such things as sieges of cities.

Because of our experience with Vietnam, Greece, Malaya, and the Philippines, we are prone to equate guerrilla warfare with insurgency. But in fact, all insurgent movements are not necessarily guerrilla wars, nor are all guerrilla wars necessarily insurgent movements. For example, the initial Bolshevik takeover in October 1917, although clearly an insurgent action involved no guerrilla warfare. On the other hand, the guerrilla action which raged in Europe, and in Russia especially, in World War II was that of a guerrilla band supporting conventional armies engaged in an international war, and consequently we cannot term this type of warfare as insurgency.

Notice that the official definition specified that we are chiefly concerned with those insurrections which are Communist inspired, supported, or exploited. Now, this is an important qualification. From the point of view of the United States, not all insurgent movements are bad, nor are all revolts Communist inspired, supported, or exploited. We should remember that a now-revered group of gentlemen in North America in 1775 raised the banner of insurgency against King George III of England. The insurgents who deposed dictators recently in Latin America--Rojas Pinilla in Colombia, and Jimenez in Venezuela--brought no Communist regimes to power.

Recently the United States welcomed, and in some degree, abetted, the insurgent movements which deposed the tyrannical Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic.

This country faces an exceedingly difficult task, and sometimes a very delicate task, in determining if an insurgent movement in fact is either Communist inspired, supported, or exploited, and to what degree. In the case of Cuba, Communist involvement was not apparent at the early stages. In the case of the Philippines and Malaya, we made this determination in time. The future no doubt will confront us with a host of identification problems.

Well, we might want to ask ourselves: Why should men turn to insurgency? We have to look beyond the condition of cold war to understand this phenomenon. In fact, insurgency obviously predates communism and is one of the oldest forms of conflict. As I indicated earlier, any examination of insurgency could profitably begin with an analysis of power and revolution. In a short lecture such as this I can touch only on the highlights of the complex interrelationships between power and revolution.

According to one philosopher, power is to society what energy is to physics. That is, it is the prime mover determining relations between people. Such a sweeping hypothesis entertains a good deal of debate. Some analysts of society maintain that other values, such as respect, enlightenment, congenial personal relationships, wealth, and standards of right and wrong also affect the interplay between human beings. However, few deny that power constitutes a crucial shaper of human relations.

What is power, then? One can say that power is the ability to make and to enforce decisions. I would like to repeat that. It is the ability to make and to enforce decisions. Men seem psychologically prone to modify the conduct of other individuals or groups, especially when they benefit thereby. Power need not rest solely on physical force. It can rest on apathy, on habit, on loyalty, or on fealty toward someone. In fact, historically, groups of men have exercised power not only because they enjoyed the will to command but because others obeyed that command. The relatively small group which ruled the Roman Empire for so many centuries relied as much on the habit of obedience as on sheer physical, violent force. But, no matter what the basis or source of power, men in varying degrees attempt to translate decisions into fact and most often by modifying the conduct of others.

For analytical purposes, allow me to oversimplify some of the major distinguishing features of the relationship between power and revolution. Within any society there exists a given distribution of power. In a dictatorship power is concentrated in the hands of one or a few. In a democracy it is more evenly apportioned. Of course, there are varying degrees of dictatorial and democratic rule. Furthermore, men on different levels of society exercise different types and degrees of power. In Vietnam, for example, traditionally the territorial ruler imposed a certain tax on a village, but it was the village chief, at another level, a lower level, who decided how that tax would be collected.

In any society, a competition for this power always exists. The competition may occur within a small elite at the top, or it may involve more of the population. In any case, some men are always seeking to change the distribution of power and make it more favorable to themselves. The Communists are attempting to do precisely this throughout the world. If these men do this fast enough and use force, they make what we call a revolution.

