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GUATEMALAN COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

BY

LTC ROBERTO E. LETONA

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The government initiated a progressive series of campaign plans. The Victory 82 Campaign established security and started redevelopment of the country. The Firmness 83 Campaign enhanced security and sought to create a climate of peace, tranquility, settlement and self-defense. The Institutional Rediscovery 84 Campaign continued development by expanding reconstruction of areas destroyed by the war. This campaign set up the electoral process which resulted in national elections. The National Stability 85 Campaign consolidated security, development, and political progress into a stable governmental system. As a result of these campaigns, the insurgents which numbered about 12,000 combatants and 100,000 infrastructure members and sympathizers were reduced to about 900 criminals.

The Guatemalan government is the first Latin American country to defeat an insurgent without direct or indirect U.S. involvement. This success was achieved while Sandinista strength grew in Nicaragua and El Salvador's counterinsurgency effort continued.

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GUATEMALAN COUNTERINSURGENCY
STRATEGY

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

LTC Roberto E. Letona

Colonel Richard Pomager and Colonel Alden Cunningham

Project Advisers

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013
7 April 1989

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ABSTRACT

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In the 70's, Guatemala faced a serious insurgent threat. Guatemala was forced to fight the insurgents alone once the United States withdrew support as a result of alleged human rights abuses. The insurgent leadership took advantage of the Guatemalan military's weakened capability and increased the tempo of the insurgency. The period from 1975 to 1982 was marked by political turmoil in the Guatemalan Government, a major natural disaster (the 1976 earthquake) and increased strength of the insurgent. In 1982, the government initiated a new strategy which turned the conflict in favor of the government and the people. The strategy supported the national goals of the government which became known as the "Fourteen Fundamental Points". Reconciliation of the Guatemalan family and adherence to the highest rules of justice were the objectives of the strategy.

The government initiated a progressive series of campaign plans. The Victory 82 Campaign established security and started redevelopment of the country. The Firmness 83 Campaign enhanced security and sought to create a climate of peace, tranquility, settlement and self-defense. The Institutional Rediscovery 84 Campaign continued development by expanding reconstruction of areas destroyed by the war. This campaign set up the electoral process which resulted in national elections. The National Stability 85 Campaign consolidated security, development, and political progress into a stable governmental system. As a result of these campaigns, the insurgents, which numbered about 12,000 combatants and 100,000 infrastructure members and sympathizers were reduced to about 900 criminals.

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GUATEMALAN COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"The states of the isthmus from Panama to Guatemala perhaps will develop an association which between the two seas could be in time the emporium of the universe. Its channels will shorten the distances in the world, will broaden the commercial links between Europe, America and Asia, and will bring to this happy region the best attributes of the other parts of the globe; perhaps the capital of the world would be founded here, as Constantino intended Byzantine to be the capital of the old hemisphere".

SIMON BOLIVAR

For the past five decades, Central American governments have been threatened, and in some instances, defeated by insurgent revolutions. In most cases the revolutions have taken years to conclude at great expense to the indigenous population. In those cases in which the government did not succumb to the insurgents, U.S. intervention played a major role in their defeat.

The most recent communist or Marxist-Leninist insurgencies that have developed placed Central American countries squarely in the midst of the East-West power struggle.

Cuba and Nicaragua are a sign of the growing tide. U.S. efforts directed at these countries have failed to bring about democratic change.

In the 1970's Guatemala faced a serious insurgent threat. In 1977, as a result of alleged human right abuses, the United States withdrew military and economic support leaving Guatemala to face the insurgents alone. Guatemalans met the challenge and

thwarted the revolution. Counterinsurgency efforts reduced the insurgents to an insignificant band of criminals. The Government gained popular support; the insurgents lost it. All of this was accomplished without U.S. support.

These pages tell the Guatemalan success story. They cover the background, strategic situation, government plans, and projections for the future.

While each country must determine how to counter an indigenous insurgent threat, Guatemala's counterinsurgency efforts may provide useful insights to other countries fighting Marxist-Leninist guerrillas.

BACKGROUND

GUATEMALA

Guatemala is the third largest country in Central America. It has a land of 108,889 square kilometers and a population of more than eight million. Growing at a rate of 2.3 percent a year, it is the most populated country in the region and enjoys the strongest economy in the area.

