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Submission to Inquiry - Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Edward Albert Chitham

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired)

Given Names *

Edward Albert

Surname *

Chitham

Post-nominals (if applicable)

MC OAM

Street Number and Name *

[REDACTED]

Suburb *

[REDACTED]

Postcode *

[REDACTED]

State *

[REDACTED]

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

Is the Submission on behalf of an organisation? If yes, please provide details:

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

To understand the insurgency threat in Malaysia during its Communist Insurgency (1968-1989), one must understand the three phases of Chinese Communist's Revolutionary Warfare (CCRW) doctrine and its direct application and success in fostering revolutionary wars in SEA post the Second World War that gave rise to the Domino Theory. With the exception of both the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) and the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia (1968-1989) all the three CCRW phases succeeded in communist victories in the First

Indochina War (1946 -1954), the Vietnam War (1955-1975), the Laotian Civil War (1959–1975) and the Cambodian Civil War (1960-1975). In the Malayan Emergency and the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, the insurgents were defeated in Phase 2, never rising to Phase 3 and armed units in combat. On the balance of probabilities from applying the CCRW doctrine and practice, I believe that the threat of insurgent attack on ABB would be in Phase 2 – Terror offensive activities probable and the likelihood of casualties very high, and in Phase 3 – Armed Unit combat action certain and the likelihood of casualties catastrophic with far-reaching strategic consequences to Australia.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: 20230511-TC-SUPPLEMENTARY-SUBMISSION-TO-DHAAT.docx

Part 5 – Consent and declaration

✓ I consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal making my submission publicly available.

✓ I also consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal:

- using information contained in my submission to conduct research;
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation considered by the Tribunal to be appropriate; and
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation the subject of adverse comment in the submission;
- using content in my submission in its report to Government.

The Tribunal will decide which person or organisation is appropriate, and this may include:

1. persons or organisations required to assist with the inquiry; and
2. persons or organisations with an interest in the inquiry.

✓ I declare that the information I have provided is correct.

Name

Edward Albert Chitham

Date

11/05/2023

*Edward Albert
Chitham*

Signed by Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Edward
Albert Chitham
Signed on: 11 May, 2023

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LEGALLY SIGNED USING
WPsignature

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
*Edward Albert
Chitham*

[REDACTED]



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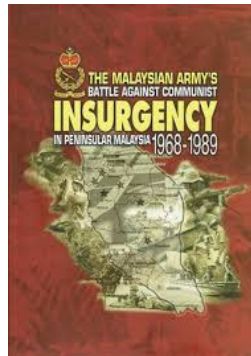


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**SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE DHAAT INQUIRY INTO MEDALLIC RECOGNITION
FOR SERVICE WITH RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH AT AIR BASE BUTTERWORTH (ABB)**



INTRODUCTION

1. After listening to all the DHAAT Inquiry's proceedings I believe that the Tribunal has not appreciated fully the context in which the Chinese Communist Revolutionary Warfare doctrine was so fully embraced and applied by communist insurgents in South East Asia's (SEA) wars of national liberation: specifically in this case the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia (1968-1989).
2. My belief is based upon my military experience (1955-1977):
 - as a combat infantry officer who fought in the Malayan Emergency as a Platoon Commander 1st Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) and in the Vietnam War as a Company Commander 9th Battalion RAR;
 - as an Instructor in Tactics (Counter Revolutionary War (CRW)) both at the Royal Military College Duntroon and the Jungle Training Centre Canungra;
 - as an Australian military student at the United States Marine Corps Staff College; and
 - as a Battalion Commander 8/9th Battalion RAR (1974-1976) who provided three RCB companies.
3. Note in this Paper the words insurgent and terrorist are interchangeable.

BACKGROUND

4. To understand the insurgency threat in Malaysia during its Communist Insurgency (1968-1989), one must understand the Chinese Communist's Revolutionary Warfare doctrine and its direct application and success in fostering revolutionary wars in SEA post the Second World War that gave rise to [the Domino Theory](#).



- **First Indochina War** (1946 -1954) between the communist Việt Minh guerrilla force and the French Army ending with the latter's defeat resulting in the Geneva Peace Accords and the division of Vietnam into two separate regimes North Vietnam (Communist) and South Vietnam (Republic).