Revolution, then, means a drastic, relatively sudden, substitution of one group of rulers for another. Revolution most often results from an active, though not necessarily miniscule, minority prompting dissatisfied majorities. The American, French, and Russian revolutions all exhibited this pattern. Revolutions usually do not occur in the form of spontaneous uprisings. To the contrary, able and well organized vanguards spearhead even popular revolts. One could say that in 1775 only a minority of the American colonists actually wanted a war of independence against England. However, that minority was well organized and had the ideals to prompt a dissatisfied majority into revolt. For their part, the Communists understand all too well the role of minorities in revolutions.

Now my last observation about revolution is, I believe, particularly significant. While I shall treat the role of social environment in causing insurgency later in my talk, I wish to point out there the importance that unequal opportunity and consequent frustration have in stimulating revolt.

In Beaumarchais' famous play, "The Marriage of Figaro," the hero who by study unsuccessfully attempted to lift himself in a privileged society, contemptuously remarked to his master, "Because you are a great lord, you think you are a genius. Nobility, fortune, rank, appointment, all this, makes a man so proud. But what have you done to deserve so many good things? You took the trouble to

get born." Here we see the pent-up emotions of the potential revolutionary, the person who chafes at the accident of birth which prevents him from exercising increased power. To paraphrase Lenin, frustrated people constitute the engines of revolution.

With this background in mind, I want to discuss briefly the role of insurgency in Communist strategy. First of all, Marxist-Leninist doctrine nurtures the concept of conflict. After all, it is a concept of world revolution, class against class, the exploited against the imperialist, the capitalist against the Communist nations. These are the hallmarks of the theory. Given such a philosophy, it seems natural that the Communists would devise and organize methods for fighting, among other forms of conflict, internal or unconventional wars. But there is no standard strategy used by the Communists for conducting such wars. Generally, Communists devise strategy and tactics to fit local circumstances. Thus, the Chinese Communists and the Soviets disagreed on the tactics of revolution, while, according to some observers, the North Vietnamese violated some of Mao Tse-tung's most prized prescriptions in the war in Indochina.

Paradoxically, the Soviet Union, the original base of a worldwide Communist movement, has not been the leading contributor to the doctrine of insurgency in emerging lands. While Lenin wrote on the subject, we look more to the writings of Mao Tse-tung, Vo Nguyen Giap, and Che Guevara, all non-Russians, to study Communist thought on the subject. The Russians, mirroring their own experience, have tended more to subversion and urban uprisings of the proletariat. This tactic proved disastrous in 1927 in Canton and in 1948 in Indonesia. Mao, knowing Asia more intimately, rightly centered his attention on the countryside. Asia is a land of villages, and therefore Mao made the village his target.

Mao developed a concept of a three-stage, internal war. He believed that the initial efforts should be directed toward organizing, consolidating, and preserving the movement, including the acquisition of equipment and the training of guerrillas, followed by progressive expansion and culminating in the final defeat of the enemy.

In the first stage the insurgents chiefly aim to stay alive while subverting the enemy and gaining sympathizers. In the second stage they turn progressively to terrorism, guerrilla warfare, and mobile warfare, as you saw on the screen previously. In the last stage they seek victory chiefly in orthodox, conventional battle, using guerrillas in a supporting role.

Mao recognized, however, that local conditions may modify this progression from the defensive to the final counteroffensive.

Notice again that guerrilla warfare constitutes only the middle stage. Insurgents who are strategically weaker use this form of conflict to assume a tactical offensive in a selected form, time, or place.

Mao outlined the primary functions of the guerrillas, as, first, to conduct a war on exterior lines, that is, in the rear of the enemy; second, to establish bases; and, last, to expand or extend the war areas. Guerrillas use as their modus operandi concentration and dispersion. They assemble overwhelming strength, hit the enemy at a weak point, and then disperse to strike again.

An important point to remember is that the Communists realize that very often guerrilla warfare alone cannot win, and that they must shift to conventional warfare. They must consider the inter-relationships between the political and the military factors in assessing the opportunities for such a shift. For example, one could say that in Indochina, while they did not have an actual military opportunity to take over all of Indochina from the French by conventional means, the fact of the political situation at that time--the beginning of the Geneva Conference--led them to the decision to attack Dien Bien Phu because they could reap a political plum by going into conventional warfare. But, in fact, the Communists have always had trouble in timing and planning the shift, from the second to the third stage. If they shift too early, they court disaster. If they wait, they may lose valuable time and opportunity.

