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RUSSIA, CHINA, AND INSURGENCY

This article is part of the solution the author submitted for the second installment of the Naval War College Counterinsurgency Correspondence Course. This installment deals with Communist theory, strategy, and tactics in relation to insurgency, and it includes consideration of the divergent approaches to this subject taken by the Soviet Union and Communist China. Rather than replying separately to each of the specific questions contained in the syllabus, the author chose to respond collectively to four of the installment's seven questions. In so doing, he composed a provocative essay in which he analyzes the role that ideology plays in Soviet and Chinese Communist policy and the impact that it has had on the "Third World" to the detriment of the United States. The author feels that any attempt to assign the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare solely to a conspiratorial international Communist movement ignores the relevance of this ideology to the Third World and limits conceptually the means of dealing with this complex situation.

by

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Although an understanding of Communist ideology is important in any study of contemporary insurgency, concentration on the "theory of world revolution" may cause a far more basic problem to be ignored: What is the role of insurgency in the total foreign policies of the two major Communist countries? It is this question which I consider more significant, both for the general conduct of American foreign policy and for the construction of an adequate response to insurgency.

We are not (or should not be) fighting an ideology. To do so is to joust

with a phantom. Time and truth take care of ideologies; they either change and adapt themselves to the human condition, or they become irrelevant and are discarded. As Hans Morgenthau puts it:

A foreign policy which takes for its standard the active hostility to a world-wide political movement, such as Jacobinism, liberalism, or Communism, confuses the sphere of philosophic or moral judgment with the realm of political action, and for this reason it is bound to fail.¹

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As with phantoms, however, the belief in an ideology is very real and has important effects upon the practical affairs of men. An ideology impinges upon politics and should be included in political analysis—an analysis which should include for this purpose a careful reading of the general semanticists Hayakawa² and Chase.³

The consideration of a state's foreign policy can be divided into three important elements: (1) what it wants to do (aims, goals); (2) how it goes about them (strategy, tactics); and (3) what it is able to do (capabilities and limitations).

The goals of countries can be broken down into two general classes: goals pertaining to their national interest (maintenance of sovereignty, defense against attack, et cetera) and goals of an idealistic nature (Pan-Africanism, establishment of a theocratic state, making the world safe for democracy, or promoting the proletarian revolution). The two are inextricably intertwined, but it is possible in most cases to see one predominate.⁴ The recent history of both China and Russia illustrates this point.

When examining strategies I believe it most important to look at a country's actions and their practical effects. What a country's leaders say they are doing, and even what they think they are doing (if we can guess it), will provide some insight into their strategy, but it is often an unreliable insight. Even they sometimes "know not what they do" (in the sense of realizing the manifold effects of their actions). In this connection it is also good to bear in mind the old dictum that in politics the means tend to become the ends; that is, particular strategies tend to become goals in themselves.

Finally, a consideration of a nation's capabilities and limitations should focus not only on physical, geographical, and economic factors, but should pay particular attention to the human organiza-

tion which sets policy in the state, and especially to the personalities of the individual leaders and the forces impinging upon them. The fewer the people who make a country's policies, the more important become their personal strengths and weaknesses.

Soviet Policy. The leaders of the Communist Party of Russia have for the last 50 years proclaimed themselves the leaders of a worldwide proletarian revolution which would eventually and inevitably overturn capitalism—with an assist from the inherent weaknesses of capitalism itself. This belief is very important to the legitimacy of the Soviet Government itself. However, other goals—though never so proclaimed—have often taken precedence over the promotion of revolution.

When Lenin and his Bolsheviks seized power, Russia was a developing but still backward and primarily agricultural country. The Russian Revolution itself was unpredicted by Marxist theory, which had postulated that the first proletarian uprisings would be in highly developed capitalist countries like Germany and England. Not only had Western European workers not revolted, but, to the dismay of most late 19th century Socialists, they had gone docilely to war for their imperialist governments.

Lenin was a dedicated revolutionary who saw his success in Russia as a prelude to the overthrow of capitalism in Europe. More than a revolutionary, he was a brilliant practical politician. At the time, he and his followers saw themselves surrounded by hostile capitalist powers, some of whom, for various reasons, had landed troops on Russian soil. He believed he could not stay in power unless the revolution could be extended to other countries.⁵ From this necessity and from Rosa Luxemburg's analysis of imperialism, he adopted the doctrine of anticolonialism—a perceptible modification of

original Marxist theory. The fact that feudal Russia had been the first to fall to communism argued that Europe could be attacked by undermining her colonial dependencies.

Lenin wanted a worldwide proletarian revolution to come as soon as possible, but he was forced by circumstances to give first priority to the consolidation of Communist power in Russia. He used Marxist theory to support him in this, his most important goal.⁶ Second priority was given to the solution of Russia's economic problems. Russia needed capital and trade from the West and was willing to abide by some of the rules of normal international relations in order to get them. Promoting revolution abroad was important—as shown above—but it was of tertiary importance. Was this shift of priorities then a “temporary, tactical jog,” as claimed by those who see the Communists doggedly pursuing an overriding goal of world conquest? Or was it not rather an early and clear example of the periodic dominance of national interest over ideology?

