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FOOD FIRST DEVELOPMENT REPORT

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U.S.-SPONSORED LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Walden Bello

THE INSTITUTE FOR FOOD & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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WFB

FOREWORD

Revolution and counterrevolution in the Philippines have long been familiar subjects for the United States military. As Walden Bello writes, the country “has enjoyed the dubious distinction of serving as America’s principal proving ground for developing and testing strategies and tactics for low-intensity conflict.” In guerrilla wars and counterinsurgency campaigns from 1899 to the present, the Pentagon, along with its Filipino counterparts and trainees, has attempted — not always successfully or consistently — to develop a methodology for what is currently termed “low-intensity conflict” (LIC).

Yet while the Pentagon and State Department, AID, CIA, and a host of other government agencies active in the Philippines have been developing various counterinsurgency strategies over the decades, the American public, in general, has remained uninformed about the wars raging there. World attention focused on the Philippines in 1986, with the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. But the nature of the unresolved social and political conflicts in the Philippines, and of the insurgency, has remained largely hidden — as has the extent of direct U.S. involvement in the counterrevolutionary response.

During the 1980s, while the counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines continued to develop, the term “low-intensity conflict” began to be widely heard in the United States — due, in part, to the revival of interest in the subject by U.S. officials in Central America. While some in the Pentagon argued vehemently against an emphasis on LIC, others fought for increased attention, funding, and programs to deal with modern counterinsurgency. Under the rubric of the Reagan Doctrine, LIC — however ill-defined and misunderstood — became a serious issue in the military and intelligence establishments, to the point where the *Wall Street Journal* referred to low-intensity conflict as a “growth industry.”

The issue of LIC also became a focus of attention for peace groups—again, largely those concerned with Central America. Studies were made, reports written, and a great deal of discussion and debate about LIC in Central America poured forth. The extremes of the debate were represented by those who dismissed LIC as nothing new and by those who saw it as a frighteningly effective, all-powerful strategy for defeating popular movements in the third world. By 1986, the term “LIC” was widely in use by opponents of the war in Central America.

In the case of the Philippines, however, the debate—both within the military and among peace groups—has been much more muted. While U.S. and Filipino military officers have written handbooks based on the counterinsurgency campaigns of the 1950s, and while their studies of the current insurgency continue, little has been produced for an American audience about the subject. Excellent work by scholars and activists in the Philippines has failed to find a large audience; and writers who look at LIC in Central America have not generally extended their studies to the Philippines.

This report by Walden Bello, then, is an essential resource. It synthesizes and presents a great deal of information about insurgency and counterinsurgency in the Philippines that would not otherwise be easily available to the general public. Most importantly, due to the thoughtful research and insightful analysis, this report presents the case of the Philippines in a historical context which sheds light not only on developments in that country, but on the process of doctrinal and methodological development of LIC by the U.S. military.

As a study of LIC, this report avoids the confusion generated when LIC becomes a “buzzword” rather than a subject for serious study. It illuminates the particular—giving Americans a much-needed understanding of the long history of their country’s involvement in the Philippines—and provides the basis for sound and intelligent generalization.

U.S. Sponsored Low-Intensity Conflict in the Philippines is exemplary work: a brilliant exploration of just what low-intensity conflict means. Walden Bello has written a comprehensive history of counterinsurgency in the Philippines and a strong and moving indictment of current LIC policy there. It is on the basis of research and reporting like this that the American public will be able to reconsider U.S. policy toward the Philippines, and will be able to debate larger issues of U.S. military and strategic policy in the third world.

SARA MILES

SUMMARY

Recent dramatic events in the Philippines have underlined the volatile, revolutionary process that is underway in the country. The U.S. response has been to mount a major effort to stabilize the government of President Corazon Aquino and intensify its campaign to contain the escalating insurgency of the New People's Army (NPA). The U.S. establishment sees itself as having vital stakes in the Philippines, the most important of which are two of the largest U.S. overseas bases, Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base. But beyond this, the U.S. elite has long considered its relationship with the Philippines, a former colony, as a "special relationship" that justifies a more pervasive intervention in that country's internal affairs than in most other third world countries. In short, Washington still regards the Philippines as a part of U.S. territory that can never be allowed to "go red."

