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# Shirking the Briggs Plan: Civilian Resistance to Reform and the Army's Struggle for Control in Malaya, 1950–1952

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## ABSTRACT



Civil–military tensions played a central role shaping the evolution of the British campaign during the Malayan Emergency. While the Briggs Plan has often been described as focusing exclusively on population control, Briggs developed a strategy combining coercive and security measures with wide-reaching administrative and political reforms. However, the reluctance of top members of the Malayan Civil Service to risk a political confrontation with Malay elites, who were deeply opposed to investment and the extension of political rights to the Chinese squatters, led them to resist the political elements of the programme during Briggs' tenure as director of operations (June 1950–November 1951). Briggs' lack of executive authority over the civil service, combined with conservative political preferences and the slow pace of administrative and government reform, led to the manifestation of the Briggs Plan as a programme of coercive population control. From mid-1951, the civil–military struggle over campaign strategy transformed into a struggle for control of the Malayan government. The new Conservative government's decision to appoint General Templer high commissioner in late 1951 represented a victory for the officers, over civilian resistance. At the same time, singularly crediting Templer overlooks important political successes achieved by Briggs and Templer's predecessor, High Commissioner Gurney.

## KEYWORDS

Malaya; Malayan Emergency; civil–military relations; Harold Briggs; Gerald Templer; counterinsurgency

## Introduction

Beginning in 1948, the British faced a serious insurgency in Malaya by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). According to the historical conventional wisdom, the organised British counterinsurgency can be divided into two distinct periods. The first, from mid-1950 to the end of 1951, focused exclusively on extensive resettlement of landless Chinese peasants and tight, coercive control over the population.<sup>1</sup> The appointment of General Templer as high commissioner at the end of 1951 led to a shift in the strategy towards increasing

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political reform and social investment targeting the Chinese population in order to win their support (the so-called 'hearts and minds' approach).<sup>2</sup>

The reality is more complicated. While coercive population control dominated the opening phase of the plan's implementation, Briggs developed a significant political component combined with an ambitious plan to reform the civil administration and the police force. The question, then, is why did these measures not manifest alongside the resettlement programme? The civil-military dynamics, which played an important role shaping the development of the campaign, provide important insights.

Malaya is often cited as a paradigmatic case of civil-military cooperation as a key to the campaign's success, but the actual relationship between civilian and military authorities has been largely neglected.<sup>3</sup> The initial phase of the campaign, the period of General Briggs' tenure as director of operations from June 1950 through November 1951, was characterised by significant tensions between the Colonial Office and Ministry of Defence in London and between the army and the Malayan Civil Service (MCS) in Malaya, reflecting serious disagreements over the primary challenges facing the campaign and the best ways to overcome them.

The core issue that defined the confrontation between civilian administrators and officers was the pace and scope of administrative and political reform, which constituted a key element of General Briggs' strategy. But, perhaps surprisingly, it was the army stressing the importance of accelerated reform and expanded administrative capacity in the face of civilian resistance. While the officers believed political and administrative reform would facilitate the defeat of the insurgency and strengthen state capacity, top civilian officials worried that these reforms would alienate the nationalist Malays whose support was seen as vital to the long-run success of Britain's Malaya project. The civilians hoped they could get around the need to take political and administrative risks by shifting the campaign's focus towards a more aggressive military approach, despite the army's conviction that the solution lay in political action in the population centres rather than military action in the jungle. But General Briggs and the officers lacked political authority to force the implementation of the civil aspects of the campaign plan, allowing civilian resistance to slow the pace of its implementation.

By November 1951, the clash between civilian and military preferences for the future direction of the campaign transformed into a struggle for control of the Malayan administration itself. Following High Commissioner Gurney's assassination in October 1951, officers in Malaya and London lobbied for his replacement to be an officer in the face of strong opposition from civilian officials and political elites in Malaya, who feared that an army takeover would lead, ironically, to a more aggressive *political* approach. The appointment of General Templer as the new high commissioner represented the victory of the army officers over the civilians.

The significant political progress made after General Templer's arrival in 1952, which coincided with a drop in insurgent activity, might lead to the conclusion that it was the officers who were responsible for the political milestones reached in 1952, including the granting of citizenship rights and land ownership to the Chinese, which in turn explains British success. This is a key component of the so-called 'hearts and minds' narrative.<sup>4</sup> But this conclusion is not entirely warranted either, leading back to the debate about Templer's contribution to success in Malaya.<sup>5</sup>

The officers undoubtedly deserve much credit, especially in laying the foundation for a more centralised and effective state and for their steadfast commitment to the Briggs Plan. But at the same time, their political role should not be overstated. Despite the army's mounting criticism of the civil administration in 1950 and 1951, there was slow and steady progress on both the administrative and political fronts. Moreover, the political reforms achieved in 1952 certainly had a major impact on the future Malayan state, but their contribution to the defeat of the insurgency itself is questionable. Rather, it was almost certainly the population and food control measures implemented beginning in June 1950 that broke the insurgency.<sup>6</sup> Finally, focusing solely on Templer and the officers discounts the important role of Malay and Chinese elites.

Civilian resistance to Briggs' political measures is especially significant given the general belief, grounded in organisational theory, that military officers prefer military solutions to insurgencies while civilians are more concerned with political solutions.<sup>7</sup> The Malayan Emergency challenges these assumptions, as it was the officers who consistently emphasised the political dimensions of the campaign over civilian opposition. Given the centrality of the Malayan Emergency to contemporary counterinsurgency theory, this article constitutes an important corrective by highlighting hitherto neglected dynamics of civil-military conflict in a case lauded for close civil-military cooperation and by challenging the tendency to hold military organisations responsible for the 'over-militarisation' of campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

In this, Malaya was actually fairly typical of the wider British imperial experience. Military actors recognised the potential contributions of political reform in a number of imperial campaigns. During the Anglo-Boer War, High Commissioner Milner and General Kitchener clashed over the strategic direction of the campaign. Kitchener favoured generous political concessions to the Boers designed to win the peace while Milner pushed for an unconditional surrender that would have led to the marginalisation of the Boers from the political and economic life of South Africa.<sup>9</sup> In Ireland in 1920–21, General Macready was among the strongest proponents of political concessions opposed by conservatives in the Cabinet, arguing 'Martial Law not only offers no permanent solution, but if it is forced on the country can only accentuate the present spirit of defiance', concluding, 'I am convinced that nothing short of a bold, dramatic,

political stroke will solve this matter’.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in 1936 during the Palestinian Rebellion, when considering the available options, RAF officers concluded that repression ‘would sow seeds of hatred in all arab countries which would bear bitter fruit ... [political concession] exposes us to taunt of surrendering to violence, but surely Britain is strong enough to laugh at this’.<sup>11</sup> In these cases, resistance to political solutions came from civilian officials against the advice of the military.

This article traces the genesis and evolution of the Briggs Plan from General Briggs’ appointment as director of operations in March 1950 through Templer’s arrival in February 1952. Focusing on the preferences of civilian and military actors and the civil–military tensions that resulted, three obstacles to the implementation of the political elements of the Briggs Plan will be highlighted: civilian resistance to the political elements of Briggs’ strategy, Briggs’ lack of executive authority, and the Labour Government’s reluctance to pressure civilians to comply with Briggs’ directives. Due to the structural barriers that the chain of command presented for the army, the struggle over the strategic direction of the campaign transformed into a struggle for control of the Malayan government, culminating in General Templer’s appointment as high commissioner.

## **The Briggs Plan: Genesis and Analysis**

### ***Background to the Briggs Plan***

When Lt. General Sir Harold Briggs was appointed director of operations in March 1950, he was tasked with developing a strategy to defeat the communist insurgency that had broken out almost two years earlier. The resulting plan focused on cutting the insurgents off from their supply base, the rural Chinese ‘squatters’, and integrating them into the state through wholesale resettlement into government-controlled ‘New Villages’, to ensure effective public security and eliminate the insurgents’ political organisation. Additionally, administrative capacity building and political reform aimed to centralise and streamline the government’s ability to respond to the insurgency and consolidate the state’s control over its population.

The opening phase of the Malayan Emergency (June 1948 through the end of 1949) was largely a strategic victory for the British army, which was able to beat back a large-scale military challenge from the MCP. This period, known colloquially as the ‘counterterror’ phase, resulted in a major setback for the communist campaign. By the end of 1949, the MCP modified its strategy, shifting its focus to subversion and population control, which led the British to a stalemate by the end of 1949.<sup>12</sup>

On 23 February 1950, the Malayan high commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, wrote to Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones:

I have been considering for some time the desirability of appointing one officer to plan, coordinate, and generally direct the anti-bandit operations of the police and fighting services.<sup>13</sup>

Gurney concluded that due to their defeats over the previous year, the insurgents had adopted a strategy of 'protracted guerrilla warfare' with a large push to mobilise the squatter population. He had recognised in December 1949 that the pace of 'anti-bandit operations' had stalled and that current military approaches had reached the limit of their potential.<sup>14</sup> Gurney concluded that this shift necessitated more coherent direction for the combined effort, but that the existing machinery was insufficient; there did not exist an individual in Malaya who could assume this role in addition to their normal duties.

While Gurney might have filled this position himself, he expressed little inclination to assume the burden. It is generally agreed that he had little interest in the counterinsurgency and preferred to separate security operations from day-to-day functions of the Malayan Civil Service, as well as politics more generally:

I therefore recommend that immediate steps should be taken to second to this Government an experienced military officer for appointment to a new civil post with the following functions. He would be responsible for the preparation for *offensive action* and the allocation of tasks to the *various components of the security forces*. ...

He would work directly under myself and within the framework of the policy laid down by this government. He will be in close touch with civil authorities responsible for essential features of the campaign, such as settlement and control of squatters, propaganda, immigration control and settlement of labour disputes, and would have *right to make representation to me* in such matters affecting the conduct of anti-communist campaign as a whole.<sup>15</sup>

Gurney's comments reveal a preoccupation with the coercive and control-oriented aspects of the counterinsurgency and almost complete silence on the campaign's deeper political aspects. Rather than considering the possibility that Malayan policy and politics might itself become an instrument of the campaign, Gurney hoped the security campaign would fit within existing government policy. Throughout the conflict, Gurney would pay lip service to the importance of political and administrative reform, but he would prove reluctant to put significant pressure on the administration or the autonomous state governments to carry it out.

