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# Late Stage Indicators of Insurgent Success: El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines

An Intelligence Assessment

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- 14. Government willing to seriously negotiate sharing of power with rebels.
  - A. Generally observed when a government concludes that it is losing ground to an insurgency and hopes, through negotiations, to salvage what it can; entails compromising authority and should not be confused with amnesties or other tactics aimed at weakening the insurgency.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Overt or covert overtures to rebel leaders proposing a meeting with government negotiators.
    - b. Government propaganda stops personal attacks against rebel leaders; conciliatory public stance taken.
    - c. Captured rebels are released as show of good faith.

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- IV. Progressive Loss of Government Coercive Power.
  - 11. Military plots or coups against the government.
    - A. In themselves may not benefit insurgency, but, in conjunction with other indicators, this indicator often points to government loss of domestic support and coercive power.
    - B. Because of the inherently secret nature of a military plot or coup against a government, analysts will usually have to rely primarily on clandestine reporting for evidence.
  - 12. Armed guerrilla forces multiplying in size.
    - A. Reflects insurgent success in recruiting and organizing; presupposes that increases are large enough to seriously decrease the ratio of soldiers to guerrillas; some theorists posit a 10-to-1 ratio as necessary for victory, but diverse factors, such as availability of helicopters and degree of popular support, can significantly lower this ratio depending on the local context.
    - B. Evidence may include:

a.

- b. Increasing frequency of guerrilla attacks or reports that guerrillas are attacking with bigger units.
- c. Guerrillas expanding their geographic areas of operation.
- d. Growing guerrilla demands for food and supplies from civilian population.
- 13. Lack of sufficient government troops for counterinsurgency.
  - A. Troops typically described in reporting as overextended or stretched thin; suggests declining government commitment, inadequate resources, or lessening domestic support.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Military officers privately conceding that they do not have enough troops to launch counteroffensives against guerrillas.
    - b. Inability of the army to protect key communications links or other strategic points from rebel sabotage or attack.
    - c. Growing army difficulty in replacing casualties or attracting new recruits.
    - d. Army abandoning large areas of the countryside to guerrilla control without attempting to defend them.

- 8. Escalation of guerrilla/terrorist violence.
  - A. Entails either greater frequency and intensity of violence or a geographical expansion of areas subject to attack; does not signify control of territory.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Increasing inability of government to provide basic services because of sabotage, ambushes, strafings, and other violent assaults against its personnel or installations.
    - b. Public or private statements criticizing government for failure to contain spread of violence.
    - c. National commerce, transportation, or agriculture disrupted.
    - d. Failure of government security measures to prevent an increasing number of spectacular acts of urban terrorism.
- 9. Increasing inability of government to protect supporters/officials from violence.
  - A. Often accompanies a general escalation of violence; selective assassinations of government supporters are conducted to undermine confidence in a regime.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Government facing increasing difficulty in replacing local officials who have been assassinated by guerrillas or have fled in fear of assassination.
    - b. Growing popular reluctance to publicly voice support for the government or participate in government programs in fear of insurgent reprisals.
    - c. Growing number of middle and upper class individuals applying for visas to leave the country.
    - d. Public media or private government reports stating that rural areas increasingly are without proper authorities.
- 10. National economy increasingly weakened by insurgent activity.
  - A. Concerned specifically with those negative economic developments that can be traced directly or indirectly to insurgent activity.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Disruption of the planting or harvesting of key crops.
    - b. Disruption of the transportation and communication networks.
    - c. Capital flight; major curtailment of domestic and foreign credit and investment.
    - d. Increasing unemployment as a result of guerrilla sabotage of industry, trade, and agriculture.
    - e. Growing government expenditures and indebtedness to finance counterinsurgency operations.

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- B. Evidence may include:
  - a. Termination or curtailment of military aid or sales.
  - b. Cancellation or curtailment of cultural and educational exchanges or economic assistance.
  - c. Antigovernment voting or speeches in the United Nations and other international bodies.
  - d. Former ally establishes contact with rebel leaders or invites them to visit country.
- 6. Increasing international support for the insurgents.
  - A. Can be crucial militarily; most revolutionary insurgencies become internationalized, with rival foreign powers supporting the government or the insurgents.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Foreign governments overtly or covertly providing increasing military or financial aid to rebels.
    - b. Formal recognition of insurgents by foreign governments or granting of diplomatic status.
    - c. Voting or speeches in international organizations favoring insurgent cause.
    - d. Establishment of an internationally recognized rebel government in exile or a domestic liberated area.
    - e. Neighboring countries allow use of their territory as a refuge or staging area for guerrilla war.
- III. Progressive Loss of Government Control Over Population and Territory.
  - 7. Significant expansion of territory under insurgent control.
    - A. Involves insurgent replacement of government administration, not necessarily military control; often observed during final six months of successful insurgency; however, some groups have triumphed without ever establishing control over territory.
    - B. Evidence may include:
      - a. Insurgents openly collect taxes, food, or supplies from local population in an expanding area.
      - b. Insurgents openly recruit combatants or supporters in an expanding area.
      - c. Insurgents enforce their own system of justice—including executions—in an expanding area.
      - d. Government forces unwilling or unable to reenter areas lost to insurgents.

- A. Most governments, of necessity, have foreign ties that are suspect, or can be made suspect, to large sectors of the public; revolutionary insurgents invariably seek to exploit this and portray themselves as foremost nationalists; Communist revolutionaries generally downplay or ignore Marxist-Leninist ideology in favor of wide-reaching nationalistic appeals.
- B. Evidence may include:
  - a. The populace believing Communist nationalistic propaganda and discussing it seriously.
  - b. Success of the insurgent movement in associating itself with a popular, nationalistic symbol, as was the case with Nicaragua's Cesar Agusto Sandino.
  - c. Public condemnation in the media and in speeches of the government's foreign ties.
  - d. Intellectuals, politicians, or religious leaders publicly or privately blaming the government's foreign ties for national economic and social problems.
- 4. Insurgent co-optation, incorporation, or elimination of other major opposition groups to the government.
  - A. Goal is to present the nation with only two choices: the government and the insurgency; a political broad front, incorporating moderate opposition into the insurgency, is a favorite strategy, but the same polarizing goal can also be pursued through assassinations and intimidation.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. A broadly based front group is established by the insurgents and becomes the principal voice of opposition to the government.
    - b. Moderate political, business, or religious leaders privately or publicly express support for the insurgency.
    - c. Insurgents or their front groups gain key positions in labor unions, churches, political parties, or student organizations.
    - d. Violent government repression against both moderates and radicals.
- II. Progressive Withdrawal of International Support for the Government.
  - 5. Withdrawal of foreign support by specific, critical allies.
    - A. Affects the capability of a government to finance and equip a counterinsurgency campaign; politically, loss of foreign support may also affect domestic support; often observed during the final six months of an insurgency.