In Indochina and in China, they successfully shifted into stage three. In Cuba they never launched a widespread, concentrated, conventional attack. One could say that they won Cuba by default. In Laos, interestingly enough, international complications forced them to shift from stage three back to stage one.

Why, at this point in history, do the Communists turn to insurgency as a major technique for expanding communism? I believe that five characteristics of our age lend support to Communist ventures. In the first place, a major war in the nuclear age has become too dangerous to play the role of midwife to the revolution the Communists have preached for so long. Khrushchev has acknowledged the insanity of a general nuclear conquest, and, at least for the public record, he has expressed fears that local wars may grow into thermo-nuclear rocket wars. Therefore, he pledges Communist support to

that form of warfare which offers much at little cost--wars of liberation and popular uprisings--in other words, to insurgency.

Second, Western Europe's past resistance to Communist take-over and its phenomenal economic and political resurgence make the prospects for Communist success in this area quite remote. In truth, Premier Khrushchev seems to be running scared in the rising competition between the European Common Market and the Communist world. He therefore has to look elsewhere, to the underdeveloped world, for his victory.

Third, the world is passing to an epoch of disintegrating colonial empires and sprouting independent countries by the bushelfull. The Communists can ride the crest of the anticolonial wave.

Fourth, millions throughout the world are experiencing a breakdown in the traditional patterns of life. This aspect is extremely important. They seek to build modern, preferably industrial, nations out of societies distrustful of the world, ground in poverty, and wrapped in rigid and oppressive social hierarchies. As with Figaro, formerly neglected, downtrodden, unconsulted human beings begin to demand a redistribution of power favorable to them. But this very modernization, by destroying old values and generating new expectations, inevitably breeds trouble. An old saying of the Basuto Tribe in Africa goes, "If a man does away with his traditional way of living and throws away his good customs, he had better first make certain that he has something of value to replace them." Unfortunately most emerging people have not found this something of value. The disciples of Marx and Lenin claim that the Communists will provide them with true and workable values. At the same time, ambition, spurred by even a glimmer of hope, strides in seven-league boots. The leaders of the emerging lands cannot possibly meet all these hopes. The bitter fruit of unrequited aspirations, trammled dreams, and unrewarded effort is social upheaval; and the Communists swoop in as the scavengers of social unrest.

Lastly, in restless lands a glaring gap exists between the elite and the people, between the villagers and the government officials. In fact, there is little dialogue between the villagers and those officials who serve the government in the capital of the country. This is due to a lack of modern communications, to traditional relationships and to the absence of an intermediary group which possesses administrative and political skills. This condition leads to a lack of identification of the peasant with the national government and often

results in instability. Again, the Communists are ever willing to move in and fill this vacuum.

Throughout the year you will hear and discuss and study many of the aspects of insurgency. Right now I would like to concentrate on the human dimensions of the problem. As has so often been pointed out, the battleground of Communist insurgency is people. The people of the countryside would prefer to be left alone but willing or not are caught up in this conflict. Under these circumstances, their attitude is the most important factor in insurgency. Mao recognized this by characterizing the people as the water and the guerrillas as the fish which inhabit it. In effect, the loyalty of the people is up for grabs and will go to the most effective wooer.

Well, why concentrate on these lowly people? After all what can an individual peasant do? What importance has he? The answer is simple. The Communists usually have success among the restless city masses and among the peasants in the countryside. The leaders of Communist insurrection usually come from the cities, quite often from the intellectuals, but the countryside has been used more successfully as the battlefield. On entering the target area, Communist cadres first exploit the grievances of the villagers and the ethnic minorities. It is very important to remember these ethnic minorities because one cannot understand the war in southeast Asia, especially in Laos, if he fails to take into consideration the importance of ethnic minorities. The peasants and the ethnic minorities are important. They pay the taxes which support the guerrillas. They are the source of recruitment for guerrillas. And, above all, they provide the all-essential intelligence to the guerrillas while denying it to government forces.

