People's Wars in China, Malaya, and Vietnam

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Published by University of Michigan Press


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PEOPLE’S WARS IN CHINA, MALAYA, AND VIETNAM
People’s Wars in China, Malaya, and Vietnam explains why some insurgencies collapse after a military defeat while under other circumstances insurgents are able to maintain influence, rebuild strength, and ultimately defeat the government. The author argues that ultimate victory in civil wars rests on the size of the coalition of social groups established by each side during the conflict. When insurgents establish broad social coalitions (relative to the incumbent), their movement will persist even when military defeats lead to loss of control of territory because they enjoy the support of the civilian population and civilians will not defect to the incumbent. By contrast, when insurgents establish narrow coalitions, civilian compliance is solely a product of coercion. Where insurgents implement such governing strategies, battlefield defeats translate into political defeats and bring about a collapse of the insurgency because civilians defect to the incumbent. The empirical chapters of the book consist of six case studies of the most consequential insurgencies of the twentieth century including that led by the Chinese Communist Party from 1927 to 1949, the Malayan Emergency (1948–60), and the Vietnam War (1960–75). People’s Wars breaks new ground in systematically analyzing and comparing these three canonical cases of insurgency. The case studies of China and Malaya make use of Chinese-language archival sources, many of which have never before been used and provide an unprecedented level of detail into the workings of successful and unsuccessful insurgencies. This book adopts an interdisciplinary approach and will be of interest of both political scientists and historians.

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I acquired many debts in the course of writing this book. I owe special thanks to David Waldner, Brantly Womack, and Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl, all of whom devoted considerable (and possibly excessive) time to discussing various aspects of this project over the past several years. Their questions, critiques, and encouragement have been indispensable and I lack the words to fully express my gratitude to them. My thanks also go to Denise Ho and Frances Rosenbluth, both of whom provided important advice that helped push this book toward completion. I would also like to thank Matthew Kocher, Edwin Moïse and Marvin Zonis for their insightful comments and critiques.

At the University of Michigan Press, my thanks to go to Elizabeth Demers, senior acquisitions editor, political science, and editorial assistant Danielle Coty. At Longleaf Services I thank Lisa Stallings, editorial, design, and production (EDP) manager, and EDP associate Ihsan Taylor.

I have been fortunate over the years to benefit from the assistance of a generous cadre of friends and colleagues. They include C. C. Chin (Chen Jian 陳劍), Leon Comber, Joshua Goodman, Lee Eng Kew 李永球, Leong Chee Woh 梁熾和, Kok Tong Lim 林國棟, Sam Plapinger, Cindi Textor, the late William Whitson, Theo Yakah, Klaus Yamamoto-Hammering, and Soo Ryon Yoon. Yet others assisted me in procuring some of the primary-source materials used in this book. They include Jing “Jackie” Fu 付井, Shusheng “Michael” Hu 胡書勝, Yi Zheng Lu 盧義証, Daniel Pasker, George Suffern, and Youguang “Roger” Xie 謝友光.

The interlibrary loan departments at the University of Virginia and Yale University helped me acquire materials from dozens of libraries across three continents. I am deep in their debt, for without their help it would have been impossible to complete this project.

My thanks also go to the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, and the University of Virginia for providing financial support for this project.
This book would not have been possible without some truly amazing Chinese teachers. Harry Kuoshu led me in my first studies of the Chinese language at Furman University in 2006 and continued to provide his encouragement and guidance throughout my undergraduate career. The rigor of Long Xu’s Chinese classes solidified my then scant knowledge of Chinese. I was also the beneficiary of amazing language training while studying at Suzhou University’s School of Overseas Education and benefitted immensely from the guidance of Lu Qinghe and Lin Qiqian, as well as Chen Ding, He Lirong, and Ji Xu.