#### Appendix

#### Indicators of Insurgent Victory \*

- I. Progressive Withdrawal of Domestic Support for the Government.
  - 1. Withdrawal of support by specific, critical segments of the population.
    - A. Includes elites and, varying with the local context, other politically and economically important sectors such as labor unions and churches.
    - B. Evidence may include:
      - a. Public criticism, including newspaper advertisements, by important businessmen, churchmen, and labor leaders.

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- b. An increase in politically motivated strikes.
- c. d.
- 2. Growing popular perception of regime illegitimacy.
  - A. The populace's belief that the present regime does not have the right to rule can precede insurgency, reflecting governmental incompetence or corruption, or result from insurgency, reflecting governmental weakness or indiscriminate repression.
  - B. Evidence may include:
    - a. Growing number of acts of civil disobedience.
    - b. Inability of government to rally popular support for its policies.
    - c. Increasing government reliance on violent repression.
    - d. Populace blaming government for natural disasters.
    - e. Increase in jokes and public derision of national leaders or institutions.
- 3. Popular perception of insurgents as more nationalistic than the government.

<sup>\*</sup> The table in this appendix summarizes the results of applying the indicators to the five historical insurgencies surveyed and lists our confidence levels for each judgment. South Vietnam is an exception to the general observation that the final year of a successful insurgency is marked not only by indicator shifts from "no" to "yes" but also by higher levels of confidence in the judgments. We believe that this is due in large part to the combination of the insurgents' long-term strategy of gradually increasing pressure on Saigon and the commensurate increase in US military and economic aid. A narrative summary of the historical analysis upon which the table is based is available on request.

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At a force strength of 160,000 men, the Philippine military is large enough to achieve its military objectives against the insurgents. The major problems appear to be ineffective deployment, poor counterinsurgency strategy, and deteriorating relations between civilians and soldiers in areas of insurgent activity. Although Marcos has displayed some interest in co-opting rebel leaders, this flexibility does not signify a willingness to compromise his authority or to negotiate seriously with the insurgents.

#### **Implications for US Foreign Policy Interests**

US political, economic, and military support for the *Salvadoran* Government was a major factor in the insurgents' loss of political momentum, despite a continued high level of violence. Indeed, we see no evidence yet that the insurgents have been able to translate some recent military successes into greater internal political support. In the absence of continued US assistance, we believe the insurgency would gain renewed internal political momentum. Likewise, failure by the Salvadoran Government to implement promised reforms would likely boost the appeal of the guerrilla movement.

The insurgency in *Guatemala* may be at a decisive stage. The Guatemalan Government has attained a substantial advantage over the insurgents, but it may not have the resources to maintain its present high level of military activities and civic action. If the government ultimately proves unable to deliver on its promises to the Western Highland Indians or to maintain its highly visible presence in the countryside, the guerrillas will be in a better position to exploit disillusionment and reinvigorate their insurgency. Decisions by the United States either to provide or to withhold assistance will be of major importance to the outcome of events. The *Philippine* insurgency, although growing, nevertheless may remain at a relatively low level of intensity for years. We believe that the United States has adequate time and options to pursue political and economic initiatives designed to head off the longterm insurgent threat. However, complacency is unwarranted because—as demonstrated by the cases of Batista and Somoza—one-man rule is particularly vulnerable to a coalition of opposition groups and unexpectedly rapid insurgent victory.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> A recent CIA assessment of the overall conditions in the Philippines concludes that although the Marcos regime is not immediately threatened, "many ingredients for political instability are present... including deteriorating social and economic trends, a growing insurgency, and greatly weakened political institutions."

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Figure 3 Revised Philippine Estimates of New People's Army (NPA) Strength, January 1983<sup>a</sup>



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Philippine protesters demand nationalization of "industries controlled by foreign monopoly capitalists," call for an end to arbitrary arrests, and condemn a "massacre" by government forces.



Guerrilla violence, however, increased nationally during 1982-83, as confirmed by press, liaison, US Embassy, and official Philippine Government reports. According to the Philippine Defense Ministry, the NPA assassinated 142 government officials and civilians during the first six months of 1982. This represents an increase over the past year, suggesting new government inability to protect supporters and officials. Despite this general intensification of violence, the guerrillas remain highly selective in their assassinations of government supporters or officials, usually targeting individuals considered by the local populace as especially corrupt or brutal.

Insurgent propaganda often focuses on the economic grievances of the people and the weak economy, which has devastated the real income of the rural populace (comprising about 70 percent of the national population). A major cause of this situation—the drop in world prices for coconut products, sugar, and other key agricultural exports-is beyond government control. However, critics of the Marcos regime charge that government monopolies and marketing policies exacerbate the negative impact. Also, many foreign and Philippine commentators condemn the agrarian

reform program for allowing large landholders to avoid compliance, while small farmers receive insufficient technical and financial aid from the government. The guerrillas have not yet engaged in systematic sabotage to worsen economic conditions and hasten demoralization and loss of faith in the government.

Government Coercive Power. The armed forces are favored by Marcos and are strongly supportive of his regime. We believe that military coup plotting is unlikely to occur in the near future, despite a potentially divisive generation gap in the military between junior and senior officers.6

Military solidarity with the government, though, has not prevented the steady increase in guerrilla activity throughout the Philippines. The growing guerrilla challenge suggests that, although insurgent forces are not multiplying rapidly, they are gradually gaining strength and,

now approach as many as 10,000 combatants.