As to the effectiveness of his efforts abroad, 1919 saw great social upheaval in Europe with the temporary establishment of Communist regimes in Hungary and Bavaria. The evidence is that these were due to complex local causes. They certainly owed their inspiration to events in Russia, but they were not due to Moscow's efforts to export revolution. This state of affairs certainly did not owe to lack of motivation on Lenin's part, but rather to the lack of an organization ready to exploit such situations.⁷ The Comintern was formed in the same year but had little immediate effect. And Lenin's efforts to bring the leftwing Socialists under his control the following year seriously weakened the power of the Socialist movement in Germany.⁸

In the Period of his leadership Lenin initiated one strategy which was to keep the other nations of the world off

balance until the present day—that of operating simultaneously on legal and illegal levels. Not only did this strategy owe very little to Marxist theory, it was indeed a reversion to the normal condition of international relations in the West until the time of Grotius. What was new was the Communist claim that Western peoples owed no allegiance to their capitalist governments—and that was less convincing to those people than it was frightening to their leaders.

The example of priorities provided by Stalin's policies is even more obvious. Although he may have subscribed to Marxist ideology, Stalin was not a “good Communist” or world revolutionary; he was a cynical pragmatist, interested above all in the aggrandizement of his personal power. Since he became virtually the center of power in the U.S.S.R., the suspicious and vindictive side of his character, as was described by George F. Kennan,⁹ played a larger role in the formation of his foreign policy than did the ideology of communism.

Stalin's fear of a war between the capitalist and Communist states was more practical than ideological. To be sure, Stalin inherited the world view of the Bolsheviks which saw the capitalist governments as capable of nothing but evil, but more significantly he saw himself surrounded by powerful Western states that were capable of conquering the U.S.S.R. Thus one of his primary goals was to protect the Soviet Union from outside intervention—a traditional goal of Russian foreign policy. He accomplished this goal both by the traditional means of power diplomacy (e.g., 1935 alliance with France and 1939 alliance with Germany) and by use of his monolithic control of Communist Parties throughout the world to weaken his enemies. Some of the spies, agents, and underlings his organization employed may have had some romantic belief of the furthering of universal communism, but it is doubtful that

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Stalin did. Marxism for Stalin was a means.

Even more important to Stalin than combating outside encirclement was the danger of opposition to him within the Communist movement in the U.S.S.R. and abroad. Stalin's psychological insecurity, as a newcomer and a provincial, caused him to give top priority to preserving his personal position, even when this was contrary to the international goals of Communist theorists or even to the traditional practical goals of the Russian state. This was the key to both his domestic and foreign policies.

If personal power was Stalin's most important goal, his means were: (1) the establishment of a domestic totalitarian state, (2) bringing the world Socialist movement under his control insofar as possible, and (3) the dual legal/illegal approach to foreign states.

Domestically, Stalin moved to destroy the few feeble sprouts of participatory democracy in the Soviet Union. If Lenin had considered sharing some power with the Soviets, and there is evidence for this,¹⁰ Stalin wanted all power in the hands of the party bureaucracy which he controlled. The ideas and institutions of communism in the U.S.S.R. unfortunately proved quite susceptible to this sort of manipulation.

Within the international Communist movement, Stalin had neither the prestige nor the position of political and ideological leadership held by the exiled European Socialist intellectuals. He had to tread carefully, eliminating them one by one as rivals to his power. Eventually he brought the international movement under his control, but at severe cost to the strength and credibility of the international proletarian revolution. Stalin's efforts to bring the Socialist movement in Germany under his domination weakened that movement considerably, and his subsequent use of German Communists to undermine the Weimar Republic and the Social Democratic

Party contributed directly to the rise of Hitler.¹¹

Stalin's relations with foreign powers illustrate a dilemma of Soviet policy which persists down to the present day: Should Moscow attempt to advance world revolution by establishing Communist regimes abroad? Or should it try to weaken the bourgeois powers by backing non-Communist, anticolonial, nationalist regimes at the expense of local Communist Parties? It is very difficult to do both at once. To prove that this is a very real problem for the Russians and not just a matter of "promoting the eventual Communist domination of the world by whatever means come to hand," I refer the reader to the history of Russian aid to Egypt, India, and Nigeria. To believe that the Russians can be simultaneously effective on both fronts—aid and subversion—is to credit them with supercunning and to assume that the leaders of the Third World are utterly naive. Moscow must choose on which tactic to place her emphasis—and her choice has not always been the right one.¹²

For Stalin the dilemma was somewhat simplified. He was happy to support local Communist Parties overseas—until they achieved enough success to demonstrate the slightest independence. Then he purged them or allowed them to be destroyed. Meanwhile he used them as an instrument of power politics to weaken his enemies.

Stalin's defensive policy of protecting Russia lasted until 1943, when victory over Hitler seemed probable. At this point he began to plan for the expansion of Soviet control. Note that this did not involve revolution in Africa or Latin America; instead it specifically applied to countries on the U.S.S.R.'s borders.