- The **Malayan Emergency**, (1948–1960), a conflict fought between the Malaysian Communist Party's (MCP) pro-independence fighters of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) and the military forces of the Federation of Malaya, British Empire and Commonwealth.
- **Vietnam War** (1955-1975). Fought by the North Vietnamese People's Army of Vietnam and the South Vietnam-based Việt Cộng against the military of South Vietnam (and its Allies) and were backed by their communist allies, mainly China and the Soviet Union.
- **Laotian Civil War** (1959–1975) was waged between the Communist Pathet Lao and the Royal Lao Government. The North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao emerged victorious in 1975 in the slipstream of the victory of the North Vietnamese army and the South Vietnamese Vietcong in the Vietnam War.
- **Cambodian Civil War** (1960-1975) The Khmer Rouge insurgency grew, aided by supplies and military support from North Vietnam. By 1973, Vietnamese support of the Khmer Rouge had largely disappeared. China "armed and trained" the Khmer Rouge both during the civil war and the years afterward.
- **Communist Insurgency in Malaysia** (1968-1989)

THE THREE PHASES OF CHINESE COMMUNIST REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE DOCTRINE

Phase One

Establish the base support amongst the population to provide recruitment, intelligence and logistic support.

Phase Two

Terror attacks, raids, ambushes, sabotage, IEDs etc., on "soft" targets such as government agencies, VIPs, police and military installations and isolated units. 'Shoot and scoot'.

Phase Three

Armed conventional combat with insurgent military units against Government military units.

5. With the exception of both the Malayan Emergency and the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia all the three phases succeeded in communist victories in the above conflicts. In the Malayan Emergency and the Communist Insurgency, the insurgents were defeated in Phase 2, never rising to Phase 3 and armed units in combat.
6. The Malayan Emergency and the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia were actively supported by the Chinese Communist Government until its 1972 rapprochement (the Shanghai Communiqué) with the USA. Thereafter, the DRV (North Vietnam) became the primary supporter of the Malaysian Communist Party's (MCP) insurgency with the supply of arms (direct weapons and indirect mortars and rockets), ammunition, mines/booby traps etc, and tactical operations advice: increasingly so after the fall of Saigon (April 1975) that ended the Vietnam War. The impact of this support was seen in the increased terror actions and casualties to the MAF.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

7. In planning a military operation Defence staff complete **An Appreciation of the Situation**. (Source Manual of Land Warfare – Staff Duties in the Field). **It is a formal template that once commanders are given the task, they must consider all the factors which may affect its attainment.**
8. **Factors.** Paramount in the Appreciation is consideration of the enemy: their capabilities doctrine, tactics and support from which countermeasures are deduced.

Other factors considered include:
 - The ground to defend in general, vital ground and key terrain, enemy approaches and obstacles;
 - Own troops in location and additional friendly resources available; and,
 - Specific limitations.

Enemy courses. In defence operations the enemy holds the initiative as to where, when and how to attack. Every course is considered, its likelihood and its effect on our own troops ending in an assessment of the enemy's most probable course of action.

Our own courses must consider all the enemy's courses and not just the most probable.
9. From the Appreciation the Mission and an outline plan is decided and passed to the appropriate military command for execution.
10. The strategic decision to deploy the RCB to protect the RAAF assets at ABB would have been decided at the Government and Defence levels from its own appreciation. From that decision the RAAF at ABB, who were responsible for its joint defence with the MAF, would have made their tactical appreciation to produce their Operational Orders that included the RCB under its operational control with the mission to provide a quick reaction force to defend the ABB against any attack that had penetrated the Base: to counter the penetration and counter attack it to defeat the insurgents.
11. The RCB Commanders on the ground would have made their tactical appreciation in conjunction with the RAAF Base Commander and rehearsed their QRF action plans. It is a military adage to "Hope for the best but plan for the worst."

THE THREAT

12. The impending withdrawal of all UK Forces from the Far East by 1970 and the increasing insurgent threat led to the expansion of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) with another six Brigades and two Divisions¹: **a 100% increase**. The newly formed 6th Infantry Brigade was based at Sungai Petani in January 1970. *"The militant threat and subversive activities of the CPM were becoming a major cause for concern... It was responsible for maintain security and eliminate communist activities in Kedah and Perlis"* ²

¹ The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsular Malaysia 1968-1989 page 74

² The Malaysian Army's Battle Against Communist Insurgency in Peninsular Malaysia 1968-1989 page 76