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Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos

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Catholic clergymen—the Church probably is the most influential social institution in the Philippines—are becoming more politically active. In both private and public statements, clergymen have stated that growing political activism by the Church is a reaction to the worsening economic situation of the rural population and the inability or unwillingness of the Marcos regime to overcome these difficulties. Many moderate nuns, priests, and bishops have become openly critical of the government's social and economic policies.

We believe that this radical fringe, however, poses no immediate threat to the government; the increasing anti-Marcos sentiment of mainstream Church opinion is, in our view, a greater danger.

local government officials are aware of the growing public disenchantment with the Marcos regime. In recent meetings, these officials conceded that military abuses—coupled with the government's corruption, inability to provide adequate services, and failure to stem worsening economic conditions—are alienating the populace. They warned that support for the NPA is growing and that, in free elections for local officials, NPA-backed candidates would win in a number of localities. The insurgents are attempting to blame many of the nation's ills on the Philippines' economic and political relationship with the United States. We believe, however, that they have failed to create an anti-US mood or to establish themselves as more nationalistic than the government. Likewise, the insurgents have neither co-opted nor eliminated other significant opposition to the government. Marcos's continuing refusal to allow viable moderate opposition to his regime, nonetheless, may ultimately force many moderate non-Communists into an insurgent broad front (as occurred in Nicaragua and South Vietnam).

International Support for the Government. President Marcos has been considerably more effective in handling international relations than either his Guatemalan or Salvadoran counterparts. Besides maintaining the support of the United States—his principal foreign ally—he has headed off potential problems with Muslim countries over the domestic Muslim rebellion.

		2381
	there was no major	25X1
increase in international aid to t	he Communist rebels	
during 1982-83.		25X1
Government Control Over Popul	ation and Territory.	25X1
	the Communist	25X1
insurgents do not yet consider th		
establish complete control over s		
islands, notably Samar, contain		
ment administration historically	has been tenuous,	25X1
and local bandits and guerrillas	act with relative	
impunity. These areas do not app	-	25X1
during 1982. In certain regions,		
prolonged insurgencies seems to		
the government rules by day and		
night, but this does not signify t		
ment of government administrat	ion required by our	
indicator.		25X1

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Guatemalan Army patrol in Western Highlands

Muslim Moro insurgency because it is essentially an ethnic rebellion that seeks local autonomy or secession, not national revolution.

military superiority over the insurgents,	that the Marcos regime is generally perceived as	25 <b>X</b> 1
his	illegitimate. Nevertheless, there are danger signs that,	25X1
inability to stem the general deterioration of living	over the long term, point to an increasingly serious	
standards is alienating increasing sectors of the popu-	threat to the government.	25X1
lation. The government is not immediately threat-		
ened, but if it fails to arrest this progressive withdraw-	Embassy and press reports suggest that businessmen	
al of domestic support, we believe that the challenge	are growing restive, in part, because the growth of the	
of the Communist insurgent New People's Army	foreign debt and the resulting International Monetary	
(NPA) will be strengthened. <sup>5</sup>	Fund restrictions are slowing economic activity and	0514
(IVFA) will be strengthened.	affronting nationalistic sentiments. Prestigious news-	25X1
Demost's Comment for the Comment On the basis of		•
Domestic Support for the Government. On the basis of	papers regularly publish articles decrying the degen-	
diverse sources, we believe that the degree of alien-	eration of the Philippines into a neocolony. However,	
ation among critical segments of the population cur-	US Embassy reporting and contact with the Philip-	•
rently is not strong enough to warrant the conclusion	pine business community lead us to conclude that	
that a major withdrawal of support is taking place or	Marcos himself is generally not being held personally	
	responsible for the sick economy.	25X1
' The NPA is the military arm of the clandestine Communist Party	•	20/11
of the Philippines / Marxist-Leninist. We do not deal with the		

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over growing Indian support for the creation of local civilian militias. In their public statements and propaganda leaflets, the guerrillas confirm that they have set a high priority on destroying this innovative, selfdefense program. The ability of the government to protect Indian militiamen and their families could be crucial in determining ultimate victory or defeat in the Highlands.

The climate of fear and uncertainty produced by guerrilla violence is having a profound impact on the national economy. According to Embassy reporting, agricultural exporters are finding it difficult to secure adequate financing for the cultivation and harvest of crops—the basis of the national economy. Key farm exports of coffee, sugar, bananas, and meat dropped 21 percent in 1982. Tourism, formerly a major source of income for a wide variety of social groups, has declined drastically—from \$141 million in revenues in 1980 to an estimated \$24.6 million in 1982. The destruction of roads, bridges, and buses has disrupted traditional commercial relations between the Indian peasantry and provincial towns.

Government Coercive Power. The March 1982 military coup against the regime of General Lucas and his fraudulently elected successor, General Guevarawhich ultimately brought Rios Montt to power-has had both negative and positive consequences for the government's ability to use coercion. The coup revealed deep divisions within the military establishment potentially detrimental to efficient action against the guerrillas as well as to the security of the government. On the positive side, the new regime of born-again Christian Rios Montt is placing an unprecedented emphasis on reducing official corruption and human rights abuses. As a result, international press accounts and Embassy reporting agree that the government appears to have emerged from the coup with greater legitimacy and public support.

25X1 between 1979 and the beginning of 1982, the guerrilla armed forces multiplied from several hundred to as many as 4,000. During the latter half of 1982, 25X1 25X1 the number of armed guerrillas had been reduced 25X1 to as few as 2,000. One cause of this apparent decrease could be the intensified military operations against guerrilla camps begun under President Lucas and continued by Rios Montt. 25X1 As in El Salvador, the ongoing military offensive is hampered by a lack of sufficient troops to accomplish the dual objective of protecting towns and finding and destroying guerrilla bands. US Embassy and press reporting indicates that 5,000 veterans and new recruits-raising total troop strength to 22,500-were called to active service for a special six-month tour of duty ending in December 1982. Their number was augmented by the expansion of armed Civilian De-25X1 fense Forces (CDF). During 1983 Army strength has been maintained at the 1982 level through new recruitment drives. Nonetheless, we believe that the number of army troops and armed CDF is still insufficient to overcome the logistic difficulties posed by rugged, isolated terrain and a lack of adequate transportation and communication equipment. Notwithstanding this deficiency, there has been no serious suggestion that the government is willing to compromise its authority or negotiate in earnest with the rebels.