Guatemala experiences severe socio-economic problems which originated during the period of colonial domination by Spain. Under Spanish rule, the land was raped of its resources. The resulting concentration of wealth to a very small segment of society contributed to current social and economic problems.

The internal contradictions, the external economic and political support to the insurgency by the world's communist

movement, and a hostile U.S. policy towards the country allowed the insurgency to become a threat to Guatemala's survival.

In view of the threat, the country's leadership analyzed the situation to develop a strategy to counteract the threat militarily. Equal emphasis was given to economic development to solve the structural, social, and political internal problems.

GEOPOLITICAL VISION OF GUATEMALA

"Central America, the door to the seas, key to the Universe, whoever owns it, will be the legislator of both worlds, the lord of the universal commerce".

WALTER SCOTT

Since the establishment of a bipolar world, the two great superpowers with opposing ideologies, philosophic thinking, economic theories, and military rivalry, have been trying to spread their influence and way of government to the world. This constant fight for hegemony in the key regions throughout the world has resulted in the countries of Central America becoming the "pawns" of the superpowers.

The strategic value of Guatemala and Central America derives from the colonial days, mainly because of the possibilities for interoceanic communications, and also because it is the land bridge between two continental masses.

England, with a clear vision of the region's strategic value, supported William Walker and the Filibusteros in Nicaragua, Belize and the Honduran Islands.

Later, France, the United States and England disputed among themselves the opportunity to build an interoceanic channel. A canal through the isthmus would enhance trading from East to West by eliminating the sea transit around South America. The French started work but ran out of finances. The United States continued on, but only by supporting the establishment of Panama as an independent republic. Under the political influence of the United States, the Colombian legislatures relinquished their claim to the land. Once the Panama Canal opened, the region was considered of strategic importance, economically and militarily to the United States. The Soviets refer to Latin America and the Caribbean as the "strategic rear" of the United States.(1) They knew that alignment of any government in the region with them creates a perception of threat to the security of the North American Continent. Thus the Soviets can create pressure in the West, while reducing U.S. influence in the East.

Both Mexico and Venezuela claim Central America to be of strategic importance for their National Security and under their own sphere of influence.

During the Second World War, the German Navy recognized the importance of the Caribbean Sea. Thus, submarines disrupted resupply efforts to Europe by sinking 260 allied ships without the support of local naval bases. The 1984 Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America pointed out that despite the fact that allied forces enjoyed many advantages, including a two-to-one edge overall in submarines and

the use of Cuba for resupply and basin operations, today this situation is reversed. The Soviets now have a two-to-one edge overall in submarines and can operate and receive air coverage from Cuba, a point from which all 13 Caribbean Sea lanes passing through four chokepoints are vulnerable to interdiction. (2)

Logistics planning for the United States, currently estimates that the Caribbean Sea Lanes are vital to the NATO resupply as more than 55 percent of the logistical support and reinforcements will be shipped through the area if a major war occurs in Europe. Currently 55 percent of the imported oil to the United States sails in the Caribbean, as well as 45 percent of U.S. total foreign trade. (3)

Until 1979, Soviet Union capabilities to support insurgents were minimal, consisting of some small arms, training, and moral support through Cuba. Since the rise to power of the Sandinista's Marxist-Leninist government in 1979, the situation has changed greatly. The Domino theory is now a possibility, since it is almost impossible in peacetime to isolate, monitor or blockade a country on the mainland. Similar actions taken against the island of Cuba were more successful in the 1960's. Today the Soviet Union has the strength and the means to support any insurgent movement in the region through Nicaragua. The build up of the Sandinista Army poses an additional conventional threat to the countries of the region, or at least preempts any action from neighboring countries, should they decide to take actions against Nicaragua for open support to guerrillas.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER II

THE INSURGENTS

HISTORY OF THE INSURGENT MOVEMENT

At the end of the 1920's and beginning of the 1930's, the communist party started organizing political parties and gaining sympathizers with the communist philosophy in the Central American region. The Comintern movement was so succesful that they not only organized, but also raised a popular movement in El Salvador. This movement was completely annihilated in the early 30's.

In 1944, the communists began their work in Guatemala, taking advantage of the democratic opening brought about by the downfall of the 14-year Ubico dictatorship. By 1950, the communist party (PGT) had successfully infiltrated the main structures of the government with the support of the President, Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzman.

