

a “strange campaign.” (p. 369) In fact, the South Africans were denied an important victory. Despite Crocker’s efforts to dissemble, the Cuban and Angolan armies performed brilliantly, which convinced the South Africans that they needed to negotiate. The irony is that the Cubans left Angola, and Namibia achieved its independence because of events beyond Chester Crocker’s control.

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Coates, John. *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992.

Informed by a soldier’s perceptions, this work, based mainly on research undertaken during the 1970s, illuminates the widely known essential facts about a conflict that ended officially only in 1960. Its author, a former Chief of the General Staff of the Australian Army, provides an operational analysis of the Malayan Emergency, placed within the socio-political circumstances of the first critical years. By 1954, he concludes, the methods for the ultimate defeat of the Communist insurgents had been established, subsequent developments being but minor adaptations to meet the evolving situation.

Coates argues that although sometimes held to be exemplary, British counterinsurgency measures were inept until early 1952, when Churchill’s recently-elected government gave unambiguous direction to the campaign. Correcting exaggerations of the insurgents’ strength, he notes that at the height of the rebellion the Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA), the armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), numbered fewer than 3,500 troops organized into twelve poorly equipped, scattered ‘regiments,’ “not one of which had the offensive strength of more than two British infantry companies” (p. 2) and, suggestive of the scale of operations, that “No single clash cost either side more than a platoon in casualties.” (p. 143) Furthermore, the composition and sympathies of the population worked against the Chinese-led challenge from its outset, the Malays being opposed, the Indians largely indifferent, and the Chinese themselves deeply divided. But the nature of the terrain and the fact that the insurgents were able to attract or extort support from Chinese agriculturist squatters located at the peripheries of the jungle permitted guerrilla warfare to persist for twelve debilitating years, for the first two of which, the army pursued insurgents as if it were “engaged on a large scale partridge drive.” (p. 36)

Wartime opposition to the Japanese had given the insurgents experience of jungle fighting and had promoted organizational links with sympathizers in the Chinese community and with jungle-dwelling aborigines. During the Emergency,

the latter provided concealed bases, food and local intelligence. But because communications depended upon frequently disrupted jungle messengers, central control was weak, and operational decisions devolved upon individual force commanders, with a resulting lack of coordination. Middle and lower-level officers lacked initiative and although the average soldier was “hardy, disciplined and uncanny in his ability to detect . . . an enemy” most were poor marksmen. (p. 12) They were also susceptible to lavish financial rewards for surrendering and informing on comrades.

Until 1952, when General Sir Gerald Templer was appointed High Commissioner with full powers over both the military and civil functions of government, the response to rebellion was characterized by official confusion and growing public despondency. Prior to the Emergency, the intelligence service had been inadequate: it had been unaware of the extent of the MCP’s underground organization, of its large stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and of its changing policies. Occasional warning reports by rural police officers had been discounted; hence, it had failed to assess the potential threat. The High Commissioner of the day, Sir Edward Gent, thus misled, failed to act; and yet, as Coates acutely observes, had he acted earlier and with uncharacteristic decisiveness against the MCP, Britain’s Labour Government might not have supported him. The Police Force, still “battered and demoralized by the Japanese occupation,” was seriously undermanned, and although experienced officers recognized that enlightened post-war colonial policies could succeed only within a framework of restored law and order, nonetheless, the MCP as well as numerous secret societies were tolerated.

Until April 1950, there existed no comprehensive anti-terrorist plan. Gent’s successor, Sir Henry Gurney, wished to place the available forces under the control of the Commissioner of Police to avoid the appearance of a military-dominated regime, and was guilty of “official self-deception” in seeking to downplay the seriousness of the situation to prevent the withdrawal of insurance cover for rubber and tin concerns, while complaining that people were not taking the situation sufficiently seriously. British troops assigned to Malaya had been ill-prepared for jungle warfare, and costly planning mistakes were made. Coates admits, however, that although it was theoretically unwise to deploy troops in small widely scattered units, protection for mine and rubber-estate managers — the insurgents’ prime targets — could not otherwise have been provided. Only in 1950, as the Emergency intensified, did Gurney ask Whitehall to appoint a Director of Operations to coordinate the anti-terrorist campaign. Although the new Director, Sir Harold Briggs, who was given authority to coordinate strategy, the police, military, naval and air forces retained the right to appeal decisions to higher authorities, a “fundamental weakness” according to Coates. (p. 81) Briggs’ assessment of the situation was clear-sighted, but his counterinsurgency proposals could not be fully implemented until the new High Commissioner (Templer) arrived armed with supreme civil and military powers.