The Western democracies at this time were busy indulging in their usual wartime errors of (1) believing that military victory would solve all major problems ("beat Hitler" or, more recently, "zap

the 'Cong'), (2) subordinating all else to the conduct of the war, and (3) fighting for unrealistic, idealistic aims ("establish a new international order of peace-loving states," or "roll back communism"). Thus preoccupied, they were unable to counter Soviet expansion until after the war when the Marshall Plan halted it in Europe and a series of alliances helped to contain it elsewhere.

On his accession to power, Khrushchev placed a higher priority upon Marxist-Leninist ideology and its goal of fomenting worldwide revolutions than had his predecessor Stalin. How much of this was due to a sincere belief in Marxism-Leninism and how much was due to a growing feeling of security about Russia's international position is moot.

Two goals, however, continued to be of primary importance: Russia's traditional national interests in Europe and Asia and the avoidance of direct military confrontation with the United States. When Soviet national interests were threatened in Hungary in 1956, Khrushchev lost no time in restoring the postwar status quo in Europe. The "peaceful coexistence" strategy was nothing more than an effort to avoid fighting the United States while Moscow was attempting to erode American influence in the Third World and to fill the political and military vacuums left by the withdrawal of European colonial powers.

Khrushchev reconciled Russia with Tito, pulled out of Austria, and began renewed efforts toward the uncommitted countries. His approach to the Third World took the familiar two roads: aid to nationalist governments and promotion of national wars of liberation. On both fronts Khrushchev used the rapid and spectacular economic and technological advance of the U.S.S.R. to assert the supremacy of the Soviet system. Khrushchev offered aid to underdeveloped countries. In most cases the countries accepted the aid, the

money, and the arms, but they did not align themselves with the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev proclaimed that there could be many roads to communism, from armed conquest to peaceful elections. He gave public support to "national wars of liberation." He also gave them physical support as well—with very little success. Uprisings in Burma, India, Black Africa, and South America provided little benefit for the Soviet Union. The 1954 rebellion in Guatemala was suppressed. Algeria disavowed communism after independence. Khrushchev was unable even to capture the only real popular uprising which occurred during that period in the Western Hemisphere—that in Cuba—even though Castro proclaimed himself Marxist-Leninist and turned to Russia for arms and aid.¹³

Virtually the only other successful "war of national liberation" during that time occurred in Vietnam. That, like Cuba, was basically a nationalist revolution led by a remarkable local leader, Ho Chi Minh, who was later supported by neighboring China. But Ho came to power 4 years before the Chinese Communists completed their conquest of the mainland, and he was too interested in national independence to be a puppet either of Russia or China.¹⁴

Domestically, Khrushchev put first priority not on increasing Communist Party control, but rather on speeding economic development to catch up with the West. He first proposed a reorganization of the party corresponding more closely to the needs of production than ideology. Then, realizing that a basic condition of productivity is a climate of personal security and internal peace, he began a liberalization campaign which included an attack upon Stalin and his totalitarian methods.

Morgenthau holds that a political order must rest on one or more of three foundations of legitimacy: traditional, constitutional, or charismatic. The Communist Party maintains its legitimacy in

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Russia by its leaders' charismatic claim to be the correct interpreters of the "scientific" truth of Marxism-Leninism. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin struck directly at the dogma of infallibility of the Soviet Communist Party and its leaders, which had also been the basis of Moscow's authority over international communism.¹⁵ It marked the beginning of the dissolution of Russian control over foreign Communist Parties and governments, and it hastened Khrushchev's downfall.

Today we can see a retreat from Khrushchev's revolutionary policies. First priority has once again been given to the more traditional national interest of the Soviet state—security, that is the protection of her borders and now the avoidance of nuclear confrontation. Moscow has gained too much power and prosperity to throw it away for ideology. Moscow will still try to promote disruption abroad but will be more willing to underwrite higher costs for security than world revolutions. This does not mean that the U.S.S.R. will become more docile or more accommodating to the West. Her traditional interests are strong ones. Any situation like Czechoslovakia (1968) which arises to threaten the security of her borders will be dealt with as severely as necessary, particularly if, as in Czechoslovakia, it also represents a threat to Moscow's control of her own population.¹⁶

What role does insurgency play in Soviet policy today? For the Soviets, insurgency in the Third World serves two main functions: First, it is a relatively cheap means of disrupting the political and economic influence of the United States and Europe. By taking advantage of the natural forces of rapid social change in the traditional societies of the developing countries, Moscow hopes to weaken governments friendly to the United States and Europe with the end of disrupting Western economies or of actually producing govern-

ments friendly to the U.S.S.R. Second, insurgent movements advertising themselves under the banner of universal communism are an effective method of alarming, exhausting, and diverting Moscow's enemies while the U.S.S.R. achieves other gains elsewhere. While the United States has wasted its skills, resources, and political leadership far from Russia's borders in Vietnam, the Soviets have increased their naval power in the Baltic and Mediterranean and their political influence in the Middle East. Note that during this time the incidence of Soviet-inspired insurgencies in the Middle East has been rather low.

Has it been worth dragging the reader through the history of Soviet foreign policy to make these two simple statements about insurgency? If the exercise has demonstrated that the promotion of insurgency is just one of several tools of Soviet strategy and not part of a scheme for universal Communist revolution, I shall be satisfied.