#### Philippines

In contrast to the situations in El Salvador and Guatemala, data from the Philippines show a slow but steady weakening of the government. Although President Ferdinand Marcos continues to enjoy great



Indian Civilian Defense Forces in Guatemala

International Support for the Government. Neither the government nor the insurgents have made major gains with regard to international support during the past year. Although the human rights issue had caused a serious rift between Guatemala and the United States and a decline in Guatemala's international standing, this problem subsided under the new administrations in Washington and Guatemala City. Nonetheless, no major increase in support for the government has materialized. We observed no increase in foreign aid to the insurgents during 1982, despite their well-organized, worldwide propaganda campaign.

of the reverses suffered in the Western Highlands, we believe that Havana is dissatisfied with the guerrillas' performance and that the Cubans consider an escalation of guerrilla activity to be counterproductive at this time. Government Control Over Population and Territory.

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area under insurgent control has decreased during the past year. Although certain areas have become a depopulated no-man's-land, the government has successfully established a strong presence in important Highland communities that a year ago were contested or controlled by the insurgents.

Even though guerrilla violence has decreased overall, the rebels have massacred Indian men, women, and children in Highland villages supporting the Army or the establishment of civilian militias. Until 1982 the guerrillas had usually avoided such actions. We believe that the new insurgent tactics betray a concern

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## Guatemala: Chronology of Significant Events

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January 1980	Occupation of Spanish Embassy by leftist radicals and Indian peasants provokes police attack in which protesters and hostages are killed; Spain breaks diplomatic relations; international media condemnation of Guatemala grows substantially	25X1
February 1980	Guerrilla violence intensifies, highlighted by attacks on Defense Minister and national police chief.	25X1
July 1981	Security forces conduct most successful urban operation to date, seizing extensive network of ORPA safehouses and arms caches in Guatemala City; ORPA military capabilities are seriously damaged.	25X1
August 1981	Gen. Benedicto Lucas, brother of President Fernando Lucas, is named Army Chief of Staff and initiates new strategy of more mobility in the western highlands and large-scale sweeps against insurgent-controlled areas.	25X1
September 1981	Seeking to regain lost momentum, ORPA stages most spectacular operation to date; 200 to 300 guerrillas attack and overrun the departmental capital of Solola, killing the governor.	25X1
January 1982	EGP guerrillas attack and overrun the military garrison at San Juan Cotzal, killing three officers and nine soldiers; this rebel victory apparently goads the Army into undertaking a systematic campaign to reestablish government author- ity in that area of the western highlands; Guatemalan guerrillas formally declare the establishment of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union (URNG).	25X1
February 1982	The Army announces the formation of three new battalions as part of expanding war effort.	25X1
March 1982	Gen. Anibal Guevara, handpicked protege of outgoing General Lucas, is elected President of the republic amidst a general outcry of electoral fraud; Guevara is ousted by a military coup, and a three-man junta is installed.	05.74
June 1982	The junta is dissolved and Gen. Efrain Rios Montt becomes President; amnesty is offered to the guerrillas.	25X1 25X1
July 1982	A formal state of siege is imposed and counterinsurgency efforts against the guerrillas in Western Highlands are intensified.	· 25X1
September 1982	A 30-member Council of State is inaugurated with the unprecedented participa- tion of 10 Indians; this advisory body is designed to give representation to all Guatemalan social classes and ethnic groups.	25 <b>X</b> 1

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Gen. Efrain Rios Montt. President of Guatemala

#### Guatemala

The guerrillas in Guatemala have recently suffered setbacks.4 Numerous interviews with military personnel and civilians in the Western Highlands indicate that the guerrillas have lost control of certain areas to the Army, as well as the support of a substantial number of Highland Indians that formerly provided them with food, recruits, and intelligence. In certain respects, however, the conflict in Guatemala is at a critical stage because the guerrillas are attempting to thwart innovative counterinsurgency measures being implemented by the government; the success or failure of these government measures probably will have a crucial impact on the course of the insurgency.

During 1981 the indicators pointed toward a deteriorating situation. In 1982, however, particularly after the March coup, several indicators changed in favor of the government.

\* The three main Guatemalan guerrilla groups are the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP), the Revolutionary Organization of the People in Arms (ORPA), and the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR).

Domestic Support for the Government. Guatemala is notorious for its political conservatism. Notwithstanding the almost indiscriminate repression by the deposed regime of Gen. Fernando Lucas, the most politically important sectors of society did not embrace the revolution.

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Brig. Gen. Efrain Rios Montt is eliciting support from such critical segments as military officers and religious leaders. Consequently, we conclude that this indicator is not now present.

Insurgent propaganda has sought unceasingly to portray past and present Guatemalan governments as tools of US imperialism. On the basis of Guatemalan press and Embassy reporting, we believe that shrill accusations of CIA and Green Beret participation in counterinsurgency have lost credibility within the country, partly because of the publicly known differences between Guatemala and the United States over human rights. Moreover, the relatively favorable disposition of the present US administration toward Guatemala does not include significant military support. Even more than in El Salvador, the guerrillas have failed to represent themselves as the true nationalists. We believe that government propaganda has successfully depicted the insurgents as dupes of foreign Communists.

The insurgents also have failed to co-opt or eliminate other groups in opposition to the government. The strongest political challenge to Rios Montt comes from political parties of the far right and hardline military officers who completely repudiate any thought of collaborating with leftists. Moreover, the killing of moderate opposition leaders undertaken by the deposed Lucas regime-which appeared to be polarizing the country for the guerrillas-has largely been halted by Rios Montt. Moderate opposition 25X1 groups, notably the Christian Democrats, evidently are still concerned over the possibility of repression and have not begun to challenge authorities publicly Nevertheless, we see no signs of significant co-optation or incorporation of moderates by the revolutionary movement, despite the insurgents' international propaganda efforts

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Figure 2 Guatemala: Major Areas of Guerrilla Activity



Salvadoran guerrillas



Garcia, not Magana, and did not immediately threaten civilian rule. CIA and DIA analysts disagree, however, on the portent of this mutiny for future stability; CIA analysts believe there is serious underlying conflict between various factions in the military.