In 1954, Castillo Armas (A Guatemalan Army Colonel in exile) backed with U.S. military, economic and political support invaded Guatemala from Honduras. He became president of Guatemala, mainly because the army did not want to fight. The communist power base was destroyed and the party became a clandestine organization.

With the triumph of Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1959, the Soviet Union recognized guerrilla warfare as a valid strategy to spread communist ideology. According to Anatolii F. Shul Gooskii

(Now the USSR's leading specialist on Marxist-Leninist theory in relation to Latin America and head of the Department for Research in Sociopolitical Questions at the Latin American Institute), Cuba destroyed the myth of geopolitical fatalism with respect to the United States and Latin America.(1)

The Cuban revolution demonstrated that:

- o The Monroe Doctrine was dead;
- o A leftist guerrilla war could succeed;
- o The U.S. would not intervene effectively;
- o Guerrilla wars were more effective than orthodox communist party tactics.

On November 13, 1960, a group of young Guatemalan officers rebelled against the corrupt elected government of General Miguel Idygoras Fuentes. The rebellion failed and the survivors fled to the mountains where marxist-leninists cells made contact with them and exploited their resentment.

This failed rebellion was the origin of the recent insurgent process in Guatemala. The initial commanders were ex-army officers and political leaders trained in communist countries including the Soviet Union. The logistics support for their activities; rations, arms, equipment and ammunition, was supplied by the same countries through the Communist Guatemalan Workers Party. The experience acquired in support activities was used by the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) in 1962.

To the rural guerrilla war, an urban war was added, whose principal areas of concentration were the capital and major

cities. Urban guerrilla tactics included arson, bombings, and assassinations of not only political and military leaders, but also businessmen and private citizens. Diplomats such as U.S. Ambassador John Gordon Mein, West German Ambassador, Count Carl Von Spretti, as well as three members of the United States military were included in the target list.

The guerrillas believed these tactics would depict the government as incapable of protecting the populace and thereby, gain their support. Instead, the reign of terror discredited the guerrilla in the eyes of the people. This popular rejection of terrorist actions stimulated the delivery of information which was very valuable in locating strongholds, hiding places, safe houses, and clandestine bomb factories. Many insurgents and sympathizers were identified and captured. By 1969 the defeated survivors of the movement abandoned the country.

THE NEW INSURGENT STRATEGY

Once the first guerrilla effort was defeated, the insurgents fled to Mexico to organize a new clandestine movement. By January 19, 1972, a group of guerrilla members infiltrated from Mexico to a remote area in northwestern Guatemala. Because of the remoteness of the area, the government exercised little control. From 1972 to 1976, the insurgents, in a clandestine fashion, and with the aid of some catholic priests (members of the "Theology of Liberation" movement), were able to reestablish

local popular support. Promises and selective terrorism were used to control the population. Several of the priests became guerrilla commanders.

In 1976, the government realized the seriousness of the situation and a counterinsurgency effort was initiated. The main effort concentrated on military operations. Only a few small activities in civic action and development were started by the government.

On February 4, 1976, Guatemala experienced an earthquake which left approximately 25,000 people dead and destroyed almost fifty percent of the production infrastructure. Almost one million persons lost their homes. The government mobilized the population and made maximum use of its natural resources to repair the damages and minimize the suffering of the people.

As General Gramajo stated, the Army's operational efforts against the guerrilla during this time were significantly curtailed. While the army concentrated on relief and reconstruction works, the communist infiltrated elements of these groups as sisting in the country's reconstruction. Foreign aid groups helped leftist elements consolidate their logistical base. They provided food and medicines, as well as their social base by means of well-planned political-ideological campaigns. The guerrillas succeeded in attracting a large portion of the population significantly increasing their numbers.(2)

The situation was growing beyond the army's control. While the army resources were dedicated to reconstruction, military

logistics arsenals and the level of military readiness decreased significantly.

During the presidency of Jimmy Carter, the question of human rights became a powerful lever the insurgents used against the Government. They highlighted to the world news media and international agencies every government military action as an atrocity regardless of the actual circumstances. This effort was so effective that President James Carter imposed an arms and economic embargo on Guatemala. This embargo virtually crippled the sustainability of the army. The situation deteriorated to a point where the balance of power leaned in favor of the guerrillas.