13. The impact of the UK's withdrawal from ABB of its RAF and its RAF Regiment (air base ground defence troops similar to infantry) on 31 March 1970 reduced the ABB's security.
14. The RAAF Commander AirCdre Parker at that time on the 5th April 1970 reported serious security concerns to his superiors that the MAF security guards were inadequate. From his concern commenced a RCB deployment from the 28th Commonwealth Brigade in Singapore in November 1970.
15. **ABB was the forward operation base for the MAF's ground and air operations against the insurgents and their nearby base areas and on the Malaysia/Thailand border, hence it was a probable target for the insurgents with the added potential for a significant propaganda achievement.**
16. Intelligence on terrorists was provided through the RAAF's involvement with MAF, Police, and Special Branch meetings. Where necessary the RAAF commander could raise the alert status at ABB to imminent to activate the GDOC. Those intel reports were passed to RAAF Command and Defence Intelligence.
17. **The JIO Report** to the end of 1975 is a strategic analysis. It identified:
 - *"The terrorists have sufficient numbers to greatly increase armed activities in some areas Northern Malaysia if they choose to."*
 - *"The terrorists have shown that they will attack government outposts and individual officials..."*
 - It mentions the 100 terrorists' successful destruction of road plant on the East-West highway near Gerik in May 1974 *"demonstrating a formidable capability to conduct large scale sabotage operations – a factor that is very relevant to the point of this report"*

18. Threat Assessments

- Para 18. of the JIO Report, Likelihood of Attack, says an **external (by another country)** overt military attack on Malaysia is unlikely but identifies a potential **internal threat** and reports a danger that the terrorists may attack the Base specifically the MAF facilities used against them: in this case collateral damage would occur to the RAAF facilities and QRF.
- **There is no suggestion in this JIO document that the threat was LOW.**

PROBABLE COURSES OPEN TO THE ENEMY

19. I believe that the terrorists were influenced by their North Vietnamese advisors' successful experience in their revolutionary wars, particularly with their tactical success in both their Phase 2 - Terror activities and in their later Phase 3 - Armed Unit combat attacks initially against the French Armed Forces, and later South Vietnamese, USA Forces and Allied Forces installations including air bases.

20. Phase 2 - Terror Phase.

In this Phase the insurgents would not risk a ground attack into the Base because of their unreadiness for Phase 3 operations and the deterrence of the QRF's presence.

Courses Open would be:

1. **A co-ordinated night “attack”** – with a static feint ground assault demonstration using small arms and RPG fire from the cemetery area but not to penetrate inside the wire. Its intent being to draw a QRF reaction followed shortly after with indirect mortar and rocket fire to inflict damage/casualties to the MAF facilities with collateral damage/casualties to the RAAF and the deployed QRF troops.
2. **A night indirect fire attack using rockets and mortars only** to inflict damage/casualties to the MAF facilities with collateral damage/casualties to the RAAF and the deployed QRF. (Note: An action similar to that used by the VC on the 1 ATF Base at Nui Dat on the night 17th August 1966 – Long Tan Battle the following day)
3. **Sabotage at any time.**

21. Phase 3 – Armed Combat Phase

If the MCP had progressed to Phase 3 then the insurgents would want to inflict major damage to the MAF facilities but not to capture and hold ABB.

That course would be a fully co-ordinated night ground and indirect fire attack with rockets and mortars as per the Viet Cong tactic of a feint from one flank to draw out the QRF and the major assault from another flank to destroy the MAF facilities with collateral damage/casualties to the RAAF and the deployed QRF. Insurgent ambushes on all routes leading to the ABB would isolate ABB from friendly relieving troops from Sungei Petani and elsewhere.

If this Phase had been reached then the Australian Government would have to review its RAAF ABB and Malaysian support strategy. The defence of AAB would require major reinforcement of Australian ground troops (minimum a Battalion Battle Group) with supporting arms (artillery) for forward defence with allowance for aggressive patrolling outside the ABB to control ‘no man’s’ land to successfully defend the ABB.

CONCLUSION

22. On the balance of probabilities from applying the communist’s revolutionary warfare doctrine and practice, I believe that the threat of insurgent attack on ABB would be in:
- a. Phase 2 – Terror offensive activities, **probable** and from that the likelihood of casualties **very high**.
 - b. Phase 3 – Armed Unit combat action, **certain** and from that the likelihood of casualties **catastrophic** with far-reaching strategic consequences to Australia.

Ted Chitham

Edward Albert Chitham
Lt Col E.A. Chitham MC OAM (Retd)
11th May 2023