My sincerest thanks also go to the scholars whose work came before mine. Their work, both theoretical and empirical, was hugely influential in shaping the questions I ask in this book and how I seek to answer them. Comparative works of political science have driven me to apply similar methods in my own work while scholars of China, Malaysia, and Vietnam have written deep, detailed studies of conflicts in those three countries that have enlightened me and driven me to do similar research. I echo the sentiments that Kathleen Hartford expressed in the acknowledgments to her dissertation: even if I am critical of existing work, it is with a profound sense of the debt that I owe to it.

My final debts are to my family. They endured and supported me in spite of the countless hours spent away from them researching, writing, and revising this book. My wife, Phương Bình-Võ Opper, suffered most in this regard, but encouraged me forward nevertheless. Thanks must also go to my parents, Evelyn and Philip Opper, and parents-in-law, Võ Vị Nhân and Trương Bích Thủy, for their support over the past several years. Finally, my four dogs (Cleo, Bim, Lana, and Lu) and two cats (Ú Ngao and Mona) were a constant source of happiness while working through all iterations of this project.

My final thanks go to my late grandparents, Teresa and Mike Widawski. Both Holocaust survivors, they were the first to make me aware of the immense and enduring human costs of war and it is to them that I dedicate this book.
This book makes use of several systems of Chinese romanization. All place names are rendered using Hanyu Pinyin, as well as the names of members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese civilians that appear in the empirical chapters that cover the CCP insurgency on the Chinese mainland. I refer to the Chinese Nationalist Party as using the acronym KMT derived from the Wade-Giles romanization of its name, Kuomintang. I also use the Wade-Giles system of romanization to refer to Nationalist politicians and military commanders, with the exception of the leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek, to whom I refer using the widely used Cantonese romanization of his name.

Ethnic Chinese in Malaya, especially in the early twentieth century, utilized a variety of romanization systems to render their names. Throughout the book, I refer to MCP members using the most widely available and accepted romanization of their names. For example, I refer to the leader of the MCP as Chin Peng rather than “Chen Ping” (Hanyu Pinyin) or “Ch’en P’ing” (Wade-Giles) and to another of the MCP’s leaders as Yeung Kuo rather than “Yang Guo” or “Yung Kuo.” Where names have not previously appeared in English, I provide a Hakka romanization based on a dictionary published by Donald MacIver in 1905.

Chinese provinces have both a full name, consisting of two characters, and an abbreviated name consisting of one character. In this book I render the names of all provinces in full, as well as the CCP’s base areas. The “Jin-Cha-Ji Border Region,” for example, is rendered as the “Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region.” Chinese counties generally have either monosyllabic or disyllabic names followed by the Chinese word for “county,” xian. I render both names using the Chinese character(s) followed by the word “county.” I therefore render Ganxian as “Gan County” and Ruijin xian as “Ruijin County.” Counties are divided into districts (qu) and I render all district names in full followed by the word “district.” I adopt the same rule for townships (xiang) (sometimes referred to as “administrative villages”). Chinese village names vary considerably and contain any
number of suffixes that would all be translated as “village.” I render all village names in full, including the suffix, followed by the word “village.” Caijiazhuang, for example, becomes “Caijiazhuang village.”

Malay(si)an place names are rendered, as far as is possible, using either the standard English or Malay words for settlements, towns, or cities. The Chinese-language sources from Malaya consulted for this book did not generally include the English- or Malay-language equivalents for settlements. Further complicating the matter of place names is the massive population relocation that took place during the Malayan Emergency, during which many predominantly ethnic Chinese settlements were destroyed. I consulted a wide range of sources in an effort to locate either place names at the time of the Emergency or, if the name changed, its name at this point in time.

All translations from Chinese are mine unless otherwise noted. Throughout the book I follow the standard convention among China scholars and provide a transliteration of terms in parentheses whose translations are ambiguous or that I have changed sufficiently to warrant a presentation of the original. For example, during the Japanese military’s counterinsurgency campaign in northern China, they used a grid system to divide up and methodically pacify the Chinese countryside. The Chinese term used to refer to an individual unit of this grid is xiaokuai, literally “small box.” I translate the term as “kill box,” which I find to be a more appropriate translation given the context. All such terms, as well as Chinese place names on the Chinese mainland and Malaya, can be found in the appendix. Where applicable, I also include relevant Vietnamese terms.