The various measures designed to neutralize the MRLA, raise morale, and win popular support are considered. The most costly, socially disruptive, but militarily most effective of these involved the wholesale resettlement of squatters into protected and controlled New Villages, thereby not only denying food and other support to the guerrillas, but providing inhabitants with unaccustomed health and education facilities, run eventually by elected councils. Attempts to resettle aborigines, on the other hand, resulted in "literally thousands" of deaths and was an "appalling disaster." (p. 92)

Like Briggs, Templer clearly understood that he was engaged in "a contest for government with the MCP" and that "the war would be lost if it were left to the soldiers and police." (p. 114) Coates gives Templer high praise for his leadership, and summarizes the policies and practices of his period in office (1952-54). The Intelligence and Information Services, District and State War Executive Committees, and Home Guard were drastically reorganized or reinvigorated, and anti-terrorist forces and civil authorities at all levels were persuaded to cooperate. By the time of Templer's departure, the Malayan Police had become "one of the finest organizations of its type in the world." (p. 31) The results support the author's claim that, at the summit, "one man, not a committee, [was] needed to . . . enforce executive decisions." (p. 131)

The Emergency was "a low-keyed conflict against a fleeting enemy, with hundreds of hours spent . . . walking, wading, slithering and sliding, punctuated by brief moments of contact," yet these "harassed the insurgents out of all proportion to the . . . small number of contacts made." (p. 162) Analyses of ambushes by security forces demonstrated that "fire should not be opened at more than twenty yards by day, and less by night." (p. 163) Tactical operations were little affected by new technology; on patrols the most successful weapon was the United States M1 Carbine, while the Bren light machine gun was the best in ambushes. Offensive operations by the RAF were of less value than auxiliary tasks such as supply and leaflet dropping, 'voice' aircraft, and casualty evacuation. The insurgents relied exclusively on small arms; they had no rockets and only two mortars without ammunition. Coates uses intelligence reports and tables of "Contacts," "Kills," and "Captures" to determine the causes of the failure of large-scale operations, and notes, by contrast, the success of small jungle patrols based on accurate intelligence; but he also draws attention to the logistical costs of such small-unit operations.

To the extent that the sources determine the focus of a work, it must be noted that Coates interviewed thirteen former army officers and officials of the Malayan government, but no civilian members of the Malay, Indian or Chinese communities. For information on the MCP and MRLA, he has relied heavily on translated documents, the accounts of Surrendered Enemy Personnel, and other material previously published in such works as Gene Z. Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya* (1954) and Lucian W. Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya* (1956). He seems not to have consulted the Malayan Security Service's Political Intelligence

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Journal which, cyclostyled, was distributed fortnightly to senior British officials. Otherwise, the work appears to be a sound assessment of the primarily operational aspects of the low-intensity conflict in Malaya.

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Charters, David, ed. *Democratic Responses to International Terrorism*. Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY: Transnational, 1991.

Terrorism is the common cold of the body politic — hard to ignore but no danger unless the victim is already much weakened by other problems. A cold can be attributed (sometimes) to a particular virus, but the infection is usually left to run its course. Similarly, we have learned something about the origins of terrorist groups, but no cure has been discovered. Indeed, students of terrorism are generally quite cautious in making policy suggestions, and, among the many books and articles aiming to increase our understanding of the origins of terrorism, relatively few have had the audacity to suggest a treatment program. This book is one of the few, and deserves special attention for this reason alone.

The editor, David Charters, introduces this collection of essays with a statistical portrait of terrorism and the burgeoning literature on terrorism. It appears that, from 1968 to 1987, the number of casualties from “international” terrorism (24,000) is of the same order of magnitude as the number of books and articles devoted to terrorism (5000). The goal of the book is to sift this large literature for suggestions about how a democratic state can best deal with terrorism. The editor notes that most of the authors are Canadian and much of the experience represented in the volume is Canadian, but suggests that the “lessons of experience” brought together in his concluding chapter can be useful to any democratic state facing a terrorist threat.

Thanks to support from the Centre for Conflict Studies of the University of New Brunswick and from the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, the editor was able to bring his authors together in a workshop at the University of Toronto in 1987. The present essays are the outcome of this workshop, and the editor, as coordinator of the workshop and Director of the Centre for Conflict Studies, had an unusual opportunity to control his inputs and produce an integrated volume.

The volume is divided, somewhat unevenly, into two parts. The first and smaller part (Chapters 1-3) aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the problem of terrorism; the second and larger part (Chapters 4-11) focuses on state responses to terrorism, with particular concern for identifying responses consistent with the preservation of a liberal democratic state.