Reflecting the general loss of insurgent momentum last year, the size of guerrilla armed forces apparently remained stagnant during most of 1982. We conclude,

that guerrilla numbers stood at an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 combatants. The current escalation of insurgent military operations, coupled with doubts within the US Intelligence Community about whether this represents greater mobility and effectiveness or a greater number of guerrillas, has led to a revised estimate of 4,000 to 6,000 combatants. Even if guerrilla force strength has grown to 6,000, such an increase does not meet the minimal doubling of manpower required by the indicator, multiplying guerrilla forces.

The 30,000-man Salvadoran military still is too small to conduct effective military operations throughout the country, as in the delays in retaking the isolated town of Perquin in July and again in October 1982, after it was occupied by the guerrillas. A lack of qualified officers and sufficient funds, as well as the absence of a national military training program, probably will hamper any rapid expansion of the armed forces.<sup>3</sup>

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Despite these military problems, the present govern-25X1 ment seems confident that it will eventually prevail against the insurgency, and thus far has shown no willingness to compromise its authority by seriously negotiating a sharing of power with the rebels. The political and economic reforms maintained by the 25X1 present regime do not represent concessions to the insurgency. Although some government officials have publicly stated that they would like to establish a dialogue with the rebels, we believe that there is a consensus among rightist hardliners and moderates in the government to refuse to negotiate a sharing of power with the insurgents. 25X1

<sup>3</sup> Basic military training varies among the military zones, depending on local conditions and the directives of the individual zone commanders. An integrated national basic training program exists on paper, but it is not being implemented because of the need to put recruits into combat as soon as possible. Most receive "on the job" training on battlefields 25X1

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Figure 1 El Salvador: Insurgent Areas



Government Coercive Power. The Salvadoran military has demonstrated that longstanding institutional behavior can be altered. Despite a liberal period during the 1960s when the Army backed certain political and social reforms, the military establishment in general served to preserve the status quo and uphold the oligarchy throughout most of this century. Nevertheless, since October 1979 the Salvadoran Army has gradually become the strongest guarantor of socioeconomic reform and democratic innovation in the country. This change was epitomized by military support of the 1980-82 junta led by Christian Democratic

leader Jose Napoleon Duarte—a victim of blatant electoral fraud by the Army in 1972. In the intense political negotiations following the 1982 election, the Army clearly demonstrated its commitment to accepting civilian rule.

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there is no serious	25X1

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plotting against the Magana regime. The brief, recent mutiny of an important provincial commander and his battalion was directed against Army Chief of Staff

International Support for the Government. The 1981 French-Mexican declaration calling for a negotiated settlement of the insurgency, coinciding with intense debates in the United States over human rights violations by Salvadoran Government forces, threatened a general withdrawal of support for the government by critical foreign allies. The 1982 election, however, dramatically enhanced El Salvador's international standing and facilitated continued US support along with new aid from Venezuela and elsewhere.

Although we cannot monitor precisely the flow of Cuban and Nicaraguan military aid to Salvadoran guerrillas, we believe that the overall strategy calls for a moderate but sustained level of aid with the volume of arms shipments fluctuating periodically, depending on tactical needs. Before the March 1982 election, for example, the volume of military aid evidently increased, only to decline afterward to its previous level.

Government Control Over Population and Territory. During 1980 the military capabilities of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement steadily improved, and in January 1981 the insurgents launched a "final offensive" that included countrywide attacks against cities and military targets. Although that offensive succeeded in attracting great international publicity, it failed to achieve its two principal goals: the decisive defeat of government troops and the sparking of a popular uprising. Subsequently, government military capabilities improved, and until October 1982 the guerrillas were unable to strengthen their hold on either population or territory.



Diverse press reports now concur, however, that the guerrillas have strengthened their military position in several areas and escalated their attacks on government forces. Our intelligence survey of successful, past insurgencies suggests that it is important to distinguish between an increase in guerrilla military operations and an expansion of insurgent-controlled territory, that is, territory where insurgent administration has replaced government administration. On the basis of sometimes conflicting unclassified and classified evidence available at this point, we conclude that, despite the heightened violence, a significant expansion of insurgent-controlled territory has not taken place.

Nevertheless, the insurgents have recently proclaimed a liberated area in northern Morazan Department. They have maintained a strong presence in that mountainous area for years, taking advantage of its isolation from the national capital as well as its proximity to arms sumggling routes and staging areas across the adjacent Honduran border. In our view the proclamation is motivated primarily by propaganda considerations. A similar situation exists in northern Chalatenango Department, where the insurgents have not declared a liberated area. We believe that, if the military continue to concede control of these areas, the insurgents may then be in a position to expand their hold on population and territory in these two departments.

Despite the overall stalemate, the insurgents are wreaking havoc on the national economy; the continuous destruction of powerlines, the sabotage of national transportation and communication networks, and the burning of vehicles are serious blows that affect all social classes. The agricultural sector also has suffered significant disruptions in certain regions. A major result has been the loss of foreign and domestic investment sorely needed to stimulate economic growth and provide jobs. 25X1

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#### El Salvador: Chronology of Significant Events

October 1979	Military coup overthrows Gen. Carlos Umberto Romero; coalition junta of military and moderate leftists declares intention of instituting basic reforms.	25 <b>X</b> 1
January 1980	Moderate leftists abandon the coalition junta en masse; a second junta is created by an alliance of the military with the Christian Democrats; guerrilla organiza- tions establish a federation of political front groups, the Revolutionary Coordina- tor of the Masses (CRM).	25X1
March 1980	Christian Democratic leader Jose Napoleon Duarte joins the second junta; agrarian, banking, and commercial reforms are announced; Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero is assassinated while celebrating mass in his cathedral.	25X1
April 1980	The Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR)—a broad front incorporating moder- ates and radicals into the revolutionary movement—is created; guerrilla warfare begins in earnest.	25X1
May 1980	Salvadoran guerrilla leaders meet in Havana and create the Unified Revolution- ary Directorate (DRU).	25X1
November 1980	The top leaders of the FDR are kidnaped and assassinated; establishment of guerrilla alliance Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) is formally announced.	25 <b>X</b> 1
January 1981	The FMLN launches a nationwide ''final offensive'' which is defeated by government forces; the United States begins a major military assistance program for Salvadoran Government.	25X1
August 1981	French-Mexican declaration recognizes the insurgents and calls for negotiated settlement.	25X1
March 1982	Massive turnout for election of new Constituent Assembly, despite widespread insurgent violence, signifies serious political and psychological blow to the insurgency; Duarte loses bid to remain in power.	25X1
May 1982	New provisional government is installed; appointment of President Alvaro Magana underscores military desire to offset conservative influence in the new Constituent Assembly.	· · 25X1
October 1982	Guerrillas launch military and political campaign to pressure Magana regime to negotiate; Magana refuses.	25 <b>X</b> 1