This report examines the strategies of low-intensity conflict (LIC) or counterinsurgency that the United States has employed in the Philippines since the turn of the century. U.S. LIC strategy in the Philippines has developed through four major confrontations: the U.S. colonization of the Philippines, 1899-1903; the campaign to defeat the Huk insurgency from 1950 to 1953; the struggle to contain the New People's Army (NPA) during the Marcos period from 1966 to 1986; and the current counterinsurgency effort fronted by the Aquino government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

While the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy during the colonization campaign was to rely on massive military repression, later efforts to contain rising insurgencies emphasized political initiatives aimed at defusing discontent. A counterinsurgency strategy using political and ideological initiatives was developed during the campaign against the Huk guerrillas in the early 1950s. Instrumen-

tal in this process was Edward Lansdale, an influential CIA operative. This study examines in detail the components of Lansdale's strategy. We call his approach the "strategy of the Third Force" because its main feature was the creation of a populist, reformist alternative—Ramon Magsaysay—to both the right and left. Other elements of the strategy were fair elections, the promise of land reform, and military "civic action." While political reforms were emphasized, the "streamlining" of the armed forces as an effective repressive force was nevertheless not neglected. The Huks were eventually crushed, but the striking feature of their defeat was that they were first beaten politically, then destroyed militarily.

During the Marcos period, 1966-86, emphasis on containing insurgency shifted back to the military solution. The United States had no substantial direct hand in containing the rise of the New People's Army (NPA), and it largely limited its support to providing military aid to a military establishment that quadrupled in size in less than a decade. To counter the NPA, counterinsurgency tactics borrowed from Vietnam, like strategic hamletting, were employed. But with the political legitimacy and credibility of the Marcos regime severely eroded, military repression simply created more and more alienation in the populace.

As the NPA threat to U.S. interests became magnified and the Marcos regime was increasingly isolated, influential sectors of the U.S. national security bureaucracy were able to successfully transform U.S. policy from supporting Marcos to cutting him loose. This reorientation was part of a larger reorientation of counterinsurgency strategy from one based principally on escalating force to one that put the priority on political initiatives. Tactics employed during the Lansdale-Magsaysay period reappeared: for example, pushing the corrupt regime to loosen its grip on political power; free elections; reform in the military; and, finally, supporting a "centrist" alternative to both the right and the left—Corazon Aquino.

Since the ouster of Marcos, the thrust of U.S. policy has been to assist in the consolidation of the Aquino government and the institutionalization of formal democratic institutions. The Third Force strategy is, however, threatened by several factors, including the military's lack of any desire to reform, the rise of death squads, and the Aquino government's inability to deliver basic economic reforms. Very damaging is the continuing failure of the civilian government and the military to achieve consensus on a counterinsurgency approach.

In a very real sense the current battle is merely "round four" of the confrontation between the U.S. imperial power and Philippine nationalism that began in 1898. Threading through the continuing conflict has been the insurgents' goal of liberating the country from domination by the United States. When the nationalist element is joined to the lower classes' struggle for land and equality, as it has been in the Philippines, then the revolutionary enterprise has turned out to be both explosive and enduring. And the costs of mounting a counterinsurgency campaign are getting progressively higher.

U.S. intervention in the Philippines, also has a broader significance in third world affairs. Given its status as a quasi-colony, the Philippines has, in the past, enjoyed the dubious distinction of serving as America's principal proving ground for developing and testing strategies and tactics for low-intensity conflict (LIC). America's first major overseas LIC engagement, the Philippine-American War, allowed the U.S. Army free rein to develop and test a variety of counterinsurgency tactics that are still emulated today. Fifty years later, in the early 1950s, there was an effort to transfer to Vietnam some of the "lessons" that the United States had gained in the struggle against the Huk guerrillas in the Philippines. Today, the Philippines, together with Central America, serves as a laboratory for experimenting with LIC tactics, which have been revitalized and revised after the debacle in Vietnam.

THE PHILIPPINE CAMPAIGN, 1899–1903

The Philippines came under U.S. control at the turn of the century, after the devastating Spanish defeat during the Spanish-American War. As in Cuba, the United States first intervened on the side of insurgents against Spanish rule, then proceeded to impose its own hegemony on its erstwhile allies. In the Philippines, less than a year after Admiral George Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet at the Battle of Manila Bay in May 1898, cautious alliance gave way to hostilities in February 1899.

