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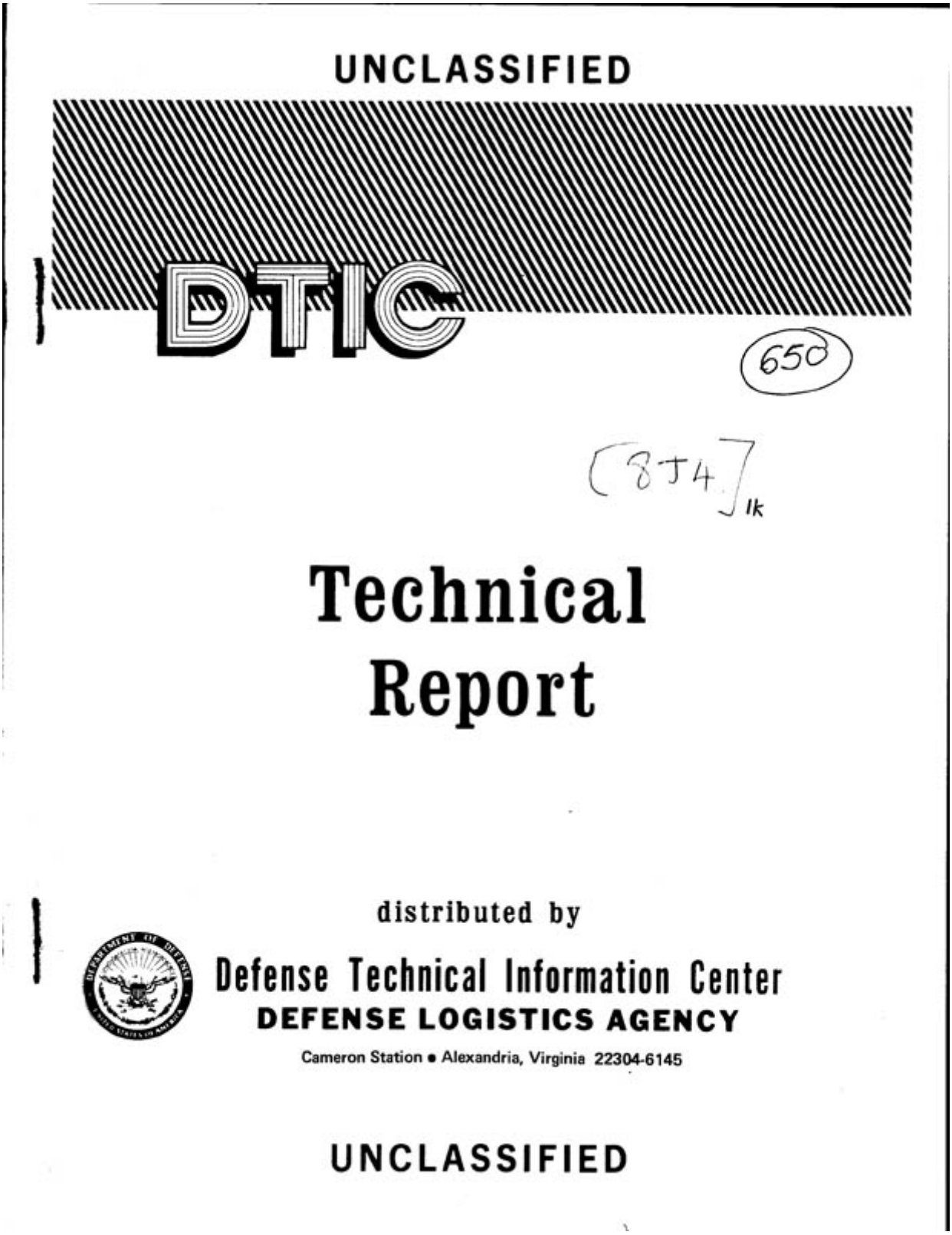
Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC) Preconflict Case Study 6 Malaya



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The end of World War II brought an end to the Japanese occupation of Malaya. The country's economy was devastated during the war, but the British administration, moving into Malaya one month after the end of Japanese occupation, was trying to rebuild quickly. Local Communists, mostly Chinese who had been dealt with harshly by the British, looked to expand their influence in Malaya leading to the declaration of war in 1948. The war came to an end in 1960 as Malaya and the British successfully suppressed the Communist uprising. Communist insurgencies continued to fight until 1989, but all attempts at overturning the government failed.

This case study of the pre-conflict period in Malaya analyzes the political, economic, sociological, psychological, technological and military factors leading to low level conflict and loss of government control.

"Preoccupation with economic development and efficiency appears to have partially blinded the British administration to the human side of what they were doing, and hence to have made it insensitive to the growth of nationalist feeling. It is difficult to explain the Malaya Union debacle in any other way. Moreover, few of the people in Malaya-few, even among the Chinese-were really integrated into the machinery of the modern Malayan Government and economy, although many performed subordinate roles in it." (page 44)

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