It is possible to view the historical progression of Soviet foreign policy as the skillful tactical maneuverings of a group of fanatical revolutionaries who have never lost sight of their ultimate goal of world conquest. The statements of the Soviets themselves would lend some plausibility to this view. Their conspiratorial tactics also appear to confirm it. Some columnists seem to believe it.

I believe it to be a fundamentally mistaken view, one that has been responsible for serious errors in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and U.S. reaction to insurgency. The world is more complicated and less dramatic than that. Evidence and commonsense argue against either the superhuman or demonic nature of the Russian Communist leaders. They would appear to be subject to the same personal faults, organizational inefficiencies, and strategic mistakes as we are. The fact that they control a great country forces them to consider its national interests.

The sooner we finally put to rest the myth that they are uncompromising, superefficient, and evil, the sooner we can take intelligent advantage of their weaknesses.

Chinese Policy. China's foreign policies, too, are governed by a blend of idealism and national interest. China's national interests have traditionally been more inward-looking and less expansionist than the Soviets. Historically, China has seen itself as the center of civilization. Its defense was oriented toward the most persistent threat—that of the barbarians of central Asia, an area which has remained of overriding importance. Seapower was never emphasized. China's only significant overseas military expeditions—those against the Japanese and Java—were undertaken by the Yuan Dynasty, a Mongol dynasty.¹⁷

As the center of civilization in East Asia, China has always considered herself culturally superior to her neighbors and has demanded respect and tribute from them on that basis rather than as a result of subjugation. This sense of superiority is manifest in Chinese Communist ideology today. China's "mission"—before and after the Communist revolution—has always been to spread the light from her superior culture to other less-privileged peoples.

Since the establishment of the Communist government in 1949, China has been principally preoccupied with internal reform, consisting in varying proportions of consolidation of administration, economic development, and ideological indoctrination—a natural reaction after 100 years of social upheaval, war, and revolution.¹⁸ Her expansionist tendencies have been few, the most notable exception being the annexation of Tibet, which she considered a part of China. Her entry into Korea seems to have arisen from a real fear that American forces would continue their drive a few hundred miles northward into China's industrial heart-

land in Manchuria or that she would be confronted with a hostile puppet state on her border. Her motives for the clashes on the Indian frontier are obscure. (Were they to consolidate her territory, to embarrass and humiliate the Indian Government, to test Russian attitudes, or to improve internal morale?)

Marxism in China has caused a slight shifting of overall priorities away from national interest toward idealistic ends. But it is important to note that this shift is not nearly so extreme as it would appear from the outpouring of revolutionary propaganda. The real test is where China is putting her resources, and she is putting by far the greatest amount toward internal reform and defense and very little toward world revolution.

At present China remains an introspective, defensive power, more concerned with domestic reorganization and the security of her frontiers than with physical expansion. The contrast of harsh words and little action can be explained by the fact that China is still a potentially strong but physically weak nation. Furthermore, her leaders are apparently convinced of the self-sufficient rectitude of their ideology and its ability to convince other peoples with a minimum of investment. However, this reliance on little more than propaganda has not been effective. The fumbling Chinese attempts at subversion in other countries—as far afield as Africa and Latin America—have proved so offensive to many developing peoples as to be counterproductive, even in places where China's national interests are directly involved, such as Burma and Cambodia.

One may fear that this condition will persist only for as long as it takes China to become militarily powerful enough to challenge the United States and Russia. Fairbank, Morgenthau, and Reischauer consider this eventuality possible but unlikely, given China's

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historical proclivities.¹⁹ Joseph Alsop sees it occurring already in Vietnam.²⁰

China promotes and supports insurgency for two entirely different reasons than the Russians do. Both can be traced to her "Middle Kingdom" mentality, are primarily idealistic, and have little to do with her traditional national interests. Perhaps this explains the relative failure to date of Chinese subversions.

First, the Chinese leaders really believe that their agrarian or peasant communism is the answer to the social problems of the developing world. The validity of this notion will be discussed later in this essay. Second, their support of insurrection is a low-cost way of shifting ideological support of the Marxist world to China and away from Russia.

This is not to say that Chinese support of insurgency is completely free from great power motives any more than Moscow's is totally free of idealistic fervor. However, I do consider the difference in their motivation to be significant, and I believe it is reflected in the surprising lack of great power moves in the last 20 years.

If this analysis is correct, it may pay the United States to heed Anatole Shub's advice to move toward closer relations with China—the less expansionist Communist power.²¹

Communist Ideology and Revolution. An ideology is a philosophical construction which explains everything about the historical process by logical deduction from a single basic idea. Unlike other philosophies an ideology usually claims a monopoly of truth and is intolerant of other outlooks. In these aspects it bears a resemblance to religion, with which it is often compared. Unlike revealed religions, however, ideologies claim to be based upon scientific truth, since they deal with natural and not supernatural processes and since they are internally consistent. In this

assertion, however, they err by ignoring the basis of scientific truth, which is composed of tentative (heuristic) propositions to be tested independently by many individuals against observable reality and discarded if they do not meet that empirical test. Despite the fact that they demand acceptance in the name of science, ideologies are dogmas which display very little curiosity about the real world. But in this respect they are less secure and more subject to change than religions. They purport to explain natural events, and they are therefore open to challenge when they fail to predict them.