The army's position on proper strategy in Malaya was unequivocal at every level of the chain of command and departed significantly from Gurney's vision: 'the suppression of the communist bandits is much more a matter for civil rather than military action'.<sup>16</sup> The chief of the imperial general staff (CIGS), Field Marshal Sir William Slim, concurred with Gurney's view that the army operations conducted between the summer of 1948 and the end of 1949 had succeeded in driving back a large-scale communist offensive and had even

succeeded in regaining the initiative.<sup>17</sup> However, he concluded that they had reached a new equilibrium where the military was only succeeding in chasing the guerrillas in circles through the jungle. Slim argued that military action was useless as long as the civil administration did not have the capacity to consolidate its gains.<sup>18</sup> This would require a serious effort to expand the size and strength of the administration to provide security to and control the inhabitants of Malaya.

General Sir John Harding, commander-in-chief of Far East Land Forces (FARELF), believed that government weakness was the greatest problem facing British forces:

I cannot over emphasise the fact that the effective administration of the whole country is the only decisive answer to the elimination of the bandits ... From the military point of view quicker decisions and more rapid action in the *civil administrative* field are essential.<sup>19</sup>

While the army's job was deep jungle penetration and support for the civil authorities, the officers were clear in their belief that the central tasks of the counter-insurgency, including controlling and protecting the population and gathering intelligence, were jobs for the police and the civil services. This suggested that Gurney and the army had quite different ideas about where the primary responsibility for prosecuting the counterinsurgency lay.

### ***The Briggs Plan***

Given the civil–military consensus in both Malaya and London about the desirability of a director of operations, Gurney's request was fast-tracked, and Slim was tasked with recommending a suitable officer for the job.<sup>20</sup> Slim's choice was (retired) General Briggs, who had been his subordinate in Burma during WWII and served as general officer commanding for Burma from 1946 until its independence in 1948.<sup>21</sup> Briggs assumed his duties in early May 1950, and his plan came together in the period of about a week, drawing on and integrating a range of pre-existing measures, including population resettlement, while adding a number of his own.<sup>22</sup> Briggs' efforts resulted in a coordinated strategy that combined three distinct elements: security (police and military), political, and organisational.<sup>23</sup>

Briggs' initial assessment concluded that the MCP's reliance on the population was their weak point. His strategy aimed to break the link between the population and the Min Yuen (the communist's support organisation operating within the population) on one hand and the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA, the armed wing of the MCP) on the other.<sup>24</sup> This disruption would cut off insurgents from their source of supplies including food, materiel, and intelligence. British officials also believed that gaining control over the population and ensuring their security would encourage the people to provide necessary

intelligence to disrupt and eliminate the Min Yuen, although Briggs recognised that such cooperation might have to be compelled through a system of carrots and sticks.<sup>25</sup> Finally, this would draw out the MNLA to fight on a ground of British choosing.<sup>26</sup>

The plan contained two distinct but related operational security components. First, the squatter population needed to be brought under effective government control, and second, the country needed to be systematically cleared of insurgents. Briggs recognised that past military operations had been ineffective because once the security forces departed an area, insurgents would return. Keeping the insurgents out and 'dominating the populated area' was a problem for the civil administration and the police force, who were responsible for resettling the squatters into the 'New Villages' and maintaining government authority in these areas.<sup>27</sup> The army's presence aimed to maintain the 'Framework', a cordon between settled areas and insurgent hide-outs in the jungle, and support the police while they reorganised themselves into an effective force. The task of the framework and its affiliated striking forces was to dominate the paths in and out of the jungle so insurgents could not re-enter settled areas once they had been cleared.<sup>28</sup>

The second element of Briggs' plan contained important political measures. Initially, these measures were aimed at persuading the squatters to provide information and assistance to British forces through a system of 'reward and punishment'.<sup>29</sup> Briggs began with the idea of granting cooperative squatters formal ownership of the land they worked while threatening to withhold or deprive land from noncooperative squatters. While later, food restrictions and curfews would constitute the key sticks of Briggs' proposed system, these were not (and indeed could not be) implemented until squatter resettlement was complete and security could be guaranteed.<sup>30</sup> Land ownership would be supplemented with improved infrastructure and services for the New Villages to raise the squatters' standard of living and extend effective state control over them. As Briggs expressed to the Malay sultans, the rulers of the semi-sovereign Malay states, shortly after his arrival:

Will your Highnesses please excuse me if I do some plain speaking? You are progressing towards self-Government. No Government can be successful unless all sections of the population are fully represented in the Administration of the country and of the State. I know how difficult it is for you to decide on such drastic changes but it is vital to realise that the Chinese are here to stay and that such land as they occupy, unless resettled, they will have to keep whether one likes it or not. Secondly, I know that much of your revenue has had to be spent on the Chinese portion of your population. To bring these Chinese under full administrative control and to give them the necessary social services is essential but will cost a further large sum. ... I beg of you to accept these facts whole-heartedly now, as they must be faced.<sup>31</sup>

While the granting of land ownership and investment in raising the living standards of the rural Chinese were conceived as means to the military end, they

obviously carried important political implications for future of the Malayan state. Given the hostility of the Malay population to the Chinese (see below), the British anticipated pushback from the state governments:

The time has come when the Malays should realise that the Chinese are here for good and will increase and that the land they occupy they will keep, unless resettled. The promise of this land or the deprivation of it according to their behaviour would knock the main plank from under the feet of Communist propaganda and deprivation of land might be as effective as the fear of the bandits.

Could not the Sultans be persuaded that, if they don't act 'gracefully' now, they will lose more in the long run?<sup>32</sup>

The final element of political reform was not part of the Briggs' original plan but was connected to Briggs' measures for integrating the Chinese as well as to Britain's long-term desire to forge an effective, democratic, and prosperous state to prevent future unrest. The new colonial secretary, James Griffiths, articulated a 'bold attempt to unify Malaya' by extending federal citizenship to the Chinese (which most Chinese did not enjoy despite having been born in Malaya<sup>33</sup>) and including them in future government.<sup>34</sup> British officials began development of a citizenship ordinance in the summer of 1950, but this required an amendment to the 1948 Federation Agreement, which required consent from Malay elites.

Finally, General Briggs reworked the system for coordinating and directing counterinsurgency operations, imposing a committee system on Malaya at three levels.<sup>35</sup> At the top, there was a Federal War Council (FWC), chaired by the director of operations, which included the chief secretary, the police commissioner, the general officer commanding, the air officer commanding, and the Federation secretary of defence.<sup>36</sup> The responsibility of the FWC was to 'produce policy and to provide the State and Settlement Executive Committees with all the resources they require'.<sup>37</sup> But while Briggs was the chairman of the FWC, he lacked executive authority to translate his directions into orders, especially when it came to the civil administration. The only one with this authority was the high commissioner, but Gurney did not participate in the FWC until spring 1951, and there was a persistent tendency to keep the workings of the FWC separate from other aspects of government.

Below the FWC, the system was reproduced at the state and district levels as War Executive Committees (WECs). At both the state and district levels, these committees included four primary officials: the chief civil political authority (at the state level, this was the Mentari Besar, the sultan's Malay deputy), the British resident advisor to the sultan, the senior military and police officers at the state and district levels. The responsibility of the SWECs was 'to wage the "war" in their own territories', creating a decentralised system where each state developed and prosecuted its own campaign.<sup>38</sup> This committee system made information sharing and discussion easier, creating opportunities for local coordination, although its decentralised nature undermined country-wide

coordination. However, it did not *guarantee* effective cooperation, as the committee system did not create an integrated chain of command; there was no overarching commander empowered to make binding decisions at any level to ensure coordinated action. The unintegrated nature of the civil and military chains of command would handicap campaign coordination throughout Briggs' tenure.

### ***An Evaluation of the Briggs Plan***

The Briggs Plan is, perhaps, the most detailed articulation of counterinsurgency strategy and its underlying logic in the history of the British empire. It establishes objectives, considers the organisation of the insurgency and the opportunities for success, and then articulates an integrated civil–military plan to achieve it. The Briggs Plan was uniquely adapted to conditions in Malaya, taking advantage of three important opportunities. First, Malaya was a food-deficit region; it could not produce enough food to satisfy its population, and the further from the coast, i.e. the deeper in the jungle, the more difficult it was to produce one's own supplies.<sup>39</sup> Second, patterns of settlement and the distribution of mountains and jungle made population control a relatively simple task. Malaya's population was concentrated along its coastal strip, and the mountainous jungle of the interior was all but uninhabitable, significantly shrinking the area the government had to effectively administer. Finally, given that Malaya was a peninsula with practically no land access, the infiltration of supplies from the outside would be extremely difficult. Even if it was feasible, because the insurgents were concentrated in the interior, supplies would still have to pass through the framework, meaning the MNLA, isolated in the jungle, could effectively be cut off from outside resupply.

In retrospect, the second element of the Briggs Plan, the expectation that population control would mobilise the Chinese in support of the government, was less strategically sound. The goal of resettlement was to provide security to root out the Min Yuen, operating among the population. However, in order for the British to provide security, they first needed to be able to identify and eliminate the Min Yuen. Success would instil confidence for cooperation, but initially, convincing villagers to come forward with information was very difficult, especially as the insurgents increased their efforts to intimidate the population as resettlement accelerated.<sup>40</sup> Reports coming from the administration in mid-1951 reveal that cooperation was improving as security was increasing, but that the British were still disappointed that the Chinese were not more forthcoming.<sup>41</sup> Rather, British officials believed that it was the threat of deportation, which resumed in 1951, that pressured Chinese detainees to cooperate.