At first, the U.S. Army chalked up one victory after another in conventional combat against the ill-equipped and ill-trained troops of the Army of the First Philippine Republic. But elation gave way to frustration as the Filipinos resorted to guerrilla warfare. The Americans were not exactly unprepared for this turn of events. Many officers, like Gen. Arthur MacArthur, the head of the U.S. expeditionary force, and Maj. Frederick Funston, the captor of Emilio Aguinaldo, the Philippine independence leader, were veterans of the Indian Wars in the West in the post-Civil War era and thus had a great deal of familiarity with irregular warfare.¹

However, the "Philippine campaign" did pose a military challenge of a different order of magnitude than the "Indian Wars." One key difference was that in contrast to its undertaking several campaigns against different tribes, in the Philippines the U.S. Army was confronted with mounting a war against a nationwide resistance waged by a politically unified government and army. Also significant was the fact that the Philippines, though smaller than the American West, was far more complex in terms of the social terrain: the war had to be waged amid thickly settled areas whose populations were sympathetic to Aguinaldo's forces.²

In response to this challenge, the U.S. Army waged a brutal counterinsurgency campaign that anticipated, in many respects, the tactics it would later employ in Indochina. To erode the rebels' base of support, vast areas were stripped of food supplies and thousands of civilians were forcibly resettled in fortified villages not unlike the "strategic hamlets" of Vietnam fame. In three years of bloody fighting, an estimated 600,000 Filipinos died of combat or starvation.

Today, nearly a century later, U.S. LIC experts are still studying the Philippine-American War for lessons that can be applied in LIC battlefields of tomorrow. A recent "Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project" of the army and air force concluded in 1986 that the main lesson to be drawn from that conflict was that brute force can be a successful anti-guerrilla strategy if one has the "political will" to impose it:

The lesson learned from this experience is that military power can be effective against a guerrilla force which has the support of the population. Victory, however, required the political will to employ total control over the population and the government. This early American experience dramatically demonstrated a classic example of security/PRC [population and resources control]. The insurgents were first separated from the population by strict security measures including resettlement, curfews, and an early forerunner of "free-fire" zones. The relocation of the populace, combined with food denial operations, resulted in defeat of the insurgency. The cost, however, was heavy for the Americans and even heavier for the Filipinos.¹

"Political will," say proponents of conservative reinterpretations of the Vietnam War, was what the United States lacked in Vietnam. Otherwise, the repressive, military solution would have worked, as it did in the Philippines at the turn of the century. The tendency to see guerrilla warfare as but another modality of conventional combat is strong within the U.S. military establish-

ment. But equally influential is an opposite perspective, which views guerrilla war not principally as a military conflict, to be settled with military means, but as an essentially *political* struggle.