Ideologies play an important role in social change. They seem to arise from the psychological stresses produced when a social system is not in equilibrium, and they serve the individual who accepts them as a means for relieving these tensions. In this respect they offer a consistent picture of the universe which gives meaning to the life of the individual and offers an explanation of the events he witnesses. Often they serve as replacements for old value systems which have broken down under social change, and they serve as a rallying point for those individuals who are dissatisfied with the social system.²²

Because of their religious and pseudoscientific nature, ideologies can be used to influence and organize people. Those who use them for this purpose are not necessarily cynical or sinister manipulators; it is more likely that they have accepted the ideology too.²³ Particularly for those at the center of a revolutionary movement, the psychological satisfaction of directing that movement toward a meaningful ideological goal can be tremendous.²⁴ So, aside from the intrinsic appeal of the ideology itself, there are powerful psychological and social rewards for those who subscribe to it.

Marxism and its offshoots are just such ideologies.

Marx proposed a theory of history

and economics which, with modifications, is still widely accepted. He saw history as a process in which people's thoughts, attitudes, and actions are largely determined by economic factors. These factors were held responsible for the division of people into classes and for the struggle between those classes which would—after passing through periods of feudalism and capitalism—finally and inevitably result in a revolution of those who produced wealth (the workers), which in turn would bring about a utopian classless society.

Marx's view of this society was optimistic and idealistic. He foresaw it as a society in which . . .

men would exercise a much greater, and equal, control over their individual destinies; would be liberated from the tyranny of their own creations such as the State and bureaucracy, capital and technology; would be productive rather than acquisitive; would find pleasure and support in their social cooperation with other men, rather than antagonism and bitterness in the competition with them.²⁵

This utopian vision still has much appeal today. It represents enough universal human longing to attract the radical students in the industrialized countries as well as the peasant societies of the Third World.

Four points in Marx's theories are particularly important. First is his argument that misery and want are not *natural* conditions, but *political* ones—the results of social institutions and not of scarcity. In this, his philosophy continues in a direct line from that of the French Revolution, whose leaders saw human happiness and the alleviation of poverty as the ends of revolution. [Note the significant contrast of this idea to that of the American Revolution, which was fought to free individuals to seek

their own happiness within a political order based on their own consent. This is an important practical and philosophical difference.]²⁶

Second is Marx's emphasis on historical determinism. Despite his concern with human happiness, human beings are seen not as individuals with individual needs and capabilities, but as agents of a historical process over which they can have little control. The corollary of this notion is purely ideological—that humans can best find happiness now by joining, not resisting, the inevitable movement toward socialism and the victory of the working class.

Third, we have Marx's conception of the dialectic of the historical process, which meant that out of the conflict of thesis (the old society) and antithesis (reaction to its injustices) would emerge a new synthesis (the new order). A corollary of this idea was that reforms of the old order only slowed the historical process and the ultimate revolution and were therefore undesirable. In short, "real" change could only be brought about by revolution.

Finally, we come to Marx's idea of the alienation (estrangement, dehumanization) of man in industrial (capitalist) society, by which he meant that the division of labor and the necessity for bureaucratic administration created by the advance of technology had resulted in a condition wherein man received no self-fulfillment from his work and life. It is this concept, seized upon by Marcuse and other contemporary social critics, which has crystallized opposition to unthinking commercialism and bureaucratic government by the student left in the industrialized countries.

The problems with Marx's original theories are well known. The labor theory of value, upon which he based much of his argument, was later shown to be deficient. His touching confidence that human nature would change from acquisitiveness to cooperation with the imposition of different social institu-

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tions was ill founded. He failed to see that his scheme provided no safeguards against the conversion of the dictatorship of the proletariat into the tyranny of a party; his classless society allows for no other institutions which could compete with the state to offer that society some defense against the totalitarianism of the new elite.

Nevertheless, the elements of Marx's theory mentioned above make it unusually susceptible to perversion into dogma for ideological purposes, either as the charismatic justification of a totalitarian system or as a stimulus to revolution. The theory tells men that they can achieve happiness by changing certain political institutions held to be responsible for their misery. It tells them that they will be acting against history if they do not change these institutions in a certain way (revolution). It explains their present discontent, and it gives them a sense of participation in history if they adhere to the theory. In short, it claims a monopoly of truth, supports all those who believe in it, and provides a justification for ignoring or eliminating those who disagree. Marx was clever enough to have been able to recognize these problems had he lived into the 20th century. An enemy of classes and bureaucracy, he would very likely be appalled by the Communist states today. Even at the end of his life he wrote to his son, "I am not myself a Marxist."

It was left for Lenin to convert these theories into ideology. As mentioned above in the discussion of Russian policy, he made two important contributions. He extended the theory of revolution to include not only the proletariat, but the large mass of peasants as well. And he forged the priesthood of the Communist Party as the conspiratorial vehicle for revolution and the guardian of the dogmatic faith of Marxism.

Mao Tse-tung's addition to Marxist

ideology arose out of his well-known experiences in mobilizing a peasant base to struggle against the Nationalist Government and the Japanese. In the course of this struggle he continued to move away from reliance on the proletariat and toward reliance on the peasants as the backbone of communism. He thus incorporated into the body of Marxist doctrine the peasant who had been despised by Marx and his European followers and who had been utilized but largely overlooked by Lenin.