But in any event, given that resettlement also cut the Min Yuen off from the insurgents, the physical aspects of resettlement and population control

effectively eliminated the Min Yuen's *raison d'être*. Struggling to feed themselves and short on supplies, the insurgents would be able to devote less time and energy to the insurgency, which eventually encouraged many to surrender to the Malayan authorities, joining the ranks of the SEPs (Surrendering Enemy Personnel) who were the real source of operational intelligence for British forces.<sup>42</sup> Population control alone, then, was probably sufficient to defeat the insurgency without needing to win the heart and minds of the Chinese population as has sometimes been claimed.<sup>43</sup>

### **Obstacles to Implementing the Briggs Plan: Political Preferences and Administrative Weaknesses in Malaya**

While the British enjoyed a number of vital advantages over the insurgents,<sup>44</sup> British and Malay authorities also faced a number of serious political and administrative obstacles to the prompt and effective implementation of the Briggs Plan. These obstacles stemmed from three sources. First, the political preferences of Malay elites and key civilian administrators generated opposition to the political elements of the Briggs Plan. Second, the distribution of political power in Malaya gave significant power and autonomy to opponents of the plan and frustrated its progress. Finally, the weakness of the civil administration, especially the police force, undermined the capacity of the government to implement the key civil elements of the plan.

From the beginning, the political elements of the Briggs Plan were going to be a challenge to implement for two reasons: political preferences and the distribution of political power. Most importantly, the plan's political initiatives, including investment in social standards, land grants, and eventually citizenship, struck against the interests of the conservative Malay elites, especially the sultans.<sup>45</sup>

One of Briggs' core objectives was to extend effective administration over the Chinese population, which meant large-scale investment in infrastructure and services. However, this generated deep resentment among the Malays, who believed that government expenditure should go to the Malay population rather than the Chinese:

There is no doubt that, although the Malays themselves are strongly anti-communist, the suspicion and distrust of the Malays regarding British intentions was at one time such that State Governments were most resentful of any attempt by the FedGov to intervene in State matters, particularly where this intervention took the form of pressure to devote resources to the resettlement of the Chinese rural population, resources that in the Malay view should be more properly devoted to the betterment of Malay conditions.<sup>46</sup>

Colonial Secretary Griffiths also believed that suspicion of the Chinese played an important role: 'the Malays, who naturally regard the Chinese as the

community responsible for the present trouble, did not react favourably to the considerable programme of government expenditure for the benefit of the Chinese Squatters'.<sup>47</sup> In this way, the British were forced to tread a fine line between implementing political measures they saw as instrumental to controlling the population on one hand and alienating the support of Malay elites and the population on the other.<sup>48</sup>

The clash between liberal and ethnocentric visions for the future Malayan state, alongside the clash between federal and state authority, reflected the 1946–48 conflict over Malaya's constitution, which pitted the British government against the Malay elite. Following the war, the British advanced a plan for constitutional development known as the Malayan Union, which reflected a liberal vision for post-war Malaya by extending equal civil and political rights to all members of Malaya's three main ethnic groups, Malay, Chinese, and Indian. The Union was to be a strong, centralised state rather than the previously decentralised amalgamation of distinct political entities that included the nominally sovereign Federated and Unfederated Malay States (a group of nine sultanates under a British protectorate) and the Straits Settlements: the crown colonies of Malacca, Penang, and Singapore.

However rising Malay ethnonationalism and the sultans' desire to preserve their power fuelled opposition to the liberal vision of the Union.<sup>49</sup> Strong Malay resistance coupled with Britain's reluctance to lose Malay support led to the collapse of the Union and its replacement by the looser and more conservative Malayan Federation in 1948, reversing plans for centralisation and equal rights.<sup>50</sup> While the British retained the prerogatives of a protectorate, including control of defence and foreign affairs, the states and sultans regained their internal sovereignty:

Malay political pressure forced us to abandon plans for a strong central Government with wide executive powers which were embodied by the Malayan Union and a measure of legislative and an even greater measure of executive authority were restored to the Malay States by the 1948 Federation Agreement. The Malay States, in combination, are a powerful force, and the Federal machine can only work with their confidence and goodwill.<sup>51</sup>

Under the Federation constitution, the British, as the colonial power, controlled the obvious instruments of counterinsurgency, including defence and security policy as well as (national) economic and fiscal policy. However, the state governments controlled key instruments of Briggs' plan including local economic investment, infrastructure development, education and health policy, and land policy.<sup>52</sup> The constitution also gave rulers the power to approve or reject any changes to laws impacting the Federation constitution, including citizenship laws.<sup>53</sup>

Top civilian administrators, notably High Commissioner Gurney and Commissioner General Malcolm MacDonald, the chairman of the British Defence

Coordinating Committee (BDCC) tasked with coordinating political and military policy for the entire Far East, were deeply reluctant to confront the Malay elites. Gurney never really foresaw the counterinsurgency effort as containing sweeping political transformation, and it is highly likely his reluctance stemmed from his fear of sparking a political crisis with Malay nationalists.<sup>54</sup> While this did not mean categorical refusal to press forward with political reform, it did lead him to proceed slowly and cautiously: 'The High Commissioner's Policy has been ... to ensure that the desire for central control should come from the perimeter and not from the centre itself'.<sup>55</sup> Colonial Secretary Griffiths supported Gurney's personal style and believed it was dangerous to push the Malay states too far too quickly: 'we must not take any risk of alienating the Malays'.<sup>56</sup> 'Indeed, without the goodwill of the Malays, we cannot hope to make progress or achieve a wholesome settlement in Malaya'.<sup>57</sup>

While the high commissioner held wide reserve powers, allowing him to override the decisions of the state governments or the federal legislature, Gurney was reluctant to use those powers because such action was 'politically undesirable'.<sup>58</sup> However, without the invocation of those powers, 'the Government is powerless to enforce its decisions'.<sup>59</sup> In turn, while Briggs was empowered to direct operations, he did not exist in the political chain of command, and his lack of real authority meant that he was powerless to enact the civil measures contained in his plan without Gurney's intervention. But due to Gurney's reluctance to push the political side, Briggs' ability to translate direction into action was often limited.

Concern regarding the Malay reaction may not have been the only factor motivating civilian resistance. The attitudes of some British members of the Malayan Civil Service may have compounded the problem. Following a visit to Malaya, CIGS Slim concluded, 'a number of pre-war British Malayan civil and police officers are, I think, still obsessed with the idea that Malaya is a country for Malays'.<sup>60</sup> The colonial secretary held similar suspicions:

I am of course aware that a sympathetic approach to the administration of the Chinese does not come naturally to senior officers of the M.C.S. [Malayan Civil Service] who (as also some of the older members of the Police Force) find it difficult to adjust themselves to post-war conditions and policies.<sup>61</sup>

Slim continued, 'There is also a tendency to regard the war effort against the Communist bandits as something that should be left to the army'.<sup>62</sup> Gurney's reluctance may have also been motivated by a certain personal apathy, as there is wide agreement that Gurney was not particularly interested in fully committing himself or the entirety of the Malayan government to the counterinsurgency effort.

The obstacles to the implementation of the Briggs Plan were not only political, they included serious weaknesses in the police and civil administration. Briggs recognised this weakness immediately and emphasised the need to

strengthen the administrative capacity of the state. This included expanding the size and capacity of the police force, strengthening the civil administration, and improving the state's ability to engage the Chinese population.<sup>63</sup>

The overarching problem was the capacity of the administration to absorb large numbers of new personnel. This was less of a problem for the civil service; Briggs believed the service contained the manpower he required, and his initial plan proposed transferring them from 'less-immediately essential Government Services'.<sup>64</sup> But Briggs expressed continual frustration that the government focused on non-essential activities, and he continued to press for the reassignment of administrative personnel to assist in the resettlement and security effort.<sup>65</sup> The problem appeared to be Gurney's reluctance to dedicate greater resources to the campaign.

The police force was a far more serious concern. The problem was not necessarily the recruitment of local forces, the size of the police force had expanded significantly. Rather, the problem was training such a large and hastily recruited force, as well as locating and recruiting mid-level officers to command them.<sup>66</sup> The British had serious trouble finding, and providing adequate financial incentive for, a sufficient number of qualified and experienced officers from the UK willing to go to Malaya.<sup>67</sup> Finally, the lack of civil and police personnel trained in Chinese was a major obstacle. Briggs hoped to recruit more officials from within the Chinese population, but willing Chinese volunteers were in short supply, and there was also resistance to allowing Chinese into government service on the part of the Malay authorities.<sup>68</sup>

### **Shirking the Briggs Plan: Civil–Military Tensions Mount**

Briggs' report was formally accepted by the Cabinet Committee on Malaya on 18 May 1950.<sup>69</sup> Framework operations and resettlement commenced in the southern state of Johore on June 1. While Briggs' initial timetable urged patience, even he was disappointed. Resettlement quickly fell behind schedule, the British did not receive the expected flow of information from the resettled population, and insurgent violence persisted, and even increased, through the end of the year.

As violence increased, questions emerged about the source of the problem. Stemming from the belief that civil consolidation had to precede effective military operations, there was general agreement in London that the main problems were the slow pace of civil and police reform and resistance to the political elements of the Briggs Plan. However, while military officials urged the civilians to speed progress on the civil front, top civilian officials, especially the high commissioner, expressed reluctance to do so.

As early as mid-June, the war secretary expressed concern that while the civil role was top priority, 'quite often it is the soldier who really has to push the job along'.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, he criticised the civil administration's reluctance to make

use of their powers under the emergency regulations while also resisting the political elements of the plan:

in this [reluctance to invoke the emergency regulations] I thought it was being too liberal and weak. On the other hand, politically the Government and the administration seem to me not liberal enough in that they are not nearly active enough in forging ahead with the political development of the country ... Democratic development has been complicated by the business of Chinese citizenship and I feel that the Government should press on with that, even at some risk, pretty rapidly.<sup>71</sup>

While acknowledging the problem, the Colonial and Foreign Offices pointed to the challenges and obstacles created by the resistance of the Malay elites.