LESSONS OF THE ANTI-HUK CAMPAIGN 1950-53

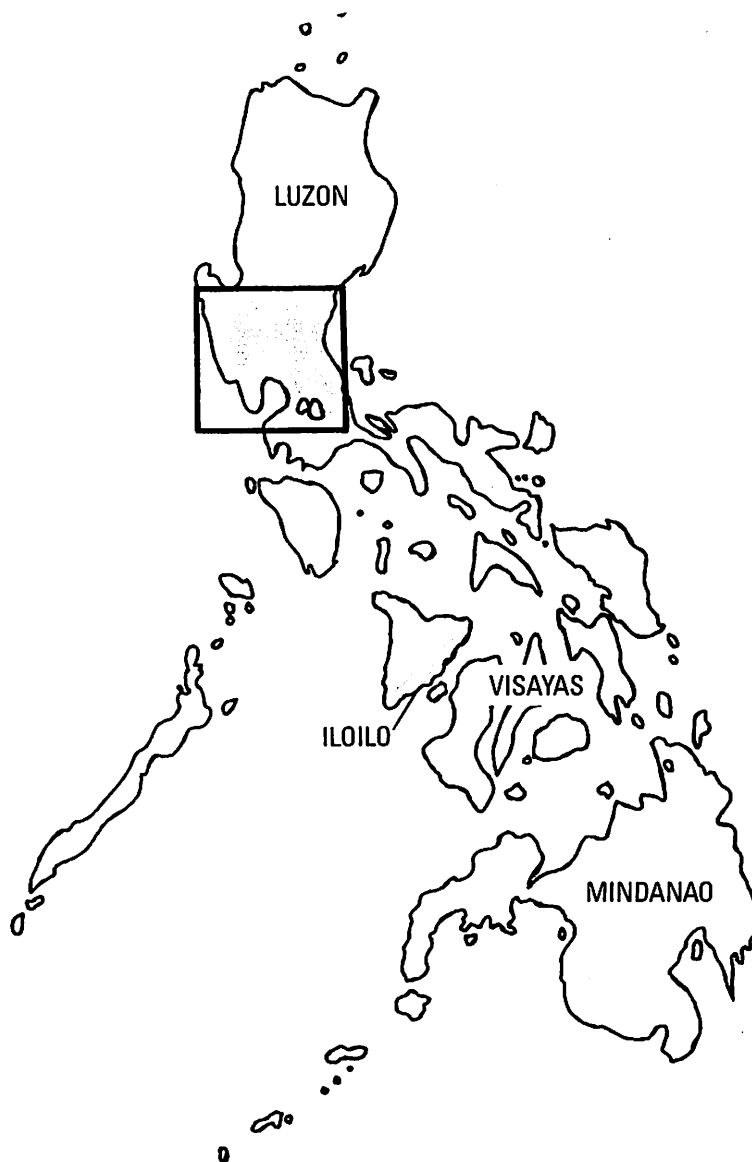
As their model, these theorists and policymakers also point to the Philippines in the period following World War II. The postwar Philippine experience is extolled as the successful application not of the military solution to insurgency but of an approach that emphasizes political and ideological initiative. This approach was first employed in the anti-Huk campaign of the 1950s, which now serves as a model for the struggle against the New People's Army (NPA). As Paul Wolfowitz, a senior State Department official, put it in late 1985 when the agency was pushing Ferdinand Marcos to hold elections:

An effective effort against the [NPA] insurgency requires far more than military means. The Philippine Armed Forces do not need any lectures from us on that score. In fact, one could say that they wrote the book on how to fight an insurgency successfully against the Huks in the 1950s.¹

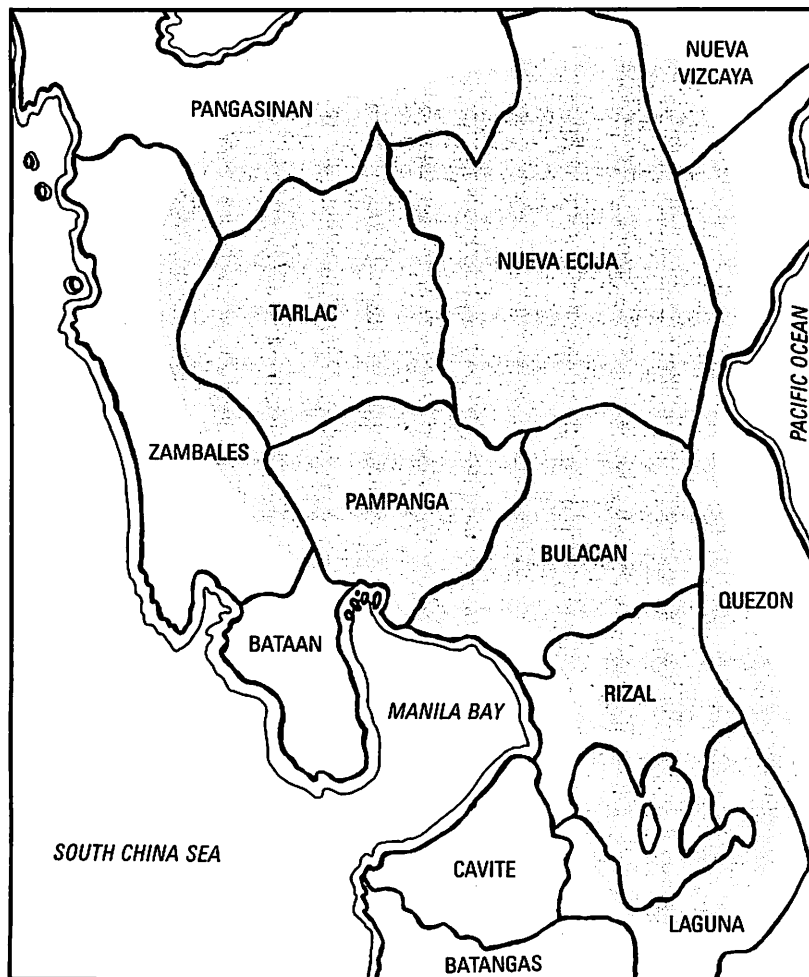
The "book" on counterinsurgency that Wolfowitz claimed the Filipinos wrote was actually written, in large part, by Edward Geary Lansdale, a Central Intelligence Agency operative with an air force cover. Lansdale's mission was later described by former CIA director Allen Dulles as "one of the first major attempts at secret warfare by the agency's covert operations department established in 1948."²