The success of Mao's organizational efforts and guerrilla tactics in China moved him to elevate the new emphasis into dogma and extend it to international politics, where he now postulates a worldwide "guerrilla war" of the underdeveloped, rural Third World against the metropolitan powers of Europe and North America.²⁷ This element in Mao's ideology has been both the instrument and the motivation for China's mischief making in the Third World and, of course, contributed also to the break with Russia.

What then is the role of contemporary Marxist ideology in the unstable social and political situation existing in the developing countries? How much is it responsible for the unrest there? What appeal does it have to individuals in those societies and why? To what degree is it merely a tool of Soviet and Chinese interests?

The first sections of this discussion have shown the manner in which the Soviets and China have promoted revolution and the spread of Marxist ideology in the underdeveloped countries for their own political purposes. But to believe that the influence of communism in these areas is solely, or even chiefly, the result of conspiratorial, outside Communist "takeover" tactics is to ignore the inherent relevance of this ideology to the Third World and to render ourselves incapable of dealing with the complex situation in the Third World except in the emotional and

somewhat simplistic manner in which we have reacted in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

Do we really think that modern Communist ideology could have taken such deep root in Asia and Latin America if it did not have some meaning to the people there? The Third World is not Eastern Europe, where communism was imposed on an unwilling population by Stalin's armies. It stretches the imagination to believe that the hundreds of thousands of highly motivated Vietcong can be but dupes of clever organizers and propagandists.

Marxist ideology and Communist organization are, and will continue to be, successful in the underdeveloped countries for at least five reasons:

(1) Marxist utopianism fits right in with the natural utopianism which exists in all peasant societies.

(2) Communist organization offers a quick, practical means for native intellectuals to gain a pervasive control of their societies.

(3) Communist governments are effective in creating political controls capable of holding a society together in today's world.

(4) The hostility of Communist doctrine to Western Europe and the United States provides a rationale for developing countries to cast off odious colonial influence and inappropriate Western-style political systems.

(5) Both the ideology and the hierarchical social organization of modern communism offer the individual a satisfying substitute for the vanishing social institutions of extended family, tribe, and local community.

Utopianism is a common phenomenon among those whom Morris Watnick calls the "history-less" peoples of the world—those whose actions are governed by custom, and whose imagination spans only one generation.^{28, 29} There it acts as a psychological safety valve for the trials of a difficult existence. When social institutions begin to

break down or to change rapidly, this utopianism bursts forth frequently in desperate, futile peasant rebellions (e.g., the 16th century Bauernkrieg in Europe on the eve of the Reformation).³⁰ Such rapid social change is occurring today in the Third World under the impact of new ideas.

This native drive for millennial rectification of perceived wrongs is usually directed against whomever is in authority as the society disintegrates. But it is doomed to achieve nothing unless it can be effectively organized. It can be organized by means of appropriate ideology and methods of control. Communism in its present form offers both. The elements of Marx's theory accord perfectly with the millennial dream of the peasant in time of stress. "Alienation" and "class exploitation" explain his unhappiness, the "classless society" provides his goal, the "need for revolution" shows him how to act, and "historical determinism" gives him the sense of participation in an historical process.

Who then are attempting to use this ideology to control and manipulate the dissatisfied majority? Foreign agents? Local Communists trained in Moscow and Peking?

Most revolutionary leaders in the Third World are indigenous intellectuals who are otherwise excluded from positions of power in their societies, who find communism relevant to them personally, and who see it as the best tool to modernize their countries.^{31, 32} In Marxist ideology they, too, find self-justification; in Communist organization they find the means to put themselves in power and to guide their societies toward the more sophisticated political systems necessary to survive in the last third of the 20th century. The backgrounds of Communist leaders have been found to be surprisingly similar to those of their local nationalist opponents.³³ Except in rare cases they are not workers or peasants, but men educated in modern ideas.

Here we find many similarities with prerevolutionary Russia and China (similarities which are not lost on Third World leaders). Communism was not imposed upon Russia from without. It was eagerly adopted by native Russian intellectuals who used it as a tool to overthrow Kerensky's provisional government, install themselves in power, and work for modernization. In China, after the nearly disastrous manipulations of Russian agents, it was a homegrown intellectual, Mao, who guided the country to a successful Communist revolution. A look at the biographies of current Vietcong leaders reveals few peasants and workers, but a high proportion of schoolteachers, architects, and engineers, whose "foreign training" was usually acquired in Paris.³⁴ It is especially with regard to these indigenous revolutionary leaders that we usually underestimate communism as a compelling, relevant force in the developing world by labeling such people "dupes," "foreign agents," or "power-hungry cynics."