This shift can be noted in several logistical areas. For example, while the Guatemalan soldier was armed with the old M-1 rifle, the guerrillas were provided with American M-16 rifles supplied by Cuba and Nicaragua thru other countries. The army's mobility and reaction capability had deteriorated due to a lack of trucks, helicopters and spare parts in general. The army's versatility in response to guerrilla incidents was curtailed. As a consequence of the logistical shortages, security deteriorated considerably.

The 1979 Sandinista victory gave a new optimism to the subversive movement in Guatemala. The guerrillas had become a serious threat to the survival of the state. They had taken partial control of some of the country's provinces. By 1982, they had gained support or control of eight out of 22 provinces of

Guatemala, and successfully portrayed an ethnic war of Indians against Ladinos. Travel to Northwestern Guatemala provinces had become hazardous. The terrorists mounted campaigns to control highways by positioning barricades or obstacles , digging trenches on the road to inhibit transit and placing claymore mines along the Pan American Highway heading West. Military convoys suffered constant ambushes. Civilians were forced to contribute "war taxes" under threat of injury or loss of life.

The guerrilla armed forces consisted of only ten to twelve thousand armed members, but the guerrillas infrastructure comprised approximately 100,000 members. Another 260,000 Guatemalans were under guerrilla control. The guerrillas operated on several fronts using names suggestive of their dependence on foreign forces or their admiration for them: i.e. the Ho Chi Minh front, the Sandino front, the Hanoi front, and the "Che" Guevara front.(3)

The "Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union", organized in Managua in 1980, controlled the guerrilla combatants. Cuban leader Fidel Castro established the union and agreed to support the guerrillas on the condition that all guerrilla units would accept centralized leadership.

Guatemalan political turmoil did not help the government cause either in the war against the insurgency or in the international arena. The government was considered a military dictatorship. Guatemala became isolated from the world's democratic community.

With the feeling that under these increasingly favorable internal and external conditions victory was near, they envisioned only a brief battle against the army of Guatemala before they would succeed.

By 1980, the insurgent movement combined orthodox, Maoist, and Vietnamese strategies to develop a new strategy that can be summarized as follows:

- o The mobilization of the population using "tactical alliances and "front organizations".
- o The infiltration of governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- o A combination of:
 - oo Political and military action.
 - oo Legal and illegal activities.
 - oo Centralized decisions to achieve unity of effort.
- o The use of terrorism to achieve national and international goals.
- o A protracted war.
- o The internationalization of the conflict.

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1. Ashby, Timothy. The Bear in the Backyard. (D.C. Heath and Co.: Lexington and Toronto, 1987), 40-41.
2. Gramajo, Hector A. "Counterinsurgency in Guatemala - A Case Study." (Guatemala City: n.p., n.d.).
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CHAPTER III

GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

NATIONAL STRATEGY OF GUATEMALA IN 1982

The most important thing in the counterinsurgent process is to rebuild public confidence in the governmental system as a means to achieve stability and satisfaction of needs. Confidence allows to achieve stability which consolidates institutions. Stability also invites foreign and national investments as a base for internal development. Development will bring the economic well-being necessary to achieve those broad national interests such as survival, independence and welfare of the population.

LTC ROBERTO LETONA

Early in 1982, the communist movement formulated a plan to declare a portion of Guatemala as liberated territory. The establishment of an insurgent government would provide for belligerent status, access to international forums, as well as recognition from the major governments of the non-democratic block (A mirror action to that previously accomplished in Nicaragua and El Salvador).

The armed forces planned a military offensive to preempt this action. This offensive became the first phase of a determined, progressive military strategy.

During this offensive, the fighting intensified and violence developed throughout the countryside. Guerrilla units started to withdraw towards Mexico, bringing the civilian population along as a shield. The guerrillas either convinced the people that the army would harm them in retaliation for their contributions to the guerrilla units, or threatened them with loss of their lives.

On March 23, 1982, a military coup led by General Rios Montt and a group of young officers overthrew President General Romeo Lucas. The coup prevented President elect General Anibal Guevara from assuming his office. The coup occurred based on the perception of election fraud. The Army believed that the coup would stop a series of authoritarian military governments. The new transitional military government ruled the country until early 1986. Under the military government, national goals were developed which became known as the "fourteen fundamental points of government". These goals established a national ideology that included the reconciliation of the Guatemalan family with the highest rules of justice, the formulation of a National Strategy to counter the insurgency problem, and the creation of a proper environment for a constitutional government.