The strategy that Lansdale put together cannot be separated from his personal background. He was not simply an agent of covert warfare and counterrevolution but apparently a "true believer" in

MAP 1: Areas Affected by Huk Insurgency, 1950–53



**MAP 1A: Provinces Affected by Insurgency
in Central Luzon**



SOURCES: Benedict Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979); William Pomeroy, *The Forest* (New York: International Publishers, 1963); "Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines, 1946-53," Fort Bragg, N.C., 15 June 1961.

the export of U.S.-style democracy. In this he was not unique, for in the post-World War II world, the extension of American influence into the vacuum created by the erosion of the old colonial order was happily justified in many minds as an extension of "democracy." "Among certain circles," wrote Frances Fitzgerald,

it was more or less assumed that democracy, electoral democracy combined with private ownership, was what the United States had to offer the Third World. Democracy provided not only the basis for American opposition to Communism but the practical method to make that opposition work.⁶

The other factor in his background that was to influence Lansdale's work was his experience as an advertising executive. "Public relations" and the manipulation of public opinion, as we shall see, were striking features of the first Philippine anticommunist campaign.

Lansdale did not arrive equipped with a counterinsurgency blueprint. Rather, the strategy he pioneered was one forged through trial and error in day-to-day conflict with the Huks. Eventually, the strategy that developed had three prongs: political reform, or the creation of a "Third Force"; military reform and "civic action"; and innovations in military tactics.

Creating the Third Force

At the height of the crisis of U.S.-backed dictators in the mid-eighties, the influential neoconservative columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote:

In friendly countries ruled by dictators, America should use its influence to support a "Third Force," a democratic alternative to a pro-American despot on the one hand and communist insurgencies on the other. A Third Force strategy

means not settling for the lesser of two evils, but trying to help build and support a middle, democratic way.⁷

Krauthammer's prescription had actually been pioneered thirty-five years earlier, in the Philippines. Lansdale did not use the term *Third Force*, nor was the regime in power a dictatorship. But his approach was essentially to build an attractive "middle" alternative to both the entrenched right and the revolutionary left.

The administration of President Elpidio Quirino was corrupt, landlord dominated, and repressive. Under the Liberal party administration, landlords whose rule in the countryside had been disrupted by the Second World War returned from the cities and sought to reimpose their power through repression, using private "white guards" and the graft-ridden Philippine Constabulary (PC). Triumphant leftist candidates in the 1946 congressional elections had not been allowed to take their seats, leading the Communist-led progressive movement to lose faith in the efficacy of the "parliamentary struggle." The climate of elite politics was captured in the classic statement to Quirino made by the president of the Philippine Senate: "If you cannot permit abuses, you must at least tolerate them. What are we in power for? We are not hypocrites. Why should we pretend we are saints when in reality we are not?"⁸

When Lansdale arrived in the Philippines in September 1950, the situation was bleak from the vantage point of U.S. observers. Hostilities between the government and the Communist-led *Huk-balahap* or "Huk" guerrillas had begun in 1948.⁹ After two years of fighting, the Huks numbered 15,000 men against demoralized government forces of 32,000.¹⁰ Large Huk units overran garrisons, even carrying their operations to towns adjacent to Manila.¹¹ But most important, the Huks enjoyed a mass base of up to a million supporters, quite close to the core of support for the central government.¹² Politically, the Huks were on the offensive with a promise of revolutionary land reform which attracted oppressed tenants and landless peasants while the Quirino government was wracked with scandal after scandal.