Does communism deliver what it promises to these modernizing nationalists? Although many of the promises are not kept, it does satisfy what is perhaps the greatest immediate need of their societies—not economic development, but political cohesion. The Communists offer effective government based on widespread mobilization of the community in political and economic programs. To label these governments totalitarian dictatorships may be true, but it does not tell the whole story—perhaps not even the most important part of it. The significant difference between the dictatorships of Ho and Diem was that Ho constructed the institutions necessary for a modern political system, while Diem did not. The United States' great failure in dealing with insurgency in the Third World has been that we have never offered these peoples an effective alternative to totalitarian control as a

rapid means to political modernization. I believe we must try, for I believe that democracy and effective government are not mutually exclusive.³⁵

Points 4 and 5 above probably need less discussion. It seems obvious that the old colonial powers appear as more of a threat to the new leaders than do Russia or China, partly because many of their economies are tied to the West (a fact which is seen as "nonpolitical" in the United States; after all, it's just business). These economic relations with the powerful, industrialized countries are often perceived in the developing countries as exploitation and, therefore, "neocolonialism." Witness our current problems in Latin America. Similar Soviet economic relations, such as the natural gas sales to Western Europe, are only just beginning and are therefore not so clearly perceived.

Furthermore, the Western Powers, in an unsophisticated, idealistic, and parochial manner have attempted to push the forms, if not the substance, of Western constitutional democracy upon developing countries for whom these institutions are not very relevant—less relevant, in fact, than homegrown communism. These systems have in many cases been properly rejected or modified out of existence, and the new nations are now experimenting with their own institutions—sometimes with disastrous results. If we hope to encourage other peoples toward systems of government we believe best, we had better study carefully the elements in other systems which are perceived by them as more appropriate for their own needs.

The psychological rewards of modern communism as a substitute for decaying traditional social institutions have already been mentioned and explored. They are a powerful motivating force for which men will give their lives.

Hopefully, the above discussion will have demonstrated that the popularity of Communist ideas and the penetration of Soviet and Chinese influence in the

Third World have not been simply the result of tactics used by Communist insurgents to organize and control a population, but rather the result of the relevance of certain elements of Marxist ideology and Leninist political organization to conditions in developing societies. For our own national interest we simply cannot afford any longer to ignore these elements because of our hostility to "communism."

The U.S. Response to Insurgency. Without attempting here the complete review of U.S. foreign policy which is needed in order to integrate our response to insurgency with our other goals, I would suggest that the following points be considered.

(1) We should clearly distinguish between those national goals which have primarily to do with our pragmatic, national interest (e.g., preservation of national security, gradual evolution of our own American institutions, amelioration of internal social problems) and those of a more idealistic nature (e.g., promoting a stable, civilized, and prosperous world order under international law, favoring foreign governments which are responsive to the needs of their citizens). We should recognize the natural limitations on the achievement of these goals, especially those in the second category. We should establish priorities for their achievement and match them against our capabilities (economic and military power, preservation of a free interplay of ideas, the historical, pragmatic Yankee approach to problems, the natural appeals of our system to others) and our foreign policy limitations ("guns vs. butter," internal social problems and injustices, the time-consuming democratic decisionmaking process, tolerance of internal criticism, the general desire to adhere to the civilized standards of international law, and the inherent limits on the effectiveness of intervention in the internal affairs of other states—even with their

own consent—especially if they differ widely from us in race, language, and culture).

(2) We should work out policies toward the U.S.S.R., China, and other Communist states which, among other things:

- recognize and take advantage of the differences between them (even to the extent of offering early recognition and aid to some Communist countries—perhaps, for example, to Mongolia or to a united Vietnam in 1954);

- treat their policymakers as human beings with human capabilities and limitations, rather than as fanatics or cynical manipulators;

- recognize Communist limits in promoting and controlling insurgencies abroad and take real care in identifying how much Soviet and Chinese influence and control is really present in each insurgency so that we can adapt our tactics accordingly;

- attempt to cut through the semantic fog surrounding such terms as "communism," "Communist domination," and "Communist-inspired insurgency" which cause us to fail to look deeper for elements which may be more important in stimulating and sustaining insurgency.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Lt. Comdr. John H. Norton, U.S. Naval Reserve, holds an undergraduate degree from Yale University and a master's degree in business administration from Stanford University. His active duty in the Navy (1958-1963) included duty aboard a destroyer, duty at the Naval Justice School at Newport, R.I., flight training, and 3 years of duty as an aviator. He is presently the Director of International Operations for the Rain Bird National Sales Corp., and in this capacity he has had an opportunity to travel extensively in the Far East.

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(3) We should accept revolution as a natural, if wasteful, social process which can, and does, occur independently of Communist inspiration.³⁶ The societies of the developing world are going to have to alter themselves considerably to be able to cope with their well-known and almost overwhelming problems. This alteration may be a relatively peaceful evolution (Japan), or it may be a violent revolution (China). It can occur without Communist control (Mexico, Algeria, Turkey, Egypt) or with it (Russia, China, North Vietnam), but it will in any case involve drastic change and interrupt the normal conduct of business.

We should understand that the basic solution to a society's social problems will have to be worked out by the people of that society themselves. We should appreciate that to them their problems of political, social, and economic change are more important than the struggle for power and influence between the United States, the U.S.S.R., and China.