#### **El Salvador**

Although the insurgent Farabundo Marti National Liberation Movement (FMLN) has escalated violence significantly in the last four months, current trends in our indicators do not point to a short-term insurgent victory. During 1981 indicators in all four categories were evident in the data, suggesting that the insurgents were within a year of victory. Dramatic changes, including a considerable infusion of US military, economic, and political support, coupled with the successful holding of elections, set in motion a chain of events favoring the government during much of 1982. The guerrillas have remained a potent force, however, and are attempting, through heightened military operations and international propaganda, to turn events to their advantage.

**Domestic Support for the Government.** Between 1972 and 1979 the Salvadoran Government steadily lost legitimacy with critical segments of the population, including influential priests, politicians, and the leaders of labor unions and peasant leagues. Reforms implemented by the military-Christian Democratic junta during 1980-82 and maintained by the present regime reversed this process. According to State Department reporting, the initial doubts of labor and peasant leaders about the commitment of the Magana administration to reform have in part been overcome, and some progress has been made in reconciling conflicting demands for both greater reform and retrenchment.

guerrilla movement still has not recovered politically	
from the popular repudiation of the insurgency repre-	
sented by the massive election turnout. The success of	
the election and the resulting increase in the legitima-	
cy of the regime indicate that the insurgents have	
failed to cast themselves as the only practical alterna-	<sup>.</sup> 25X1
tive to an unacceptable government. The election also	
suggests that the insurgents have failed to establish an	
image as the foremost champions of nationalism.	•

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#### Table 1 Application of Indicators to Current Insurgencies (1982-83 Data) a

	El Salvador	Guatemala	Philippines
I. Progressive withdrawal of domestic support for the government	• 		
Withdrawal of support by specific, critical segments of population	No (3)	No (2)	No (3)
Growing popular perception of regime illegitimacy	No (2)	No (2)	No (3)
Popular perception of insurgents as leading nationalists	No (2)	No (2)	No (3)
Insurgent co-optation, incorporation, or elimination of other major opposition groups to the government	No (2)	No (2)	No (3)
II. Progressive withdrawal of international support for the government			
Withdrawal of foreign support by specific, critical allies	No (3)	No (3)	No (1)
Increasing international support for the insurgents	No (3)	No (3)	No (2)
III. Progressive loss of government control over population and territory			
Significant expansion of territory under insurgent control	No (2)	No (1)	No (3)
Escalation of guerrilla/terrorist violence	Yes (1)	No (3)	Yes (2)
Increasing inability of government to protect supporters/officials from attacks	Yes (3)	No (2)	Yes (2)
National economy increasingly weakened by insurgent activity	Yes (1)	Yes (1)	No (1)
IV. Progressive loss of government coercive power		-144	
Military plots or coups against the government	No (2)	Yes (1)	No (1)
Armed guerrilla forces multiplying in size	No (2)	No (1)	No (3)
Lack of sufficient government troops for counterinsurgency	Yes (1)	Yes (2)	No (1)
Government seriously negotiates sharing of power with rebels	No (2)	No (1)	No (1)

<sup>a</sup> Confidence level of judgments:
(1) High—strong or abundant evidence; data overwhelmingly supports judgment.

(2) Medium-adequate evidence; contrasting information or con-

flicting trends may exist, but bulk of data supports judgment.

(3) Low—weak or insufficient evidence; although data support judgments, there is significant conflicting information or evidence of

opposing trends.

No single indicator can provide conclusive evidence of a trend favoring an insurgent victory, and all indicators need not be present for a government defeat to be in progress. For example, three out of the four indicators in the category concerning loss of government coercive power were observed in the final year of the Rhodesian insurgency; the fourth indicator, military plots or coups against the government, never appeared. Of further significance:

- Although a small number of indicators may be evident for years before a situation becomes critical, in general, a majority of indicators in each of the four categories will be observed only in the last year of a successful insurgency.
- While insurgencies can remain inconclusive for many years, they also can take dramatic turns and progress rapidly from an apparently incipient stage to final victory. The revolutions that overthrew Batista and Somoza could have been defined as incipient two years before victory.
- Because the indicators sometimes appear in the last two years of a successful insurgency—not just in the final year—the level of confidence in reaching conclusions about whether indicators are present is important for assessing trends. In the final year, the confidence level generally is higher than in the preceding year, reflecting a stronger trend and more obvious evidence from diverse sources (see table in the appendix).

Although we devote considerable attention in this study to the progression of events characteristic of the final stage of successful insurgencies, this progression is not inevitable. Effective government countermeasures can block the evolution of an insurgency and shift its momentum. Indeed, the same indicators may be used in reverse to evaluate the effectiveness of counterinsurgency efforts.

Reports about the Malayan insurgency in the early 1950s, for example, indicated that the government was beginning to lose control over population and territory. The insurgents increasingly attacked government supporters, sabotaged plantations and other economic

targets, and seemed to be expanding their activities rapidly in certain rural areas. The appeal of the insurgency to the Chinese segment of the population threatened to divide the country and undermine the legitimacy of the government. The situation exhibited a potential for insurgent victory.

Yet effective British countermeasures arrested further development of the Malayan insurgency. Addressing the insurgency's interrelated facets with determination, competent personnel, and adequate funds and manpower, the government instituted a successful strategic hamlet program. Civilians were effectively protected from guerrilla violence, and agriculture was safeguarded from disruption. At the same time, government political and propaganda initiatives undercut the insurgents' ethnic appeal, thereby preventing a violent confrontation between Chinese and Malays. These measures were a critical complement to a successful military strategy in which small unit operations destroyed guerrilla bands or drove them into uninhabited jungles.