The objectives and policies of the new government can be summarized as follows:

National Objectives

- o Maintain independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty
- o Achieve internal peace
- o Safeguard the general social welfare
- o Stabilize democratic and governmental institutions
- o Develop and expand economically
- o Distribute equitably the country's wealth and provide equal opportunities to all Guatemalans

National Policies (Fourteen Fundamental Points of Government)

ADMINISTRATIVE:

1. Align government employees and officials with the people they serve.
2. Reduce corruption in the administration and replace corrupt officials.
3. Reorganize the government's administration system to provide greater control and efficiency in the execution of the governmental programs.

LEGAL:

4. Achieve security and individual tranquility based on absolute respect for human rights.
5. Restructure the Judicial Branch with the help of the Bar of Lawyers to achieve modernization and to operate in a moral, ethical and professional manner.
6. Reestablish a legal system in such a way so that Guatemalans learn and practice their responsibilities and rights within the democratic system.

SOCIAL:

7. Achieve national reconciliation.
8. Recupérate national and individual dignity.
9. Establish a national spirit and create the base to integrate and obtain the participation of different ethnic groups within the country.

ECONOMIC:

10. Elevate the living conditions of the population to diminish the current inequities.
11. Expand the private enterprise system by reducing governmental control and encouraging investment.
12. Seek opportunities to establish cooperative agreements with foreign countries.

POLITICAL:

13. Restructure the electoral system to reflect a democratic system, and to respect the outcome of the elections.
14. Stimulate the participation of all interest groups in the political system through a new nationalistic, reformist and developmentalist direction.

NATION BUILDING AND COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGY

The long term strategy of the Guatemalan Government, implemented during the period 1982 through 1986 of military government, was aimed at achieving the following objectives:

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT, CONSOLIDATION OF PEACE, CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONAL STABILITY.

Each phase of this strategy responded to a Campaign Plan developed for each of the following years as follows:

CAMPAIGN PLANS:

1. Victoria 82: (Beans and Rifles)

- o Security
- o Development

OPPLAN "Victoria 82" established that the main objective of our government's operations would be the security and well-being of THE PEOPLE. Victoria 82 became the backbone of the armed forces new strategy.

Victoria 82 was the first time that a comprehensive long term strategy was developed with a new attitude towards the nation and the people. The primary objective was to isolate the insurgents from the population through military operations,

psychological warfare, and developmental assistance. The people were given the means to provide for their own defense and development. Using partial mobilization, the armed forces were reorganized to handle the rapid enlargement of the force, new operational areas were assigned consistent with tactical objectives.

An amnesty program was established as part of the psychological warfare effort. The amnesty program became a valuable tool to return to the government people who had joined the insurgents.

The military strategy consisted of three fundamental actions:

- o Defend the civilian population.
- o Regain loyalty of the 100,000 local guerrilla sympathizers (FIL).
- o Annihilate the local clandestine committees (CCL) and the guerrillas' permanent military units (UMF) estimated at 10,000 to 12,000.(1)

The prime concern of the government's armed forces was the safety and well-being of the population living in the areas of conflict. The "Food for Work Program" and the "Plan for Assistance for Areas in Conflict" (PAAC) were created in an effort to protect human life and to mitigate the hunger, sickness and poverty caused by terrorist activities in these areas. This plan provided for the care and return of refugees and displaced persons to their original homes and entry into an economic process which would provide for their well-being.

Of paramount importance was the creation of the civilian population internal defense system. This system built confidence in the democratic system as a way not only to defend themselves but to promote their own development. The government's war was not aimed to conquer terrain, but to conquer the citizens hearts and minds. The Government planned and developed the means to allow for their own local organization and democratic selection of leadership. This process allowed for the establishment of legitimate leadership for the community as well as the self-defense force. A secondary effect of the SELF DEFENSE FORCE concept was the creation of a local code of conduct, a constitutional chart and a defined purpose and objective of the community consistent with its government's objectives.

This organization became the basis for establishing the "committees of local development", a parallel organization to deal with all aspects of economic and social development. Initially, the military commander organized and guided those committees.

To equitably meet the supply requisitions generated by these organizations while at the same time coordinate the efforts and resources being poured into the countryside by the government, a national governmental system down to the local level was implemented. The Government appointed cabinet members at the national level, governors and regional commanders in the provinces, and municipal and local commanders at the lowest level. This organization was known as INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATORS, further

defined as national, regional and municipal, depending on the operational level.