All place names in China, Malaya, and Vietnam are presented as they appeared during the periods under analysis. Beijing, for example, is rendered as “Beiping,” its name for the duration of the Chinese Nationalist rule of the mainland. The city of Zhangjiakou is called Kalgan, as was customary in reporting and scholarship on China at the time. In Malaya, I refer to states using their pre-independence names and spellings. I refer to what is today the state of Seberang Perai as “Province Wellesley” and Johor is spelled “Johore.” The chapter on Vietnam refers to Dinh Tuong Province rather than Tien Giang Province, its current name.

There are a total of six maps in this book that show the geographic regions in which insurgents were operating in China, Malaya, and Vietnam. The maps were created using QGIS 2.18.1. The China maps were created using the fifth version of the China Historical GIS data. Province boundaries correspond with the 1926 province-level data and counties with the 1911 county-level data. The
A Note

map of Malaya was created with version 3.6 of the GADM database of Global Administrative Areas. The map of Vietnam was created by editing the GADM data to correspond to the Republic of Vietnam’s provincial boundaries as of 1973 as indicated in South Vietnam Provincial Maps and with reference to district and township boundaries as indicated in the Army Map Service’s 1964 “Population Density Map of South Vietnam.”

Counties shaded in the map of the Chinese Soviet Republic indicate counties in which the CCP established political administrations and over which the CCP exercised control and is created based on descriptions of the CCP’s government in Hongse Zhonghua, the official organ of the CCP’s government, and in Tsao Po-I’s Jiangxi suweiai zhi jianli jiqi bengkui. Areas shaded in the map of the Three-Year Guerrilla War indicate areas where CCP guerrillas operated at the time. The map was created based on the descriptions and maps in a series of books edited by the Historical Materials Editorial Committee of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun lishi ziliao congshu bian-shen weiyuanhui), specifically the Gan-Yue (Jiangxi-Guangdong), Minxi (Western Fujian), and Min-Gan/Minzhong (Fujian-Jiangxi/Central Fujian) volumes.

The counties shaded in the map of the Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region during the Resistance War and Chinese Civil War indicate counties in which the CCP established political administrations and over which the CCP exercised control. The Resistance War map was created based on the description in Song Shaowen’s 1943 Jin-Cha-Ji bianqu xingzheng weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao and in Li Jinlong’s Zhongguo gongchandang chuangjiande difang xingzheng zhidu yan-jiu. The Chinese Civil War map was created based on those two sources, as well as expansions to CCP territory indicated in maps found in Zhongguo jiefangqu fenqu xiangtu and William Whitson’s The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927–71.

The map of Malaya is based on a map originally used by Australian lieutenant general John Coates in his 1992 book on the Emergency. It is one of the only available detailed maps of the distribution of the MCP’s forces in Malaya during the Emergency. The map was provided to Coates by C. C. Too of Malaya’s Special Branch, under whose direction the map was created. Shaded areas indicate those in which the MCP was active up to the end of 1951.

Areas shaded in Dinh Tuong Province and in South Vietnam more generally represent areas under the control of the National Liberation Front (NLF) as of August 1965 as indicated in a detailed map of the war by Zhu Yulian in Shijie zhibishi, an international affairs magazine published by the People’s Republic of
China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some changes to areas of NLF control on that map were made based on the map in David Elliot’s *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930-1975*.

All sources referenced above in composing the maps can be found in the bibliography.

I provide references to all source materials using notes in each chapter. Many of the sources are found in compilations of primary source documents or in periodicals. In the chapter notes, I render the titles of such materials using abbreviations, the full titles of which can be found in the bibliography.
Map 3. The Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei Border Region, ca. 1943.
Map 5. The Malayan Emergency, 1951.