

BOOK REVIEWS

Beer, Colin M. *On Revolutionary War*. Bromley, UK: Galago, 1990.

This book will be of interest to all readers interested in guerrilla warfare and who are interested in the reflections of someone who has had considerable experience of British counterinsurgency methods.

The main conclusion of the book is that there is one overriding requirement of successful counterinsurgency and that is the need to provide effective security for those whose hearts and minds one is attempting to win. He states, "Security of life takes precedence over all form of material welfare" (p. 18), and it is upon this premise that his analysis of the nature of subversion, terrorism and guerrilla warfare is built. If the terrorist is able to threaten the security of the population more effectively than the state can protect the population then no amount of reform, road and school building or propaganda can be effective.

The book develops the argument by an analysis of the classical methods of insurgency followed by reference to several campaigns in which Britain was involved such as in Kenya and Malaya. He also makes useful comments on American experience in Vietnam. Although much of the book's content is not new, it is a useful summary of the experience from the 1950s and 1960s which will be of great benefit to the military or police officer undergoing training. It is written in an approachable and commonsense style which many young trainees will find attractive. There are also some useful charts and photographs which greatly help to illustrate the points made.

The book is divided into two parts. The first examines the theory and practice of insurgency, and the second, the principles of counterinsurgency warfare.

The first section concentrates mainly upon the ideas of guerrilla warfare developed by Mao Zedong, Guevara, and Marighella. He demonstrates how a programme of subversion will go through various stages and how party organization, violence, popular mobilization, and the process of escalating conflict are linked. However, it is his analysis of counterinsurgency which is more interesting since it is obviously based upon experience. He makes several valuable points. For example, he argues that protecting the population is more important than engaging in active operations against the guerrilla. Securing bases within which the population feels unafraid is vital if the security forces are going to take the war to the enemy. He also argues that the focus on the bomber, or the front-line cadre, is futile since such people are easily replaced. However, in addition to pointing out what does not work he also makes positive suggestions on how to wage a successful counterinsurgency campaign.

The government must have a clear sense of purpose and the confidence to sustain that purpose over time. If one starts with doubts one is almost certainly doomed to defeat. The security forces must be visible and engage

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with the local population in providing security. They will not achieve results if they only make occasional visits to villages after an act of terror has taken place. The guerrilla must be isolated as a result of this intimate relationship between the security forces and the people, for this will provide the intelligence which can be used to destroy the organization which supports him. One then turns the guerrilla to work against his old comrades, undermining their belief in their cause and strengthening your supporters' belief in your cause.

These premises may well be familiar to readers of Frank Kitson or Robert Thompson but they are no worse for that! I recommend this book to all readers interested in unconventional warfare and to all students of the subject who will find this a useful and easily understood handbook of experience.

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Bates, Robert. *Beyond the Miracle of the Market: the Political Economy of Agrarian Development in Kenya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

It is the habit of many historians, as part of the standard investigation of a country afflicted by violence or instability, to perform the usual post-mortem to discover the underlying political, social and economic sources of the conflict. It is more unusual for someone to avoid the attractions of this form of historical "ambulance chasing" and examine why a country *did not* experience structural political instability.

Robert H. Bates in *Beyond the Miracle of the Market* provides an interpretation of the contemporary political history of Kenya spanning the period from the Mau Mau insurgency to the presidency of Daniel arap Moi during the 1980s. He examines why Kenya, unlike many of its East African neighbors and many West African counterparts, proceeded along a different path in its post-colonial development, and enjoyed a comparatively stable politico-economic environment.

According to Bates, the difference lies in the manner in which Kenya came to independence and the key role played by the politics of agriculture. The end result of the Mau Mau insurgency (1952-56) and the run-up to independence (1963) was the capture of power by the prosperous producers of cash crops in Central Province, resulting in a government which favored the accumulation rather than the redistribution of agriculturally-generated wealth. Public policy, therefore, tended to treat export agriculture as a valuable national resource to be carefully nurtured rather than consumed. In contrast, in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania those who seized power after independ-