### ***General Briggs Threatens to Resign: November 1950***

In October 1950, four months into the resettlement programme, Johore was gripped by a fresh outbreak of insurgent violence and Briggs' frustration began to mount, generating the first civil–military confrontation in November. Internally, military criticism of the capabilities of the civilian leadership in Malaya was growing. General Harding held firm to the army's initial position, 'whatever we are able to do by the way of increased [military] efficacy will not increase the overall rate of progress unless and until there is a faster improvement on the police and civil side'.<sup>72</sup> He continued:

I don't believe that the civil and police authorities on the state and district level have really got the personality, ability or drive to see this business through. They are mostly inclined to accept difficulties and delays instead of going all out to overcome them.<sup>73</sup>

Harding believed that the solution to the problem lay in greater military control over the higher direction of the campaign.

Defence Minister Emanuel Shinwell's apprehensions about the campaign's progress led the government to recall Gurney to London for consultations in late October. Briggs indicated his desire to also return to London to present his side of the story and 'impress upon [the colonial secretary] the growing urgency and seriousness of the position here'.<sup>74</sup> Briggs threatened to step down as director of operations and conditioned his willingness to remain in Malaya on the immediate implementation of a number of measures he had requested but which Gurney had ignored. The primary demand was that Gurney begin chairing the meetings of the Federal War Council. The second demand was to put the civil administration on a 'war footing', eliminating 'non-essential activities': aspects of civil administration that were not directly connected to the counterinsurgency in order to free up administrative personnel and focus the investment of resources towards the campaign.<sup>75</sup>

Following the November consultations, Briggs reported to the prime minister that the high commissioner would begin chairing the FWC, giving it the executive authority Briggs desired; in fact, it was the Colonial Office rather

than Gurney himself who agreed to this demand. Briggs also reported his intention to place the Malayan civil administration on the war footing he had demanded in his telegram.<sup>76</sup> Briggs expressed his belief that the government possessed all the powers necessary to 'take ruthless action against the Malayan Communists'.<sup>77</sup> While the committee system received a power boost when Gurney began chairing FWC meetings, questions remained regarding whether he would be willing to use his powers to implement Briggs' directives.

### ***Civilians Attempt a Strategic Pivot***

Owing to a renewed deterioration of the security situation, a second round of consultations occurred in late February 1951 at the request of Prime Minister Attlee, who, along with Shinwell, was growing increasingly concerned at the pace of resettlement and its apparent lack of results.<sup>78</sup> Slim responded that the main task was not military, the killing of insurgents, but rather the re-establishment of law and order and the dismantling of the insurgents' support structures in the settled areas.<sup>79</sup> Griffiths, while agreeing that progress was disappointing, argued that the FWC had all of the power it required. But once again, the authority to act did not imply action, which constituted the crux of the army's criticism: 'The powers of the Malayan Government were now admittedly adequate, but were they being fully used and was there any real leadership?'<sup>80</sup>

The Foreign Office representative on the Malaya Committee made a different sort of proposal. He suggested that, given the state of affairs in the Far East at the beginning of 1951, including the recent communist victory in China, setbacks and stalemate in the Korean War, and the trouble experienced by the French in Indochina, time was of the essence and that the solution was 'more ruthless action' against villagers who refused to cooperate with the British. Griffiths revealed that an additional outcome of the November consultations was the passing of a collective punishment ordinance at the army's request (modelled on the harsh collective punishments ordinances passed in Palestine during the Arab Rebellion of 1936–39<sup>81</sup>), indicating the beginnings of a civilian pivot towards greater support for coercive measures against villagers. While collective punishments had been an important element of the Briggs Plan and were strongly favoured by the army, the officers were clear that they needed to be combined with strong security and the provision of rights and services; collective punishment was not a substitute for the reforms advocated by Briggs, it could only be a complement.<sup>82</sup>

A number of operational changes in the first half of 1951 demonstrated the civil administration's desire to substitute repression for wider reaching civil reform. In late January and early February 1951, the collective punishments began to be imposed on uncooperative villages.<sup>83</sup> More importantly, food

control and denial operations, entailing the tight regulation of rice rations and the limitation of caloric intake in the New Villages, accelerated significantly in the late spring of 1951.<sup>84</sup> Restrictions on food reached their peak in June 1951 as resettlement in Johore neared completion.<sup>85</sup> However, while the British effort escalated military pressure on the population, reforms and investment continued to lag. Gurney's resistance to more aggressively paced political and administrative reform led him to advocate a different strategic approach in June 1951:

By the end of the year, we shall have finished squatter resettlement, so that the role of the civil administration in carrying out the plan of operations will become less prominent. Operations will then become more largely police and military.<sup>86</sup>

While Gurney's phrasing seems inconspicuous, a shift towards more active military and police operations was not part of the Briggs Plan; Briggs did not foresee a shift away from civil efforts. Undoubtedly, population resettlement required a massive effort by the civil administration that stretched them to the brink of their capacity, but their role was not simply to resettle and leave, but to control the population and permanently prevent the return of the communists. The military framework and its striking forces were intended to maintain the cordon between the insurgents in the jungle and the population in settled areas, undertake targeted offensive operations based on the intelligence gained from the population, and progressively hand over responsibility for security to the police as their capacity improved. The army's effort was intended to buy time for the civil administration to develop better capacity to take over the campaign. As the civil and police gained strength, Briggs had foreseen a smaller military commitment, not a larger one.

The BDCC articulated a vision similar to Gurney's:

We feel that the distinction should be drawn between the intensive fight against armed terrorists and the eradication of the Min Yuen which will be a long-term process. In our view the elimination of armed terrorists in Malaya is of first priority.<sup>87</sup>

This, too, represented a significant departure from the Briggs Plan, which clearly prioritised the elimination of the Min Yuen rather than large-scale military operations to eliminate 'armed terrorists'. Given that the claim contradicted the position of the FARELF chiefs of staff, who also sat on the BDCC, this was probably Commissioner General MacDonald's personal position.

Finally, many Malay elites supported a shift towards harsher security and punitive measures against the Chinese population. In a meeting with the acting high commissioner following Gurney's murder, the Mentari Besars (the sultans' deputies) pushed for expanded measures including the resumption of large-scale deportations and the seizure of property from Chinese who did not hand information to British forces.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the Cabinet's apprehension regarding the counterinsurgency's progress and civilian attempts to pivot towards greater militarisation, the army

held fast to its support for the Briggs Plan.<sup>89</sup> Slim was cautiously optimistic; he believed that a recent increase in insurgent attacks was actually a sign that the insurgents were concerned with the implications of resettlement, and he pointed to evidence of increasing (but still underwhelming) cooperation from the Chinese.<sup>90</sup> This led him to reaffirm his commitment to the Briggs Plan:

The real enemy are not the bandits in the jungle but the Min Yuen, in the towns, who finance, supply and direct them. It is against this side of the Communist organization that the greatest efforts should be directed and the most lasting results achieved. This is a matter for intelligence, CID [Criminal Investigation Division] and the police, and is largely a civil responsibility ... I suggest that pressure should be brought to bear on all concerned to solve these problems, and to attack the Min Yuen with the utmost vigour and with every resource.<sup>91</sup>

The chiefs of staff held a similar view:

Sir Nevil Brownjohn [vice chief of the imperial general staff] said that he did not agree with the view of the B.D.C.C ... the elimination of armed terrorists in Malaya was a first priority. He agreed that the job of the armed forces was to kill bandits, but he was quite confident that the only way of rendering the bandits incapable of effective action was by destroying their organization..<sup>92</sup>

Throughout 1951, the army would retain this position. What began to change were attitudes towards the chain of command. Harding expressed concerns about the efficacy of the civilians in Malaya as early as October 1950. His comments received an indirect response in the form of a minute authored by Brownjohn:

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that General Briggs has satisfactorily co-ordinated the actions of military and civil and has done as much as any man, *with the powers given to him*, to re-organize the civil agencies and to stimulate real, energetic action on their part. The fact remains that progress is extremely slow. I personally begin to doubt whether the Briggs Plan will ever be completely successful, unless more drive and energy is shown by the civil administration and the police.

It can be argued that if Gurney had been a man of drive in addition to being an able administrator, things would have gone much faster. I am, however, inclined to think that the dilatoriness of the civil administration and the failure to overcome quickly financial obstacles and local administrative difficulties is due to the fact that there is no-one on the highest level with powers of leadership, a real sense of urgency and the authority to take decisions.<sup>93</sup>

Against this backdrop, the impending struggle over the position of high commissioner represented a deeper struggle between civilian and military actors over the strategic direction of the campaign.

### **British Successes During Phase I (June 1950-July 1951)**

By the summer of 1951, the situation appeared dire. Despite resettlement in south Malaya being largely complete, insurgent violence was up, British

officials were lamenting the lack of mass mobilisation among the Chinese, the pace of police and administrative expansion was falling behind, and the desired political reforms did not appear anywhere in sight. But was the situation as bad as it first appeared? Was the Briggs Plan flawed? More importantly, was the civil administration really failing to make any progress? A closer look at the figures reveals cause for more optimism.

While the pace of resettlement fell behind Briggs' expectations, the reality is that the forced relocation of over 450,000 individuals was a monumental task, and Briggs' timetable was probably too ambitious. However, by mid-February 1951, Briggs reported 117,000 had been resettled, and by early June, the figure was over 240,000. Resettlement in the priority areas in southern Malaya, including Johore, Malacca, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, were largely complete.<sup>94</sup> In turn, this allowed the British government to begin aggressive food denial operations in the late spring of 1951. Additionally, the collective punishments of non-cooperative villages and the resumption of deportation operations put increasing pressure on the population, which in turn placed increasing pressure on the communists.