The Malayan example underscores our belief that the indicators should be used primarily for short- and medium-term analysis of a current situation, not long-range projections. Ideally, the indicators would be applied to data at regular intervals, preferably on a quarterly basis.

#### Assessment of Current Insurgencies

Applying the indicators approach to the Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Philippine insurgencies, we conclude that none is in a final phase (see table 1). In all three cases, no indicator shows a significant progressive withdrawal of either domestic or international support for the government. Furthermore, in no case is a majority of indicators evidencing a progressive loss of government coercive power. Only in El Salvador do we see an overall, progressive loss in the category of government control over population and territory.

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systematically compared raw and finished intelligence on insurgencies occurring in divergent political, cultural, and military contexts, including Cuba, South Vietnam, South Yemen, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and Nicaragua. To help distinguish developments peculiar to the final year of a successful insurgency, we also examined intelligence reporting on two cases----Malaya (now part of Malaysia) and the Philippines in 1950-53—in which strong guerrilla movements peaked and then were defeated. To gauge the progression of events and isolate with greater clarity those that were most significant near the end, we also investigated the penultimate year of the five successful insurgencies. Since our intention is to warn of insurgent victory in a revolution that is a critical threat to the government, we did not investigate the early or middle stages of these insurgencies.

To define the last year, or final phase, of an insurgency, we had to determine the precise moment of insurgent victory. The dramatic flight of a Batista or Somoza, immediately followed by the insurgents' entry into the capital, is only one type of ending. Acknowledgment of defeat also can be a protracted process, as in the gradual triumph of the rebels over the British-backed government in South Yemen. The end of an insurgency, moreover, is not necessarily the moment when the guerrillas actually assume national power; insurgent victory sometimes is the point at which there is consensus that the government's cause is lost and the regime decides to negotiate seriously with the insurgents or a third party. The two-year periods of the successful insurgencies surveyed were:

- Cuba, December 1956–December 1958
- South Vietnam, March 1963–March 1965<sup>2</sup>
- South Yemen, November 1965–November 1967
- Rhodesia, December 1977–December 1979
- Nicaragua, July 1977–July 1979

<sup>2</sup> Although the Vietnamese insurgents did not take power until 10 years later, we include South Vietnam during this period for several reasons. The Vietnamese National Liberation Front is a model of modern revolutionary organization, and it is highly useful to compare and contrast other triumphant guerrilla movements with it. Even more important for our purposes, trends in 1963-65 favored the insurgents. In 1964 diverse intelligence reports concluded that Saigon was progressively losing control over the countryside. In early 1965 it appeared that Saigon would eventually fall if a major increase in external assistance were not forthcoming. We use March 1965 as a cutoff date because thereafter the introduction of significant US ground forces and large-scale US air attacks against North Vietnam changed the nature of the war.

In deciding which cases to analyze, we focused exclusively on revolutionary insurgencies in which an organized insurgent movement attempted to overthrow a government and impose a new social, political, and economic order. Insurgent or terrorist movements that were entirely urban based are not considered, nor are tribal or other insurgencies with limited goals such as local autonomy or secession. We believe that revolutionary insurgencies generally pose the greatest threats to US foreign policy interests.

#### The Indicators

Through our observation of historical cases, we have discovered a common pattern of behavior and events as governments battling insurgencies weaken and fall. This pattern comprises four categories of developments:

- Progressive withdrawal of domestic support for the government.
- Progressive withdrawal of international support for the government.
- Progressive loss of government control over population and territory.

• Progressive loss of government coercive power. These categories include a total of 14 interrelated and mutually reinforcing indicators of prospective insurgent victory (see appendix). The interrelationships and overlap of the indicators are crucial to our analysis because, in our view, victory in an insurgency is the outcome not only of armed violence but also of economic, political, and social and psychological developments that are importantly influenced by one another.

Historically, the indicators have not appeared in any single order; nor is there clear evidence that one or several indicators are consistently more important than others. For these and other reasons, the indicators should not be thought of as determining a specific outcome. We are not saying, for example, that withdrawal of foreign support for a government causes insurgent victory. We have observed, however, that withdrawal of foreign support by major allies generally occurs during the final year of a successful insurgency.

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#### Late Stage Indicators of Insurgent Success: El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines

The Instability and Insurgency Center, OGI, is producing a series of studies in which a set of indicators is systematically evaluated to provide a degree of rigor and comprehensiveness to the analysis of political instability. The sets of indicators used in the individual studies vary according to: (1) the time frame of the study—short term (six months or less), intermediate term (seven months to two years), or long term (beyond two years); and (2) whether the analysis concerns generalized political instability or one of its subsets, such as militarily organized insurgency or regime collapse. In this paper we are concerned with indications that an insurgency will be successful within one year.

#### **The Intelligence Problem**

Insurgents can fight inconclusively for decades, but they also can seize national power within an unexpectedly short period. Only three months before Cuban President Fulgencio Batista's overthrow, for instance, an intelligence analysis concluded that "at no time .... has the rebel movement seriously threatened the Batista regime." Given the speed with which Third World regimes battling insurgencies can collapse, the identification of specific warnings or indicators of insurgent victory is important. We applied 14 indicators of an insurgent victory within one year to the ongoing insurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines to determine whether any one of these insurgencies is close to victory. These indicators are derived from an analysis of five successful insurgencies and two unsuccessful insurgencies.

#### Methodology

To obtain indicators, we first investigated the unclassified literature on revolutionary insurgencies that have occurred since 1950. We found that academic theories and models of successful insurgency typically are highly general and speculative and often based on assumptions that are valid in some cases but not in others. Much recent writing takes as a model the patient Viet Cong strategy of gradually exerting control over rural villages and expanding a support network for prolonged guerrilla war. Indicators of insurgent success derived solely from the Vietnamese case, however, are not applicable to insurgencies such as that of Nicaragua's Sandinistas, who were able to win without a supportive rural infrastructure. Our objective is to discover indicators of near-term insurgent victory that may be applied systematically to revolutionary insurgencies, regardless of the particular strategy being employed.