The basis of success rested on the fact that the people could defend themselves while at the same time work on projects of self-interest for the community under their own leadership. The people and the government worked for a common goal together with non-governmental organizations trying to fulfill the people's needs and priorities in a responsive fashion. The normal bureaucratic system of government would have taken years to respond to a recognized need or to assign resources to a specific project. Under the new organization and methodology, needs could be met in few days or perhaps a couple of months, depending on the resources available. The military government was becoming responsive to the people and a democratic system was being created.

Tactically, military units remained with the people in the countryside. Response times were established so that army units could react within an hour or two to support local defense forces under attack by guerrilla bands. A military unit's tactical value was based in part by its direct contact with the civilian population. The daily contact with the people built the confidence, security, stability and control necessary for the accomplishment of development projects.

"Rules of Engagement" and a "Code of Conduct" were established as guidelines for army units in fighting the insurgents.

The rules served to emphasize respect for the civilian population and thereby obtain their respect for the government and the armed forces.

Psychological warfare operations were aimed at four different targets: Government security forces, the civilian population, guerrilla sympathizers and guerrilla units. The psyops objectives were to encourage popular nationalist sentiment among the population, to strengthen the troops' combat morale and attitude with respect to human rights, and to reduce the morale of the terrorists and their sympathizers so they would submit to the amnesty program. These objectives supported each campaign plan.

The "general amnesty" program proved to be invaluable in reconciling the Guatemalan family and undermining the insurgent organization. The guerrilla leaders were confronted with a dwindling force structure as desertions rose. Low unit morale was a direct result of the distrust and lack of loyalty within their ranks. More than 20,000 former enemy guerrillas and sympathizers enrolled in the amnesty program within the first year. Some were former combatants, others were part of the logistical or political structure, and some belonged to the political and military leadership structure. Under the amnesty program, returnees could later become members of the civil defense patrols, thus enhancing the capability of these organizations and providing an invaluable source of information to military units.

Special jurisdiction courts were established for a period of two years to guarantee that those opposing the law would be sentenced and to ensure that judicial authorities would have the necessary support to administer justice impartially and free from threats. These courts dealt both with crimes committed by guerrillas or security force members.

The thrust of the "Victory 82" campaign, was to ensure the protection of non-combatants and to make soldiers understand that counterinsurgency operations are always in support of the people and never against them.

The scope of the fighting required the military to address the combat aspects as well as civilian security and development matters. This necessitated a change in the force structure. Although a G-5 civic action coordinator already existed, his duties and responsibilities were expanded and formalized into a new doctrine, operational concept, administrative procedures and logistical support structure in order to enhance mission accomplishment. Civil Affairs Companies were assigned to each brigade with the responsibility of organizing and controlling the Civil Defense Patrols. They also focused on matters concerning the development side of the counterinsurgency effort to include Psychological Operations towards the civilian population.

By December 1982, "OPPLAN VICTORIA 82" had turned the tide in favor of the army and the government.

2. Firmeza 83 Campaign Plan (Roof, Tortilla and Jobs)

The focus of the Firmeza 83 Campaign was the:

- o Enhancement of Security levels.
- o Creation of a climate of peace and tranquility to allow the implementation of an attitude towards development realized in the Poles of Development. (Polos de Desarrollo).

The Firmeza 83 Campaign Plan was developed as a follow-on and focused on building upon the successes of the Victoria 82 plan. The aim was to consolidate all previous gains before moving on to the next stage of development, and to expand the initial success to different geographic areas. The plan was commonly referred to as "Roof, Tortillas and Jobs".

Expansion of government control to other geographical areas required a redeployment and reorganization of all military units to correspond with the political and administrative division of the country. Campaign planning involved consideration of military needs as well as size of the population, importance of the region, stage of security, stage of development and attitude of the people towards the insurgent movement. The basic realignment called for the creation of specialized units to support a province with subunits deployed to the municipalities within that province.

Public awareness of the success of the Inter-Institutional Coordinators became a key element of this plan. That the program was administered and conducted legally under the laws of the government secured the institution's legitimacy.

The Government issued laws to put the institution within a block of national laws so that any further transition to civilian government would not easily abolish the institution.