Insurgent violence had increased in October 1950 as the communists attempted to counter the resettlement drive; as British operations increased in pace and intensity in 1951, so did attempts by the insurgents to combat them.<sup>95</sup> The increasing rate of violence prompted Defence Minister Shinwell to write to Slim in to express his concern in early May. Slim's response was that while the situation was certainly less than satisfactory, he urged, 'we must be careful not to judge the position solely on the returns of incidents and casualties'.<sup>96</sup> The figures beyond the incident rate paint a different picture. While total incidents were up 19 per cent in the quarter ending in June 1951, there was also a 179 per cent increase in insurgent surrenders alongside a 40 per cent increase in insurgents killed, a 17 per cent decrease in civilian casualties, a reduction in firearms lost and an increase in recovered weapons, as well as a 100 per cent increase in insurgent food depots located by British forces.<sup>97</sup> This indicated that the British effort was beginning to pay off. Most importantly, this battle over the population culminated in the MCP's decision to back down in October 1951. The MCP's 'October Resolutions', calling off the active armed struggle, constituted an admission that their attempt to disrupt resettlement, and the armed approach more generally, had failed.<sup>98</sup>

On the political and administrative fronts, too, there was definite progress. While the state of the police force left much to be desired, significant progress had been made recruiting officers and lieutenants. By the end of July, 473 of the 557 vacancies had been filled, new candidates were under consideration, and more attractive terms of service had been approved by the treasury.<sup>99</sup> Additionally, reports indicate that the intelligence branches were improving and there was the beginnings of an increase in Chinese participation in the force. Politically, while the citizenship ordinance was not passed until 1952, work on the

new law had been introduced in the summer of 1950 and made slow but steady progress through the government, thanks in part to significant efforts by Commissioner General MacDonald.<sup>100</sup> It was approved by the legislative council in early March 1951.<sup>101</sup> Consequently, while the situation was still considered to be serious, there are clear indications that the tide was beginning to turn.

### Templer: The Last King of Malaya

As the civil–military confrontation over the direction of strategy in Malaya was coming to a head, two events combined to create an opening for a drastic change in the machinery and direction of the campaign. On 6 October 1951, High Commissioner Gurney was killed when his motorcade was ambushed by the MNLA. Coinciding with Briggs' impending retirement, Gurney's murder created a power vacuum in the Malayan administration and the opportunity to choose new leadership. Later that month, the Labour government was defeated by the Conservatives in a snap election, returning Winston Churchill to Downing St. The new government held a very different attitude regarding the proper conduct of the counterinsurgency and, like the army, held the top civilians in Malaya in low regard, giving the officers the opening they desired.<sup>102</sup> The selection of Templer to replace Gurney and Briggs represented a victory for the army, in support of a more aggressive implementation of the political and administrative elements the Briggs Plan, over the more cautious attitudes of the civilians in Malaya. In this way, Templer's selection also represented a *de facto* transfer of control in Malaya to military officers, despite the measures taken to assure the public that this was not the case.

The civilians opposed a transfer of control to the army despite their support for a more militarised approach to the campaign. Commissioner General MacDonald's position was unequivocal:

I am averse to the appointment of any of the soldiers you mentioned. None of them would be likely to understand adequately *the need to continue Gurney's political and social policy*.<sup>103</sup>

This social policy, clearly, was the avoidance of measures that would challenge Malay interests. The Malay sultans had similar concerns, and they demanded a say in the selection of the new high commissioner, threatening to 'flatly refuse to cooperate with appointee unless they thought he was the right man'.<sup>104</sup> The sultans did not want to give up their power and they did not want a high commissioner who would exert greater pressure to conform to Briggs' political programme, which entailed a decrease in their power and a series of politically unpopular investments. Malaya had reached an important turning point, and everyone appeared to recognise it.

On October 17, less than two weeks after Gurney's murder and less than two weeks until his retirement, Briggs finally revealed his frustrations and belief that

he did not have enough power to direct the campaign. He argued that it was vital to place the director of operations in the chain of command while giving him a significant measure of policy control, proposing that 'full executive authority (subject only to the high commissioner's overriding power of control) should be given by the high commissioner to the director of operations in all emergency matters falling within the sphere of the Federal government'.<sup>105</sup> This would allow the director of operations to issue direct orders to members of the Federal War Council.

A month later, General Sir Rob Lockhart, former commander-in-chief of the Indian Army who had initially been selected to replace Briggs, reflected on the challenges he faced upon his arrival, which included:

- The number of independent administrative units with which he had to deal
- Disinterest of the government in the Emergency
- Adherence to peace-time standards
- Racial divisions between Malays and Chinese, the need to enlist Chinese cooperation, the hostility of the Malays to the idea of a united Malayan nation.<sup>106</sup>

Lockhart praised Briggs' efforts, concluding, 'All informed critics with whom I have discussed the situation have stated that the Briggs Plan was, and is, fundamentally sound'.<sup>107</sup> He recommended a complete change in the machinery of strategic control in order to give the military greater power to implement the Briggs Plan:

The time has arrived when the man who has full executive control of whole organisation of Government must run the Emergency.

He must have wider experience of the capabilities of both the Services and Administration and should therefore be a Military Officer.<sup>108</sup>

The first major decision taken by the incoming Conservative government was to send the new colonial secretary, Sir Oliver Lyttelton, to Malaya in late November 1951. Lyttelton's attitude toward the organisation of the counterinsurgency crystallised early in his visit:

I have subjected the subject of the chain of command and responsibility to intense and careful study and I have definitely reached the conclusion that the place where a personage of the caliber we discussed is required must be the (Headquarters of the) High Commission of the Federation. My advisers agree.

This High Commissioner would assume entire responsibility for both military operations and civil administration.<sup>109</sup>

Lyttelton's recommendations (and even their wording) reflected Lockhart's November 23 memo, revealing that Lockhart and Briggs, who had remained

in Malaya following the end of his term for precisely this reason, had succeeded in convincing Lyttelton to support the army's position.<sup>110</sup> Lyttelton further recommended sidelining Commissioner General MacDonald by removing as many of his powers and responsibilities vis-à-vis Malaya as possible. Moving forward, the officers would be in firm control of the campaign.

The Cabinet accepted Lyttelton's proposals, and the War Office was asked to present a suitable list of candidates. Templer, a rising star in the army, was the unequivocal choice. Templer did not actually want the job due to its potential to interfere with his career in the army. However, rather than being offered the position, Templer was ordered to Malaya by his superiors and seconded to the Colonial Office on special assignment, a significant departure from normal procedure.<sup>111</sup> While Templer was not the first, nor last, officer to serve as a high commissioner, these postings were almost always retirement positions, and Templer may be the only officer to have returned to active duty. Arriving in February 1952, Templer enjoyed an unprecedented level of power through the combined roles of high commissioner and director of operations, backed by the unwavering support of the colonial secretary and the prime minister.

Supported from above, Templer's arrival led to sweeping changes to the counterinsurgency on the civil side the army had advocated since 1950. The first priority was administrative reform to combat the divisions within the federal administration, as well as the tensions between the centre and the states.<sup>112</sup> The most important change was the fusion of the War and Executive Councils, meaning the War Council gained control of all the instruments of governance and the counterinsurgency campaign would no longer be separate from any aspect of governance in Malaya. At the same time, membership on the council expanded to include the leader of the United Malay National Organization as well as a representative of the sultans in order to cement Malay support for the government. Additionally, representative of the Chinese community was added.<sup>113</sup>

At the same time, Templer modified the Director of Operations Committee to be something of a shadow-cabinet, containing his seven main civil, military, and police deputies, in order to plan and direct counterinsurgency operations. Templer explicitly designed this system in order to plan operations, pass orders directly to the State and District WECs, and 'by-pass the cumbersome government machine', further centralising his own control while ostensibly expanding self-government.<sup>114</sup>

The first test of the government's new resolve, involving the appointment of a deputy high commissioner to assist with the civil administration, came even before Templer's arrival.<sup>115</sup> Lyttelton's goal was to find an effective administrator to whom Templer could delegate the day-to-day of civil administration. His choice was the chief secretary of Jamaica, Sir Donald MacGillivray, who had previously served as a distinguished member of the Palestine Civil Service during the Arab and Jewish Rebellions of the 1930s and 40s.<sup>116</sup>

The Malay sultans strongly opposed the choice, adamant that the deputy high commissioner should be promoted from within the Malayan Civil Service. Additionally, the Malayan Legislative Council, which contained significant Malay representation, threatened to vote against the proposal.<sup>117</sup> Given resistance from Malaya to the appointment, it became a battle between Lyttelton and local opinion. Under the previous regime, there was little question that Gurney would have deferred to Malay opinion. As it was, MacDonald expressed strong opposition to the use of Britain's reserve powers to override a vote rejecting MacGillivray, maintaining that the British could not possibly risk alienating the Malays.<sup>118</sup> However, Lyttelton insisted that if the legislative council tried to block the appointment, the acting high commissioner was to invoke those reserve powers.<sup>119</sup> MacGillivray was to be appointed, regardless of the political fallout.

In the end, the British were not required to take such drastic measures. While the announcement of MacGillivray was met with widespread criticism in Malaya,<sup>120</sup> the death of King George VI on 2 February 1951 led everyone to put their disagreements aside.<sup>121</sup> While Lyttelton's intentions were not carried through to their logical conclusion, this episode demonstrates that the British were no longer willing to acquiesce to conservative Malay sentiment. All that was needed to bring this change about was for proponents of the Briggs Plan to gain control of the powers of the high commissioner.

As fused high commissioner and director of operations, General Templer enjoyed unprecedented authority. Sitting at the top of both civilian and military chains of command in Malaya, his position empowered the high commissioner to issue orders to the military without reference to FARELF, something previous high commissioners could not do. Moreover, it empowered the director of operations to issue orders to the civil service, a power Briggs had not enjoyed. Moreover, once he was issued his directive from London, the British government allowed him a remarkable level of autonomy to conduct the campaign as he saw fit. No other figure in British Malaya exercised as much authority or autonomy.