The Communists have devised effective methods to coerce or solicit the support of the rural people. They first propagandize a cause, catering to the dissatisfactions of rural folk. They discipline their forces not to molest the peasant's wife, his property, his daughter, thereby seeking to gain his respect. They are not always successful in this endeavor. One reason the Meo tribesmen in Laos fight the Pathet Lao is the memory of past ravages which they experienced at the hands of the Viet Minh. Communists also conduct selective terrorism against opposite local opposition leaders or against informers.

One could say this is a rather depressing situation. What are we in the United States and in the free world doing about this problem? Simply stated, we seek to administer prophylaxis where armed

insurgency has not yet erupted and therapy where it has. Some measures are either preventative or therapeutic, depending upon local conditions. Others we only use in the case of actual hot, armed guerrilla warfare.

Let us turn to the first case. In countries not yet plagued by armed insurrection, we work through the host government to eliminate those conditions that give rise to Communist insurgency. This is a natural and a logical way of doing it. If you do not want to have to fight a guerrilla war, eliminate those conditions which give rise to it. Specifically, we aim to induce the elite to launch needed reforms, to prompt the people to identify themselves with the national government, to promote economic and social improvement at a rate fast enough to convey an image of progress. The people have to feel that if they are not reaching Utopia, at least, they are advancing. We aim to help provide opportunities for career advancement of all people, including those not of the elite. This action is aimed at trying to remedy that tremendous frustration which gives rise to revolutionaries. We aim to improve internal security by strengthening the armed forces, the intelligence services, and the police; to provide training to the armed forces, specifically tailored to combating guerrilla rather than conventional forces; to enlist the sympathy of the people for the armed forces by encouraging military discipline and aiding civic-action programs; to improve the motivation and efficiency of bureaucracies.

An extra word about civic-action programs--our vastly increased sponsorship of such programs signifies a new trend, I believe. Less developed countries can profit by using their armed forces for social and economic purposes as well as for military purposes. Friendly armed forces can help build needed roads and schools, can teach reading and writing, can train men in administrative and technical skills, or can conduct a host of other beneficial projects.

In the United States the Armed Forces have a long history of such services. Today our Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAG), with the cooperation of men from the Agency for International Development (AID) in the field are busily devising and implementing such programs in many emerging countries. For example, with our help the armed forces of Ecuador are conducting a pilot project aimed at helping villagers in a selected area improve transportation and living conditions in their villages.

Where a country suffers from actual hot guerrilla warfare, such as South Vietnam, our first order of business is to help the host

country defeat the guerrillas. Formulators of doctrine seem prone to divide their concepts into three parts. We have developed a concept of counter guerrilla warfare also involving three stages which in part overlap. In all these stages we use not one but a combination of military, economic, social, psychological, and political actions. In the first stage we attempt to insulate the people from the guerrillas. This is a very difficult task, but there are some ways of accomplishing it. In Vietnam, for example, we are applying the concept of the strategic hamlet, used so successfully in Malaya. The strategic hamlet provides a protected haven for peasants formerly exposed to Communist attack and terror. It possesses more efficient military defenses, as well as heretofore unavailable services such as education, medical, sanitation, and farming assistance.

By the use of such fortified villages, we aim to cut off the access to the people by the guerrillas, to prevent them from getting supplies, recruits, and intelligence, and we also use this device to protect those who inform on the guerrillas. These villages not only improve the material lot of the people but, just as important, establish closer rapport between the villagers and the national government. This helps to break down that gap I spoke about previously, whereby the peasant does not identify himself with the national government.

In the second phase guerrilla forces seek out and destroy the guerrillas by aggressive military action.

The third stage is one of reconciliation and rehabilitation, during which we seek to convert captured guerrillas into loyal, useful citizens, a lesson we learned from Magsaysay in the Philippines, and to rebuild that which the revolt has destroyed.

The Vietnamese Government is now considering a similar program of effective encouragement and rehabilitation.