Other important aspects in this campaign plan were:

- o Procedures for the handling of displaced persons and refugees to ensure their security and access to resources to fulfill their basic human rights and needs.
- o Implementation of programs to handle, re-educate and integrate to their communities all persons returned to the government under the amnesty program.
- o Prevention against civilian interference in military operations by establishing legal procedures for population control.
- o Reconstruction of destroyed villages .
- o Support and security to organizations working in development efforts with the people.
- o Support, control and supervision over government officials working within each command area of responsibility.
- o Population and resources control operations in the conflict areas.
- o Organization, Training, Control and Support of the Civil Defense Patrols.
- o Re-prioritization of development projects.
- o Intensive Training to officers and specialists in Civil Affairs.
- o Intensification of Psychological Operations directed toward the Enemy and Friendly troops, the Civilian Population and a program of information for the country's and international media.

3. Reencuentro Institucional 84 Campaign Plan

Reencuentro Institucional objectives were:

- o To implement electoral laws and the election of the Constituent Assembly.
- o To develop reconstruction plans for the areas impacted by the violence.
- o To accelerate activity within the Development Poles.

OPPLAN "Reencounter-84" was developed to guarantee legitimate election of a National Legislative Assembly in order to gain domestic and international credibility and respect for the democratic process. The plan called for providing the affected areas with the means with which to return to normal life, to defend themselves against terrorist actions, and at the same time to encourage those Guatemalan refugees in other countries to return home to a peace under which they could resume a normal life.

The military government put emphasis basically on the following aspects:

- o Administrative Decentralization aimed mainly to fulfill the needs of the people in the rural areas. This was accomplished through strengthening of the Inter-Institutional Coordinators structure which allowed the people to become involved in their own re-development.
- o Maintenance of the Poles of Development program since this program is the fastest and easiest way of providing government services to the rural population normally scattered throughout the countryside.
- o Creation of Civil Affairs Companies as a tool to coordinate efforts in rural areas.
- o Reconstruction of devastated areas.

- o Return to Constitutional Government.
- o Return of Guatemalan refugees from Mexico and Honduras.
- o Removal of the armed forces from the political process.
- o Reinforcement of civil defense patrols with the arms needed to defend themselves.
- o Relocation of displaced persons and refugees within the "Development Poles".

"Development Poles" fulfilled important functions such as: (2)

- oo Attracting displaced persons who had settled in urban areas.
- oo Providing health and educational services to alleviate illness
- oo Furnishing the necessary infrastructure so that the rebuilt areas might integrate into the country's production process. Improvements were directed toward roads, energy, housing, irrigation systems and agricultural technology.
- oo Organizing the people into cooperative enterprises.

For Guatemala, the traditional "Civic Action" was changed to "Civil Affairs". A significant difference exists in the meaning of Civic Action as an attempt to "Improve the army's image", and "Civil Affairs" whose purpose is to "Promote and improve standards of living and development for the population".(3)

4. Estabilidad Nacional 85 Campaign Plan

This plan consisted of the following elements:

- o Actions to consolidate the country in all areas (political, economic, social and military) to prepare conditions to turn over the government to civilians.

- o Actions to increase confidence in the electoral process, and demonstrate the armed forces supported the election process.
- o Actions to prepare the Armed Forces for the transition to civilian government.

This campaign plan was aimed mainly towards the continuation of the transition from military government to civilian government. In this sense, all efforts were made to insure a perception of stability and security to allow for a free play of politics within the country. The armed forces were instructed to respect this process without interference. At the same time, the army leadership was concerned with ensuring the purity of the elections.

The main efforts were aimed toward:

- o Guarantee Peace and Tranquility.
- o Guarantee Fair elections.
- o Consolidate the Inter-Institutional Coordinators.
- o Prepare the military psychologically for a peaceful transfer of the government to civilian hands.
- o Increment the military reserves.
- o Prepare the legal basis to ensure continuity of Civil Defense Patrols under Civilian Government and at the same time preclude the use of these organizations as a base of political power by any political party.
- o Support the Agro-Industrial enterprises within rural areas.
- o Increase the support for programs dealing with displaced persons and refugees.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Guatemalan armed forces successfully defeated a threat of more than twelve thousand armed guerrillas in a period of reduced support from external governments and under unfavorable conditions.
2. The armed forces of Guatemala recognized that a Marxist-Leninist insurgency existed because of:
 - o Geopolitical value of Guatemala in relation to the East-West conflict.
 - o Internal factors such as poverty, underdevelopment, hunger, social injustice, etc.
 - o Administrative and political corruption.
 - o Flawed military strategy.
 - o Sanctuaries in other countries.
3. Wage war through combined use of all elements of power.
 - o Military
 - o Political
 - o Economic
 - o Socio-psychological
4. The Guatemalan Armed Forces changed their counterinsurgency strategy with objectives as follows:
 - o Isolate and fight the insurgents.
 - oo Defend the civilian population
 - oo Return guerrilla supporters to the government cause.
 - oo Eliminate guerrilla bands.
 - o Instill confidence in the populace.
 - oo By the longterm presence of well trained military units in the conflict areas.