The unsystematic use of case histories in developing general indicators is subject to criticisms of selectivity of data and irrelevance because of changing world conditions. We believe, however, that a systematic, comparative examination of a number of divergent cases, using unclassified and classified data, can provide a solid foundation for deriving indicators of an impending insurgent victory. Clearly this approach cannot yield exact scientific predictions. We believe, though, that the empirical observation of developments peculiarly common to the final phase of past successful insurgencies and relatively absent from unsuccessful insurgencies is a good basis for assessing whether a current insurgency is near victory. Not least, this process makes explicit assumptions and formalizes criteria that analysts may already be employing implicitly and unsystematically.

Focusing on the final year of five historically successful insurgencies, we sought to identify specific types of generally common developments. In retrospect, these developments—14 in all—constituted warnings of insurgent victory.<sup>1</sup> To avoid the subjectivity and excessive speculation of the unclassified literature, we

<sup>1</sup> Of the 14 indicators identified, nine appeared in all five cases, two appeared in four cases, and three were observed in three cases.

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Late Stage Indicators of Insurgent Success: El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines

#### **Key Judgments**

Information available as of 10 March 1983 was used in this report. Through a detailed study of seven past insurgencies, we have identified a pattern of common behavior and events that occur in the last year of successful insurgencies. Through an analysis of this pattern, we have developed 14 indicators, divided into four categories, that are intended to gauge the prospects for an insurgent victory.

This analytic framework was used to assess the insurgencies in El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines. We believe—on the basis of applying the indicators to both open and classified information of the past year-that in no case are the insurgents close to victory. Trends in the three countries vary greatly, however:

- Situation Fluid in El Salvador. In all four categories of indicators domestic support, international support, control over population and territory, and coercive power-the government made significant gains during 1982. The insurgents, however, continue to pose a grave threat. They have recently stepped up their attacks and strengthened their military position in several areas.
- Counterinsurgency Progress in Guatemala. The government retains important advantages in countering the guerrilla war. Moreover, although guerrilla violence continues, Rios Montt's innovative counterinsurgency measures have reversed the momentum of the insurgency in favor of the government. Continued counterinsurgency success will depend, to a large degree, on the government's financial and administrative ability to sustain its new programs in the Western Highlands.
- Gradual Expansion of Insurgency in the Philippines. Although President Ferdinand Marcos continues to enjoy overwhelming military superiority over the insurgents, domestic support for the government is declining. Poor economic performance and Marcos's inability to bring about improvement are contributing to the public's dissatisfaction with the regime. Exploiting this discontent politically, the insurgents are gradually escalating the level of violence.

Secret GI 83-10073 March 1983

## Late Stage Indicators of Insurgent Success: El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines

**An Intelligence Assessment** 

This assessment was prepared by the Political Instability Branch of the Office of Global	25X1
Issues. Comments and queries are welcome and	•
may be addressed to the Chief, Instability and	
Insurgency Center, OGI,	25X1
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This paper was coordinated with the Directorate of	
Operations.	25X1

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Application of Indicators to Past Insurgencies a

I. Progressive withdrawal of domestic support for the government

Withdrawal of support by specific, critical segments of population

Popular perception of insurgents as leading nationalists

Insurgent co-optation, incorporation or elimination of all other major opposition

II. Progressive withdrawal of international support for the government Withdrawal of foreign support by specific, critical allies

ine insurgents
III. Progressive loss of government control over
population and territory
Significant expansion of territory
under insurgent control

Increasing inability of government to protect supporters/official from attacks National economy increasingly weakened by insurgent activity

insurgent activity
IV. Progressive loss of government coercive
power
Military plots or coups against the
government
Armed guerrilla forces multiplying in
size

Increasing international support for the insurgents

Escalation of guerrilla/terrorist violence

size

Growing popular perception of regime illegitimacy

to the government

Cuba <sup>b</sup>

Preceding Year

No (2)

Yes (3)

No (3)

No (2)

No (2)

Yes (3)

No (1)

Yes (3)

No (2)

No (2)

Yes (1)

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Final Year

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (3)

Yes (1)

Yes (2)

Yes (1)

Table 2

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size Lack of sufficient government troops for counterinsurgency Government willing to seriously negotiate sharing of power with rebels No (1) No (3) No (3) No (3) No (2) No (3) No (1) No(1) animg or port with encoded 8 - Confidence level of judgments: (1) High—strong or abundant evidence; data overwhelmingly supports judgment. Here (2) Medium—adequate evidence; contrasting information or con-ficting trends may exist, bub kill of data supports judgment. (3) Low—weak or insufficient evidence; although data support opposing trends. Updgments, there is significant conficting information or evidence of opposing trends. In tata sureful informers is on weak, insufficient, or contradictory I hat a sureful informers is not resolute. <sup>b</sup> Two-year periods surveyed were: Cuba, Dec 56-Dec 58; South Vietnam, Mar 63-Mar 65. South Vernen, Nov 65-Nov 67; Nicaragua, Jul 77-Jul 79; Rhodesia, Dec 77-Dec 79; <sup>c</sup> Applies to black majority of Rhodesia

South Vietnam <sup>b</sup>

Preceding Year

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

No (2)

No (1)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

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Yes (2)

Yes (1)

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Final Year

Yes (2)

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Yes (2)

Yes (2)

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Yes (3) I

South Yemen<sup>b</sup> Preceding Year

No (3)

Yes (3)

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No (3)

Yes (2)

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Yes (2)

Yes (2)

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Final Year

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (3)

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Yes (2)

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Yes (2)

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Nicaragua b

Preceding Year

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No (2)

No (3)

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Yes (3)

No (3)

No (3)

No (2)

Yes (2)

No (2)

No(1)

Final Year

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (2)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

No (3)

Yes (1)

Yes (1)

Yes (3)

opposing trends. I Inconclusive—evidence is so weak, insufficient, or contradictory that a useful judgment is not possible.

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Rhodesia<sup>1</sup>

Preceding Year

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (2)

Yes (1)

No (2)

Yes (3)

Yes (3)

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