The United States can marshal many resources to cope with these twilight wars--military advice and assistance to indigenous military establishments, training by American officers and enlisted men, adequate materiel, and if need be, direct support by United States forces in supporting combat missions launched by government troops. Army and Marine helicopter units provide such support in Vietnam, for example.

The guerrillas then are confronted with an appropriately trained and armed force. If properly designed and executed, these military programs also can contribute, in some measure, to the economic and social programs of the country.

That takes care of the military side. How about the economic side? Well, our economic aid program aims to help buttress the local economy which is under severe duress. By supporting counterinsurgency measures such as the strategic hamlet, civic action, and police programs, economic assistance not only contributes to internal defense but fosters conditions hospitable to the growth of democratic institutions and social and economic progress.

AID also supplies technical assistance to particularly vulnerable sectors of the society. In this respect it sponsors rural development projects and provides village alarm and communication systems. This program is really getting into high gear in Vietnam at the present time. All these actions by AID may augment grants and loans designed for more long-range economic development.

Our information service, USIA, prompts people in its information program to identify themselves with the national government and to convey an image of the United States in the country, an image showing the United States as a backer, as a supporter, of the more modernizing and the more progressive forces in that country.

To apply these resources with telling effect, this country must manage, and manage expertly, extensive, comprehensive, and complex programs conducted by various United States agencies. Anyone familiar with the way of doing business in the United States Government knows that this is no easy task. It takes a lot of doing for the State Department, USIA, Department of Defense, CIA, and AID to orchestrate their efforts.

The country team, under the direction of the Ambassador, has the responsibility for this function in the field. The Special Group for Counterinsurgency, directly under the President, provides top-level monitorship in Washington. I am certain that you will hear more about these and associated counterinsurgency organizations throughout the year.

Now I would like to discuss some general observations. First of all, the concept of counterinsurgency does not provide a neat formula for all situations. For example, our policy for countering insurgency in Laos differs considerably from our policy in Vietnam. In Laos we used diplomatic means to conclude an armed insurgency that we were losing, preferring to shift to a still uncertain political conflict but one we might conceivably win. In Vietnam a people willing to fight allows us a more aggressive approach. Therefore, good judgment rather than doctrine should govern our responses to actual

or to potential insurgency in specific countries. We can exercise good judgment only by knowing the underlying social, economic, and sociological factors as well as the political maneuvering at the top.

Whatever approach we take, we must work through host governments. Some governments may be more cooperative and effective than others. For example, it has not always been easy to convince the Vietnamese Government to undertake certain reforms which we considered necessary. On the other hand, President Diem can point to several major accomplishments which he claims he made by rejecting American advice. In any event, working through host governments will continue to tax our diplomatic ability.

This observation logically leads to the next, and this is an extremely important one--the problem of dictatorial regimes and insurgencies. We do not want to be labeled the defenders of tyranny. At the same time we do not want Communist elements hostile to the United States to assume power in underdeveloped countries. In some cases, such as in the Dominican Republic, we actually promoted insurgency. Yet, how do we encourage insurgency and at the same time maintain the friendship of regimes whose support we require in the international arena? I do not think there is any simple answer to this dilemma. We may prefer a more peaceful, evolutionary approach toward democratization, rather than insurgency.

In some instances our problem may be one of preventing the Communists from taking over insurgent movements. This is an extremely difficult task for which we have very few guidelines. We know, for example, that there is a growing insurgent movement against the Portuguese in Angola, in Africa. We also know that the Communists have made inroads into this movement. Well, if we are convinced that the winds of change are inevitable in Africa and that some day the insurgent movement will give rise to an independent Angola, we want to make very certain that it will not be a Communist Angola. How do we decide that a particular movement threatens eventual Communist takeover?

We have, as I remarked earlier, a host of resources and techniques appropriate for many situations. Our overall aim should be to help emerging lands maintain their independence and to influence their modernization constructively. To attain this goal worldwide, we must avoid giving exclusive attention to snuffing out hot, armed insurgency and work toward eliminating those conditions--political instability, economic deficiency, social inequity, and administrative inefficiency--which give rise to insurgency.