If we hope to have any success at all in influencing these societies toward (1) the system of government we prefer for ourselves, and (2) the norms we profess in international conduct, if we hope to avoid being backed into an isolated corner as the world's number-one anti-revolutionary power, we must overcome our provincialism and understand what is relevant to these people and why—including some aspects of communism. As an outgrowth of this new approach to our foreign affairs we should probably help these people toward new systems of government which are (a) relevant to their needs, (b) effective in mobilizing their societies toward a solution of their own problems, and (c) as unoppressive as possible. We should not presume that Western parliamentary democracy necessarily lies among them in the short run.

(4) Carrying this thought further, we should stop treating insurgency as

merely a peculiar kind of "unconventional" warfare which can be overcome by sophisticated military methods and advanced technology. Insurgency is fundamentally a *political* process. The most effective "weapon" against insurgency is also political. It is the establishment of "good government," which I define as including:

- the physical safety of the people.
- an effective administration, responsive to the people's needs.
- effective participation of the people in the government at all levels.
- the administration of justice which is seen by the people as just.
- honest, dedicated, disciplined, indigenous officials.
- an army and police force that are liked and respected because they avoid the common antisocial abuses.

Notice that the concept of "good government" is broader than that of "effective government." Measures for education, medical aid, and economic development are important, too, but they are secondary. Military and police measures to provide security are necessary to physical safety, but they should support the primary goal of establishing good government and not be considered as an end in themselves.

We should stop our wholesale damnation of the Communists and point out to our friends in the developing world that one of the reasons for Communist success is that they manage to provide many of these elements in their "liberated areas."³⁷ They are the "carrot" of Communist administration; the "stick" (by which we are bemused) is, of course, totalitarian control.

I submit that if, after consideration of our own goals and priorities, we absolutely must intervene in another country, then the cost (even the sheer U.S. dollar cost) of imposing good government, as I have defined it, will be less than the cost of waging what now passes for "counterguerrilla warfare," and its effectiveness will be greater.

FOOTNOTES

1. Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 26.
2. Samuel I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949).
3. Stuart Chase, *The Tyranny of Words* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938); Stuart Chase, *Guides to Straight Thinking* (New York: Harper, 1956).
4. For a review of the dual trends of national interest and idealism in American policy, see Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).
5. George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), p. 155.
6. Morgenthau, p. 57.
7. Kennan, p. 159-161.
8. George F. Kennan, "The Russian Revolution Fifty Years After; Its Nature and Consequences," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967, p. 13.
9. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin*, p. 241-259.
10. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), p. 312-313.
11. Harry J. Benda, "Reflections on Asian Communism," *Yale Review*, October 1966, p. 1-2.
12. For a discussion of this point, see Philip E. Mosely, "The Kremlin and the Third World," *Foreign Affairs*, October 1967, p. 64-77.
13. This statement may be challenged. I can only point to Castro's independence from Russian political control. He would not sign the Test Ban Treaty. He refused to condemn the Chinese. He has pursued his own scheme (unsuccessful) of hemispheric revolution contrary to the Moscow line.
14. I assert this, even though in 1954 he apparently sacrificed his national interest to pressures from China or Russia by agreeing to the temporary partition of his country.
15. Richard Lowenthal, "The Kremlin's Difficult Choice," *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1965, p. 80.
16. Anatole Shub, "The Lessons of Czechoslovakia," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1969, p. 272.
17. John K. Fairbank, "China's Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective," *Foreign Affairs*, April 1969, p. 454.
18. John H. Norton, "Economic Development in Mainland China," Unpublished Paper, Stanford University, Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford, Calif.: 1965.
19. Edwin O. Reischauer, *Beyond Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 153-161.
20. See Joseph Alsop's columns for the *Washington Post* for the last 5 years.
21. Shub, p. 280.
22. Chalmers A. Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1966), p. 80-87.
23. Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York: Harper, 1951), p. 104.
24. E. Victor Wolfenstein, *The Revolutionary Personality: Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), *passim*.
25. Thomas B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1964), p. 132.
26. Hannah Arendt's discussion of the question of human wants and political institutions is brilliant on this point and may indicate why some of our domestic institutions are failing us now. See her *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), p. 53-110.
27. U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Lin Piao Article Commemorating V-J Day Anniversary "Long Live the Victory of the People's War"* ([Washington]: 3 September 1965), p. 22.
28. Morris Watnick, "The Appeal of Communism to the Underdeveloped Peoples," John H. Kautsky, ed., *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries* (New York: Wiley, 1962), p. 317.
29. Margaret Mead, *Culture and Commitment* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Press, 1970), p. 32-97.
30. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 453-483, discusses the social conditions, aside from peasant utopianism, which provoke peasant revolts.
31. Benda.
32. Kautsky, ed., p. 77.

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33. Harold Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites* (Cambridge: MIT Press 1965), p. 97-178.

34. Douglas Pike, *Viet Cong* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. 421-436.

35. For a detailed discussion of the institutions of modern political systems and for an analysis of how Leninism can also help provide them, I urge the reader to consider Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 334-343.

36. The case for the United States *supporting* revolutions is well argued by Robert L. Heilbroner, "Making a Rational Foreign Policy," *Harper's*, September 1968, p. 64-71.

37. Pike, p. 269-305.

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... The primary war strategy of a people seeking to emancipate itself.

Chang Tso Hua, c. 1937 (quoted by
Mao Tse-tung in *On Guerrilla War*)