Templer's conduct as high commissioner departed from Gurney's in three important respects. First, Templer completely retooled the machinery of governance, intelligence, and police administration.<sup>122</sup> Second, he became more aggressive in his management of personnel. Using his power of appointment, Templer did not hesitate to dismiss any official whose cooperation was suspect; a number of sources refer to 'spies' throughout the administration who reported back to Templer on the disposition and conduct of state and district administration.<sup>123</sup> Finally, while it is true that the term of Templer's appointment saw the accelerating pace of reform, it also saw a significant increase in the use of collective punishments against the population in order to coerce information regarding the insurgents, demonstrating the army's commitment to adopt a combined carrot and stick approach.<sup>124</sup>

But Templer's behaviour was not the product of his own strategic thinking, nor was it based on a novel approach to the campaign. The major strategic initiatives implemented during Templer's tenure largely originated with Briggs and Gurney. But Gurney and MacDonald's unwillingness to spark a confrontation with reluctant Malay elites, combined with the cumbersome machinery of governance in Malaya and Gurney's tendency to separate politics-as-usual from the campaign, slowed the progress of the civil campaign between June 1950 and November 1951. In this sense, Templer was sent to Malaya to ensure that the initiatives contained in the Briggs Plan and endorsed by Churchill's government would not be impeded by the civil administration in Malaya; he was not reliant on the goodwill and cooperation of the civil service as Briggs had been. Templer's drive and his personal experiences made him an ideal candidate to oversee the campaign in Malaya, but these attributes could not have made a difference if he had faced the same barriers as Briggs.

At the same time, while Templer's aggressive push seems to have overcome a number of civilian obstacles, important changes were occurring within Malay politics that rendered his job significantly easier. Previously, there had been little inclination to cooperation among Malay and Chinese elites, which in turn generated significant resistance among the Malays to investment and political reforms to improve the condition of the Chinese. But that began to change in 1951 as the attitude of some previously hard-line nationalists began to relax, culminating in a pathbreaking alliance between UNMO and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). This story has been documented elsewhere, and does not warrant in-depth treatment.<sup>125</sup> However, the electoral alliance forged by the two organisations in 1951 laid the foundations for better cooperation between the communities going forward, and in 1952 the alliance was extended beyond Kuala Lumpur.<sup>126</sup>

Elections were preceded by the reorganisation of the federal legislative council by the introduction of the 'member system', inaugurated in April 1951, providing Malay citizens representation within the government, which Gurney suggested increased the willingness of Malay elites to cooperate with government initiatives.<sup>127</sup> The elections themselves encouraged the expansion of political parties to gain popular support, while the threat of Dato Onn's non-communal Independence for Malaya Party, stressing the importance of Malay-Chinese cooperation, pushed the communal parties, UNMO and MCA, into this alliance. Templer's job was rendered significantly easier due to the move towards elections and greater indigenous involvement in politics promoted by Gurney and the Labour government in 1951.<sup>128</sup> Finally, increasing government revenues from the Korean War commodities boom, which began to have a major impact in 1952, reduced the zero-sum nature of government budgeting, allowing generous investment into both communities.<sup>129</sup> In this way, due credit for the accelerating pace of reform after 1952 also needs to

be given to local elites as well as Gurney and the policies of the Labour government.

## Conclusion

Between its inauguration and General Templer's arrival, the Briggs Plan faced a number of obstacles stemming from the political will and organisation of the Malayan government. The political interests of the ethnic Malay population, notably their opposition to investment in the Chinese community and the extension of political rights, ran counter to the Briggs Plan's civil initiatives. Exacerbating the problem, the Malayan state's decentralised and cumbersome structure and the relative weakness of the federal government created constitutional challenges to unified higher direction of the campaign, undermining Briggs' ability to direct the campaign.

These challenges constituted serious obstacles to Briggs' programme, but it was the third, the reluctance of the high commissioner and Colonial Office officials to take political risks to overcome these obstacles, which ultimately handicapped the implementation of Briggs' civil elements. Instead, as criticism of government inaction mounted, Gurney and MacDonald attempted to escalate the coercive response through the use of collective punishments and food denial operations, which did not require the expenditure of political capital.

On the other side, the officers recognised both the limits of military force and the potential contribution of political and administrative reform to defeating the insurgency and consolidating an effective state. As Generals Slim, Harding, Briggs, and Lockhart concluded that the existing administrative setup would continue to constitute an obstacle to the Briggs Plan, the civil-military conflict in Malaya transformed into a struggle for control of the civil service itself. The decision to appoint General Templer as high commissioner reflected the new British government's decision to endorse the army's position and allow them to take the lead by placing an officer in overall command of the campaign.

At the same time, the army's view that the civil authorities lacked the drive and desire to play their role was not entirely true. There were certainly several factors that produced civilian opposition. However, the officers seemed to possess less than a full understanding of (or sympathy for) the challenges facing the government including the incredible strain of administrative and police expansion and training, and more importantly, the risks of trying to force political action on resistant Malays.

The support demonstrated by the officers for the primacy of a political and administrative approach to the campaign carries important implications for the broader analysis of counterinsurgent behaviour: it is a mistake to assume that military preferences will necessarily push for military solutions. So much of the wider literature on counterinsurgency carries this assumption, either

implicitly or explicitly, but the historical record reveals a much higher level of nuance on the part of military actors, who in this case demonstrated a clear understanding of the limits of military power's ability to bring about a successful, long-term resolution to the conflict. The equally important corollary is that civilians may not always support political solutions to insurgencies, and this largely depends on their political preferences.<sup>130</sup>

Many counterinsurgency lessons taken from the Malayan Emergency focus on the importance of civil–military cooperation; however, to this point, very little work on British imperial policing and counterinsurgency more generally has actually examined the nature of civil–military relations and the process of strategic planning. Such a focus challenges many of the assumptions built into theories of counterinsurgency. In Malaya, despite the open lines of communication and opportunities for coordination created by the vaunted security committees, effective cooperation failed to emerge. The case of Malaya reveals that open communication could not promote better understanding by each actor of the challenges and concerns facing their counterparts, and they certainly could not overcome the problem of divergent preferences among different civilian and military actors. This suggests that communication may not be enough to achieve an integrated campaign; the solution might be less about cooperation than higher levels of integration in the chain of command. This analysis reveals the need to pay closer attention to the preferences of civilian and military actors, the interaction between them, and how these dynamics impact the strategic direction of counterinsurgency campaigns.

Finally, the civil–military dynamics that shaped the implementation of the Briggs Plan provide further insight into the Templer debate. Templer's success was the result of the authority he was given. But this does not entirely clarify the nature of the changes that coincided with Templer's appointment. Did Templer's arrival coincide with a new strategy (a shift from population control to 'hearts and minds')? Or, as some have argued, was Templer the beneficiary of Briggs' success, receiving credit that he did not entirely deserve? The answer to both of these questions is a qualified yes. First, Templer's arrival did not coincide with a new strategy, as many of the political elements that emerged during Templer's time as high commissioner were the culmination of processes that had begun under his predecessors. Similarly, if it is true that the insurgency was broken by the resettlement drive and framework operations, then the role of these political measures is likely minimal. At the same time, Templer's arrival represented an important change in the administrative setup in Malaya as well as a significant departure from Gurney's governing style. The administration was centralised and strengthened, and Templer mobilised its full resources behind the campaign. In this sense, the campaign strategy itself may not have changed, but the vast authority granted to Templer allowed him to aggressively push forward with all of the elements of the Briggs Plan. That having been said, evidence clearly

demonstrates that the campaign was beginning to yield important successes even before Templer's arrival, and significant credit is due to his predecessors, both Briggs and Gurney.

## Notes

1. The phase between 1948 and 1950 was largely a disorganised series of ad-hoc military measures rather than an integrated campaign directed by any specific strategy.
2. Short, *Communist Insurrection in Malaya*; Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*; Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*; Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*. See also Hack, "Iron Claws on Malaya"; and Smith, "General Templer and Counterinsurgency in Malaya." See also the literature in political science including Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change*; Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons*; Jackson, *Organizational Dysfunction*; Nolan, *Military Leadership and Counterinsurgency*.
3. Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*; Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect*; Sunderland, *Army Operations in Malaya*; Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*; Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency*; Egnell, "Explaining US and British Performance." Cf. Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*, 100, who refers to the committee system under Briggs as sometimes "farcical."
4. Especially Short, *Communist Insurrection in Malaya*; Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*; Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*.
5. Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*; Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*; Hack, "Iron Claws on Malaya"; Ramakrishna, "'Transmogrifying' Malaya"; Smith, "General Templer and Counterinsurgency in Malaya."
6. Hack, "Iron Claws on Malaya." See also Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect*, 19; Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds?'; French, "Nasty, not Nice"; Gentile, *Wrong Turn*, 6; Etzioni, "COIN: A Study of Strategic Illusion"; Hazelton, "The 'Hearts and Minds' Fallacy," for variations. See also Opper, *People's War*, 293–5.
7. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change*; Strachan, *Politics of the British Army*; Cassidy, "Why Great Powers"; Cassidy, *Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror*; Nagl, *Counterinsurgency Lessons*; Jackson, *Organizational Dysfunction*; Egnell, "Explaining US and British Performance." Also Paget, *Counter-insurgency Operations*, 158.
8. Also Caverley, "The Myth of Military Myopia."
9. Surridge, *Managing the South African War*, especially Chs 7 and 8.
10. First quote: Memorandum by General Macready, May 24, 1920. P 1. Multiple locations including BL 102/5/21. Bonar Law Papers, PA; Second quote: Letter from Macready to Greenwood, July 17, 1920. LG/F/19/2/12. Lloyd George Papers, PA.
11. Letter to Air Ministry from Brooke Popham, July 20, 1936, in Brooke Popham Papers, 4/6, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College, London, UK (LHCMA).
12. See Telegram 1350 from HC to Colonial Secretary, December 17, 1949. DEFE 11/34, Doc 465. The National Archives of the UK, Kew, UK (TNA).
13. Telegram 151 from HC to Colonial Secretary. February 23, 1950. DEFE 11/34, Doc 523. TNA.
14. Telegram 1358 from HC to Colonial Secretary. December 20, 1949. DEFE 11/34, Doc 467. TNA.
15. Telegram 151 from HC to Colonial Secretary. February 23, 1950. DEFE 11/34, Doc 523. TNA. (My emphasis).