- oo By insuring the success of economic units and by providing more jobs to the region.
 - oo By population and resources control.
- o The conduct of psychological operations
 - oo To insure support of the population.
 - oo To obtain information.
 - oo To exploit the success of the government and the armed forces.
 - oo To organize civil defense patrols in the conflict areas.
- 5. Military strategists sought to maintain operational pressure on the insurgents by joint efforts with the civil defense patrols. The defense patrols achieved physical and psychological control over the towns and their resources. By cutting off the enemy's support in rural communities, the subversive groups were isolated and the army was able to eliminate guerrillas by tactical means.
- 6. Use an amnesty program for reconciliation and as a psychological weapon.
- 7. Use national resources to respond to the needs of the rural population as a main premise for counterinsurgency operations.
- 8. Basic gains attained by the military government.
 - o Consolidation of peace and the consolidation of tranquility.
 - o Integral rural development.
 - o Administrative decentralization.
 - o Ascendent planning from low to high.
 - o Preferential use of local human and natural resources.
 - o Mobilization of the population to achieve their own security and development.
 - o Establishment of a legal basis and the successful return to civilian government respectful of human rights and the establishment of an open, competitive, pluralistic process.
 - o Will to win.

CHAPTER V

THE FUTURE

It is the internal and external factors within a country that contribute to insurgencies. It is all these factors which must be faced, solved and fought simultaneously to achieve success in a counterinsurgency effort.

Without a solution to the internal causes such as poverty, social injustice, hunger, etc., it would be very difficult to prevent communist militants from deceiving the people to get support of the masses. The best shield against communism is to make each citizen owner of something to defend. The best shield from a totalitarian system is to give each citizen his right to defend his family and his properties and a democratic system for which to fight.

Such a system must be capable of providing for the citizens' needs, well-being and defending their rights while providing opportunities for a better future.

Governments must fight political and administrative corruption so the people gain a sense of the system's honesty and a hope that the system will be able to solve national problems that affect them.

Education is a very crucial matter in this process. This means political education to understand the democratic system, ethical values to dignify his person, and preparation of the

population in all technical fields in order to fulfill the needs of an increasingly industrialized world.

It is possible that with the easing of tensions between the East and West, the Soviet Union will decrease its direct military support to insurgent movements in Central America. This fight will then become a political fight under the terms of the governmental process.

Guatemala has defeated the insurgents three times: In the sixties, in the Eastern part of the country; in the seventies, in the Northern section; and in the eighties, in the Western part.

Even though the insurgents were defeated, they were never completely eliminated because they enjoyed a sanctuary in Mexico. It is impossible to successfully fight a counterinsurgent war if the enemy enjoys a sanctuary. The guerrilla group can maintain its political basis, logistical apparatus, and conduct rest and training of its military units. The government of Guatemala will continue its diplomatic effort to convince Mexico to stop any direct or indirect support for the insurgents.

Although a civil government has taken power in 1986, the guerrilla problem continues (approximate strength 800); however, it is important to note that many of the guerrillas' original causes are no longer valid. The army must and will continue fighting the terrorists since the threat is still present.

We are currently in a transitional phase from a military to a civilian government which must be supported by legal means.

Clearly, this transition may create problems and uncertainties which the terrorists might want to take advantage of in order to support their cause.

Since the army's existing supply and material stockpiles are precariously low, our strategy will continue to be: "to strengthen the Guatemalan Army with professional leadership, efficient administration, optimum maintenance of existing equipment, limited acquisitions, and aggressive training". (1) The army will work with the civilian government to maintain operational pressure throughout the country within a comprehensive counterinsurgency framework to insure the free exercise of government and consolidation of democracy. The goal of the existing government will be to prevent the seeds of discontent from surviving in Guatemala.

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