Well, after listening to this talk, you might be tempted to ask, "What's so new about all this? After all, the free world has had to deal with Communist-led insurgency for many years. How about Greece, Malaya, the Philippines, and so forth?" In truth, there is not much which is new, but what is new is crucial. The current high-level interest in countering this form of conflict is new; the establishment of the Special Group for Counterinsurgency, and other bodies to expedite the development and implementation of counterinsurgency programs; the United States commitment to a vigorous civic-action program; a high priority given to police assistance programs, and this latter program is really beginning to mushroom; and the determination of this Administration to get the message across to all members of the Armed Forces and to appropriate civilians.

In the field of counterinsurgency we face a momentous challenge, plagued by uncertainty, consternation, and concern. We should strive to make our response as productive as that of the turtle in Ogden Nash's famous poem:

The turtle lives twixt plated decks
Which practically conceal its sex.
I think it clever of the turtle
In such a fix to be so fertile.

Thank you very much.

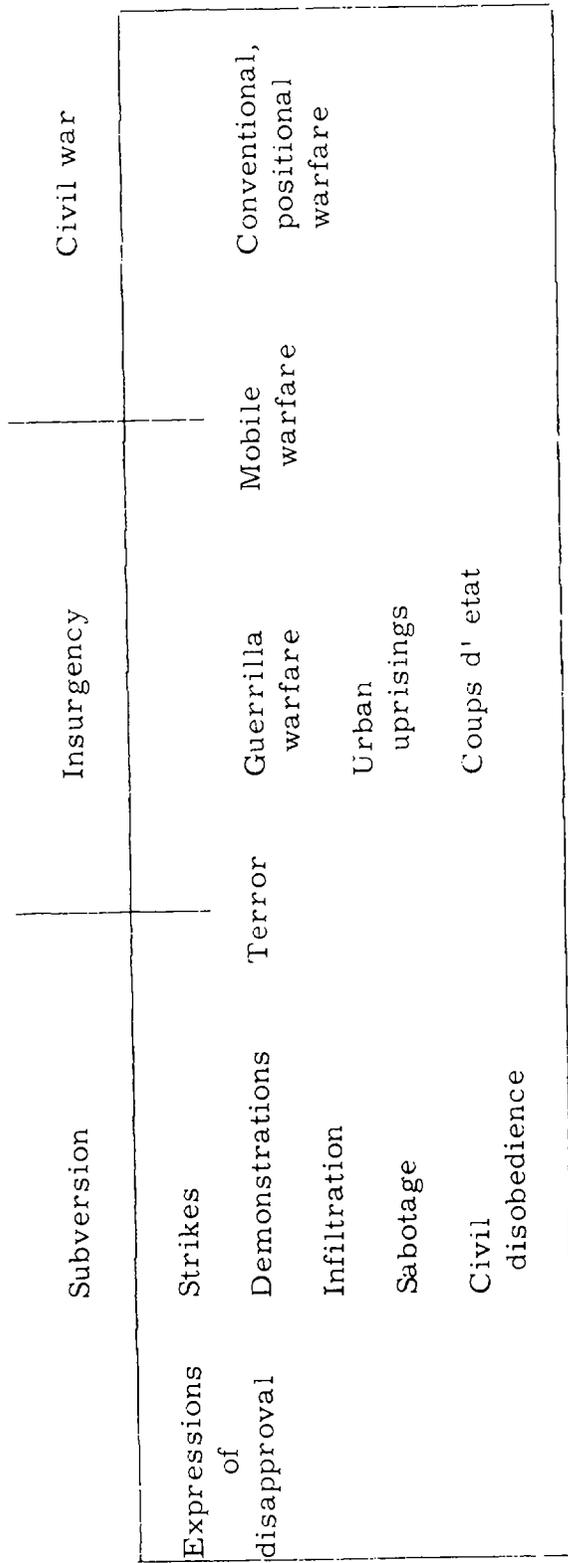


Fig. 1. -- Spectrum of actions against constituted governments

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