16. Report of CIGS visit to Malaya, Part II. P 2. No Date, the visit itself came in November 1949. CO 537/4374. TNA.
17. See "Appreciation by General Briggs," October 25, 1950, as COS(50)468, Chiefs of Staff Committee. CAB 21/1682, Doc 8. TNA.
18. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)1. CAB 134/497, p 3. TNA.
19. "British Defence Coordinating Committee, Far East. The Military Situation in Malaya on 9 April, 1950. Appreciation by Commander-in-Chief, FARELF." SEC(50)7. Received by CoS Committee as COS(50)132, April 19, 1950. DEFE 11/35, Doc 622, p 2. TNA.
20. Memorandum COS 294/9/3/50 by C.R. Price to Chiefs of Staff. March 9, 1950. DEFE 11/34, Doc 548. TNA.
21. Mockaitis, "Briggs, Sir Harold Rawdon," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
22. While the resettlement scheme is often attributed to Briggs in 1950, it was actually Gurney's initiative, developed in December 1948. Annex to "The Squatter Problem in the Federation of Malaya." Summary of Federation of Malaya White Paper. P 5. MAL.C(50)5. April 22, 1950. DEFE 11/35, Doc 641a. TNA. Due to the deterioration in the security situation, resettlement had to be put on hold and the British began deporting Chinese detainees. Once the Communists defeated the Nationalists, it was no longer advisable – the British were concerned that this would lead to the Chinese government providing training to the deportees and sending them back to Malaya. Consequently, in late 1949, deportation ended, and resettlement recommenced. See Despatch No. 3 from High Commissioner, January 12, 1950. DEFE 11/34, Doc 493a. TNA. P 4; Cabinet Conclusions CM(50)37, CAB 12817/37. TNA. While Thompson (*Defeating Communist Insurgency*, 53) argued this was done for ethical reasons, there is no evidence that the British were motivated by moral concerns. Moreover, deportations resumed in the spring of 1951, made available to the Malayan government as a coercive tool in their fight for information. See Telegram SEACOS 213 for Chiefs of Staff from BDCC (FE), June 16, 1951. P 2. CAB 21/2884. Unnumbered Doc. TNA; see also Hack, "Detention, Deportation, and Resettlement."
23. This, according to a comment by the colonial secretary on May 18. See Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)5. CAB 134/497, p 1. TNA. For an early articulation of the Briggs' Plan, see notes on a special meeting of the BDCC with General Briggs on May 5, 1950. (document dated May 9, 1950). DEFE 11/36, Doc 693a. TNA. For a more developed version, see "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700. TNA Yet another version, likely the most developed, comes in the form of a memorandum presented to the Malaya Committee on July 7, 1950: "General Briggs' Plan for the Elimination of Communists in Malaya." Memorandum by the Minister of Defence. MAL.C(50)23. CAB 134/497. TNA.
24. See "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700. TNA.
25. "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700, p 3. TNA.
26. "Federation Plan for the Elimination of the Communist Organisation and Armed Forces in Malaya," final version. May 24, 1950. Annex to memorandum by the minister of defence to the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)23. July 7, 1950. CAB 134/497. TNA.

27. Ibid., 2; See also "Outline of Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by General Briggs, Annex to "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700, p 2. TNA.
28. "General Briggs' Plan for the Elimination of Communists in Malaya." Memorandum by the Minister of Defence. MAL.C(50)23. July 7, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 2. TNA.
29. "Outline of Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by General Briggs, Annex to "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700, p 3. TNA.
30. 1st meeting of the Malaya Committee in 1950, MAL.C(51)1. July 26, 1951. CAB 134/497. TNA.
31. Message to state governments from General Briggs. Annex to "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700. TNA.
32. "Future Anti-Bandit Policy in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)14. May 12, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 700. P 3–4. TNA.
33. See Carnell, "Malayan Citizenship Legislation."
34. 8th meeting of the Malay Committee, MAL.C(50)8. July 17, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 3. TNA.
35. Directive No. 1. Director of Operations, Malaya. April 16, 1950. CAB 21/1681, Doc 1. TNA.
36. 6th Meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)6. June 19, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 2. TNA.
37. Directive No. 1. Director of Operations, Malaya. April 16, 1950. CAB 21/1681, Doc 1, p 2. TNA.
38. Ibid.
39. This point was raised in the 4th meeting of the Malaya Committee, May 8, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 3. TNA.
40. "An Appreciation of the Military and Political Situation in Malaya as on 25th October, 1950," Memorandum by the director of operations. COS(50)468, November 16, 1950. CAB 21/1682, Doc 8. TNA.
41. See "Combined Appreciation of the Emergency Situation by the High Commissioner and the Director of Operations." June 4, 1951. CAB 21/2884, Unnumbered Doc. TNA; Oppen, *People's War*, 298–300.
42. The British Army's psychological warfare division conducted studies of the surrender behaviour of insurgents. While food shortages were not the primary reason given for surrendering, it constituted an important response that grew in significance over time. See WO 291/1763 – A Study of Surrender Behaviour among Chinese Communist Terrorists in Malaya; and WO 291/1783 – A Study of Surrenders in Malaya. TNA.
43. See Hack, "Iron Claws on Malaya."
44. This has occasionally led to the argument that Malaya was a case of 'most likely' for successful counterinsurgency. See Greenhill and Staniland, "Ten Ways to Lose at Counterinsurgency," 403.
45. See "The Squatter Problem in Malaya," Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C.50(5), April 22, 1950. DEFE 11/35, Doc 641a. TNA. For long-standing opposition to Chinese rights among the sultans, see "Pro-Malay Policy," *Malaya Tribune*, December 13, 1947. For comments about middle class opposition, see Telegram 400 from HC to CO, May 3, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 678. TNA.
46. "Political and Economic background to the situation in Malaya." P 1. Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, DO 50(94). November 15, 1950. DEFE 11/42, Doc 995, Folio 285. TNA. See Rudner, "The Draft Development Plan," for a detailed discussion

- of the development of Malayan economic plans during the Emergency, and White, "Capitalism and Counterinsurgency?" for a discussion of British relations with business in Malaya during the Emergency. While Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, 107–11, argued that the Korean War, which broke out in June 1950, led to a budgetary windfall due to a spike in commodity prices, that argument comes with important caveats. The state of Malayan finances was a constant preoccupation for the British in 1950–1951. CAB 21/1682. TNA. See, for example, Doc 8: "An Appreciation of the Military and Political Situation in Malaya on 25 October 1950." Report by the Director of Operations. Received by Chiefs of Staff Committee as COS(50)468, November 16, 1950; See also Doc 11a, a report to the prime minister of a meeting between the chiefs of staff and General Briggs, no date; Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)5. CAB 134/497, p 3. TNA; Cabinet Conclusions, June 19, 1950. CM(50)37. CAB 128/17/37. TNA; Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*, 277, argues that by the time large-scale investment began, prices had begun to drop and Templer was deeply worried about Malayan finances.
47. "Various Matters Discussed with the Authorities in Malaya." Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary, MAL.C(50)25. July 14, 1950. CAB 21/1681, Doc 31. TNA.
  48. This was a concern of Gurney's since 1949. Secret Despatch No. 3 from HC. January 12, 1950. DEFE 11/34, Doc 493A. TNA. It also reflected the consequences of Britain's conciliatory policy towards the Palestinian Arabs after 1939 in the Palestine Mandate, which triggered a Jewish insurgency in the 1940s; Gurney had previously been the last chief secretary for Palestine.
  49. Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*, 14.
  50. See also "United Malays Oppose Union," *Malaya Tribune*, March 6, 1946; "The Sultans' Protest," *The Straits Times*, April 3, 1946.
  51. "Political and Economic background to the situation in Malaya." Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary DO 50(94). November 15, 1950. DEFE 11/42, Doc 995, Folio 285. TNA. This was written two and a half years after the promulgation of the Federation constitution, and so must be viewed as a retrospective that is not isolated from the challenges the British perceived that the constitution generated.
  52. Ibid.
  53. Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Malaya Committee MAL.C(50)6. June 19, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 2. TNA.
  54. British business interests do not seem to have played a significant role. See White, "Capitalism and Counter-insurgency?"
  55. "Political and Economic background to the situation in Malaya." Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary DO 50(94). November 15, 1950. DEFE 11/42, Doc 995, p 8. TNA.
  56. Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Malaya Committee MAL.C(50)6. June 19, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 2. TNA.
  57. "Political and Economic background to the situation in Malaya." Memorandum by the Colonial Secretary DO 50(94). November 15, 1950. DEFE 11/42, Doc 995, p 1. TNA.
  58. "Memorandum by the Officer Administering the Government, Federation of Malaya, in Connection with General Brigg's 'Appreciation of the Military and Political Situation in Malaya as on 25th October, 1950.'" submitted to CoS Committee as COS (50)473. November 18th, 1950. P 3. CAB 21/1682, Doc 10. TNA.
  59. Ibid.
  60. Report of CIGS visit to Malaya, Part II, p 2. No Date. CO 537/4374. TNA.

61. Letter from Colonial Secretary to High Commissioner. December 5, 1949. CO 537/4374, Doc 8, p 2. TNA.
62. Report of CIGS visit to Malaya, Part II. P 2. No Date. CO 537/4374. TNA.
63. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)1. April 19, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 1. TNA.
64. Minutes of a Special Meeting of the BDCC, May 9, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 693a. TNA; "Federation Plan for the Elimination of the Communist Organisation and Armed Forces in Malaya," final version. May 24, 1950. Annex to memorandum by the minister of defence to the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)23. July 7, 1950. CAB 134/497, p 3.
65. Telegram 1052 from OAG to Gurney. November 2, 1950. CO 537/6004, Doc 1. TNA.
66. Ibid. See also documents throughout CAB 21/2884, including Docs 36, 37. TNA.
67. "The Situation in Malaya," Memorandum by colonial secretary MAL.C(51)2. July 13, 1951. DEFE 11/45, Doc 1349. TNA.
68. Ibid.; Minutes of a Special Meeting of the BDCC, May 9, 1950. DEFE 11/36, Doc 693a. TNA.
69. Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(50)5. May 18, 1950. P 1. CAB 134/497. TNA.
70. "The Military Situation in Malaya." Memorandum by the War Secretary, MAL.C(50)21, June 17, 1950. CAB21/1681, Doc 14, p 4. TNA.
71. Ibid., 4–5.
72. Personal letter DO/CIC/65 from General Harding, GHQ FARELF, to CIGS. October 24, 1950. WO 216/835, Doc 1. TNA.
73. Ibid.
74. Telegram 1052 from OAG to Gurney. November 2, 1950. CO 537/6004, Doc 1. TNA.
75. Ibid.
76. Meeting with the Director of Operations, Federation of Malaya. GEN 345/1, November 27, 1950. CAB 130/65. TNA.
77. Ibid., 2.
78. GEN 345/5, Meeting at No. 10 Downing St, February 26, 1951. CAB 130/65. TNA.
79. Ibid., 1.
80. Ibid., 2.
81. Notes of a meeting held at the Attorney General's Office, November 10, 1950. CO 537/6007. TNA.
82. See Discussion and Papers presented during the 5th meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Malaya, May 18, 1950. CAB 134/497. TNA.
83. See Report on Malaya No. 104, January 19–25, 1951. DEFE 11/43, Doc 1104. TNA; See also Report on Malaya No. 107, February 9–19, 1951. DEFE 11/43, Doc 1142. TNA; See also "The Present Situation in Malaya," Note by the Colonial Secretary. Undated. DEFE 11/43, Doc 1159. TNA; Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, vol 485, 7 March 1951, 78 (Emrys Hughes) <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1951-03-07/debates/e9c45e96-4935-47b8-8246-ba1fa7f3667e/CollectiveDetentionJenderam>
84. Colonial Office Report 13–19 October 1950. DEFE 11/40, Doc 919a. TNA; Colonial Office Reports for 1–7 June and 8–14 June 1951. DEFE 11/44, Docs 1289 and 1296b. TNA.
85. There is not much discussion of these food denial operations in the official records. However, there are a number of illuminating accounts of these operations, and their consequences, in the personal records of General Sir Rob Lockhart. See File 9501-165 in the Papers of Sir Rob Lockhart, Deputy DO Malaya, especially Doc 1,

- a report dated November 3, 1950 detailing food denial operations, as well as Doc 33, a report on Operation Warbler, a large-scale food denial operation. For measures taken in June, 1951, see Doc 22, which is a copy of the food regulations signed by Briggs. Templer Study Centre, National Army Museum, London, UK (NAM).
86. Personal letter from Gurney to Field Marshal Slim, June 14, 1951. WO 216/394, Doc 2a. TNA.
  87. Telegram SEACOS 213 for Chiefs of Staff from BDCC (FE), June 16, 1951. P 2. CAB 21/2884. Unnumbered Doc. TNA.
  88. Telegram 83 from OAG to Lyttelton, October 30, 1951. CO 1022/148, Doc 2. TNA.
  89. Letter from Shinwell to CIGS, May 3, 1951. DEFE 11/44, Doc 1252b. TNA
  90. Figures for the first half of 1951 are given in the Annex to "Combined Appreciation of the Emergency Situation by the High Commissioner and the Director of Operations." June 4, 1951. CAB 21/2884. TNA; See also "Progress Report on Situation in Malaya," February 15, 1951. Annex to GEN 345/6, Cabinet Memorandum. CAB 21/2884, Doc 36. TNA.
  91. Letter from CIGS to MoD Shinwell, May 4, 1951. DEFE 11/44, Doc 1252g. TNA.
  92. Extract from Chiefs of Staff meeting COS(51)107, June 29, 1951. DEFE 11/45. TNA.
  93. Minute for CIGS on "Appointment of a 'Supremo' for Malaya." Minute Sheet #5, February 24, 1951. WO 216/835. TNA. (My emphasis).
  94. "Progress Report on Situation in Malaya," February 15, 1951. Annex to GEN 345/6, Cabinet Memorandum. CAB 21/2884, Doc 36. TNA; "Combined Appreciation of the Emergency Situation by the High Commissioner and the Director of Operations." June 4, 1951. CAB 21/2884. TNA.
  95. Colonial Office Intelligence, 13–19 July, 1951. DEFE 11/45, Doc 1350. TNA.
  96. Letter from Field Marshal Slim to Shinwell, May 4, 1951. DEFE 11/44, Doc 1252g. TNA.
  97. Annex to "Combined Appreciation of the Emergency Situation by the High Commissioner and the Director of Operations." June 4, 1951. CAB 21/2884. TNA.
  98. Hack, "Iron Claws on Malaya," 104–05.
  99. Minutes of the first meeting of the Malaya Committee, MAL.C(51)1. July 26, 1951. CAB 134/497. TNA.
  100. Colonial Office Intelligence, 14–20 July, 1950. DEFE 11/38, Doc 830a. TNA; "The Present Situation in Malaya," Memorandum by the colonial secretary MAL.C (50)29, September 22, 1950. CAB 21/1681, Doc 57. TNA; Telegram 264 from MacDonald to Colonial Office, November 24, 1950. DEFE 11/42, Doc 1013. TNA.
  101. Colonial Office Intelligence, 16–26 March 1951. DEFE 11/44, Doc 1205. TNA.
  102. For an explicit evaluation of the civilians in Malaya, see Montgomery's note "Success in Malaya," January 2, 1952. WO 216/806, Doc 9a. TNA; David Lloyd Owen, Templer's military assistance, referred to MacDonald as a "socialist slug" in his diary. March 22, 1952. 1998-06-176-2, Lloyd Owen Papers, NAM; In 1949, Lyttelton accused the Labour government of weakening the UK's ability to resist communism and accused Shinwell and Strachey (the Labour minister of defence and war secretary) of having communist sympathies. Letter from Lyttelton to Churchill, March 4, 1949. CHAN II 4/5, Churchill Centre Archives, Cambridge University, UK (CCA).
  103. Telegram 285 from Commissioner General SE Asia to Lloyd. November 5, 1951. CO 850/254/10, Doc 26. TNA (My emphasis).
  104. Telegram 1018 from OAG Malaya to Colonial Office. October 22, 1951. CO 850/254/10, Doc 23. TNA.
  105. Telegram 1052 from OAG to Colonial Secretary. November 1, 1951. CO 1022/7, Doc 1. TNA.

106. "The Situation in the Federation of Malaya from the View of the Director of Operations." Report by Lockhart, November 26, 1951. File 9501-165, Doc 28. Lockhart Papers, NAM.
107. *Ibid.*, 9.
108. "Executive Powers of the High Commissioner and the Director of Operations, 2nd Edition." Memorandum by General Sir Rob Lockhart. November 29, 1951. P 1. File 9501-165, Doc 32. Lockhart Papers, NAM.
109. Telegram 1214 from Lyttelton (via OAG) to Prime Minister (via Colonial Office). December 8, 1951. PREM 11/639, Doc 2. TNA.
110. See also letter from Lockhart to Slim, January 14, 1952. WO 216/806, Doc 12a. TNA.
111. See WO 216/806 – Gen. Templer, especially draft Telegram 693 to WO. TNA.
112. Telegram from Sakai to Lyttelton, January 9, 1952. CO 1022/60, Doc 1. TNA.
113. Telegram 286 from Templer to Lyttelton, February 28, 1952. CO 1022/60, Doc 3. TNA.
114. *Ibid.*
115. See CO 1022/101 – appointment of High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner. TNA.
116. Gullick, "MacGillivray, Sir Donald Charles," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. He had previously served in Tanganyika and came to Palestine as part of Harold MacMichael's entourage.
117. Telegram 128 from OAG (Malaya) to CO, January 30, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 138. TNA. Abdul Rahman would go on to serve as the first prime minister of independent Malaya/Malaysia from 1957 until 1970.
118. Telegram 37 from Commissioner General to Colonial Secretary, January 25, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 117. TNA; See also Telegram 46 from Commissioner General to Colonial Secretary, January 29, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 132. TNA.
119. Telegram 33 from CO to MacDonald, January 17, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 80. TNA; See also Telegram 20 from CO to OAG (Malaya), January 17, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 83/84. TNA.
120. See "Slap in Face for Malaya' New Deputy HC creates stir in KL," *The Singapore Free Press*, February 4, 1952.
121. Telegram 57 from Commissioner General to CO, February 9, 1952. CO 1022/101, Doc 171. TNA.
122. "An Appreciation of the Situation in Malaya on September 22, 1952." WO 216/561, Doc 1B. TNA.; Colonial Office Intelligence Report, February 22–28, 1952. DEFE 11/47, Doc 1563. TNA; "Templer Streamlines 'Cabinet': Changes to Get Rid of 'Split Personality,'" *The Straits Times*, March 3, 1952.
123. See, for example, "Note on planning and organization committees," July 12, 1952. File 7/4/1, Stockwell Papers, LHCMA. It is possible the genesis of this programme predated Templer's arrival: See "Note of a Visit by Mr. Brett to TC Jerome," October 26, 1951. Doc 26, Lockhart Papers, NAM.
124. For an early use of collective punishments by Templer, see records on the March 1952 punishment of Tanjong Malim village in CO 1022/54. TNA; See especially the documents in CO 1022/56 – Imposition of Curfew and Other Restrictions In the Federation of Malaya. TNA; Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya*, 274.
125. Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds*, Ch 7.
126. Telegram 286 from Templer to Lyttelton, February 28, 1952. CO 1022/60, Doc 3. TNA.
127. Letter from Gurney to Higham, April 28, 1951. CO 537/7262, Doc 51. TNA.
128. Telegram from Sakai to Lyttelton, January 9, 1952. CO 1022/60, Doc 1. TNA.

129. See Stubbs, *Counter-Insurgency and the Economic Factor*; Hack, “Iron Claws on Malaya”
130. Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms*, 120.

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