Sorting out the situation, Lansdale concluded that the thrust of the campaign against the Huks would have to be primarily political, not military. As he later put it, "The most urgent need was to construct a political base for supporting the fight. Without it, the Philippine armed forces would be model examples of applied military doctrine, but would go on losing."¹³ Once this was done, the government could "use this political base to mount a bold, imaginative, and popular campaign against the Communist guerrillas."¹⁴ Reversing the traditional approach of the military protecting civilian institutions, Lansdale was proposing that government instead provide the shield behind which the military could be reshaped and sharpened.

In short, reform, if not replacement of the Quirino administration, was the *sine qua non* of a successful counterinsurgency program.

A key element in this approach was choosing a dynamic figure who could be counted on not only to listen to U.S. advice but also lead in projecting a reform program. This role was soon filled by Ramon Magsaysay, a World War II guerrilla leader and congressman who had been appointed defense minister by President Quirino in September 1950, bowing to pressure from the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG). Becoming not only political allies but close friends, Lansdale and Magsaysay devised a reform program with three key components: land resettlement, fair elections, and populism.

Realizing that demands for land reform were at the heart of popular support for the Huks, Magsaysay promised land to those who surrendered on the southern island of Mindanao, the country's second largest island. He created the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) and staged a massive propaganda blitz to publicize the program in central Luzon, the seat of the rebellion. The government's primary aim was not the large-scale surrender of Huk fighters but to split the Huks from their mass base. By creating the image that even dedicated Huks were abandoning the armed struggle and enlisting in the government program, Magsaysay and

Lansdale eroded Huk support among peasants whose political education had, in most cases, not gone beyond the demand for land reform.¹⁵ Yet EDCOR was essentially a propaganda program with little substance: only slightly over 5,000 Huks and their dependents—out of a revolutionary mass base of over one million—were, in fact, settled in Mindanao.¹⁶ As David Sturtevant, an expert in peasant movements, has underlined, “the movement was not shattered by reforms; rather, it was shattered by the *promise* of reforms. That was enough.”¹⁷ But for Lansdale, the advertising man, what counted most was not so much the substance as the impression of reform.

The other prong of the political program was clean elections. The 1951 congressional elections became the turning point in legitimizing the government and the military. To prevent a repeat of the rigged elections of 1949, army units and members of the Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) patrolled the polling booths under Magsaysay’s direction. Expecting massive fraud on the part of the ruling party, the Communist party (PKP) and many in the Huk leadership urged the people to boycott the polls.¹⁸

But the elections were relatively clean, and they succeeded in giving the military a new image as the “defender” of the democratic process. More important, the immediate impact of the elections was to “open again elections as alternatives to rebellion.”¹⁹

The 1951 elections were followed by Magsaysay’s campaign for the presidency against Quirino after he bolted from the Liberal party and joined the Nacionalista party. As the 1953 elections approached, a citizens’ electoral watchdog organization, National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), was set up with CIA backing, and troops and cadets were again mobilized to guard the polls. Bright young graduates of the elite, American Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University were recruited into the Lansdale-Magsaysay organization. Emulating Lansdale, these cadres launched a number of public relations initiatives, including the airing of the highly successful electoral theme song “Mambo

Magsaysay.”²⁰ Lansdale’s reformist program climaxed with Magsaysay’s landslide in November 1953.

A third critical component of the Lansdale-Magsaysay electoral effort was a highly personalized and populist reformism that was new in Philippine politics. “Magsaysay,” writes one student of the period, “inaugurated a new style of ‘grassroots’ politics by campaigning directly to rural voters, instead of leaving the task of mobilizing them to local party leaders.”²¹ Magsaysay, in fact, was not simply a tool of Lansdale, as some of the more simplistic accounts would have it. Though Lansdale at times did treat him as a marionette,²² the Filipino was charismatic and politically creative in his own right. He succeeded in forging that charismatic relationship between himself and the urban and rural masses that one usually encounters in Latin American politics. Backstopping Magsaysay and providing the reformist zeal of the election campaign were middle-class professionals who saw Magsaysay’s election as a means to break the control that the traditional elite exercised over political office and political mobility.²³ In this the Magsaysay phenomenon resembled the rise of the Christian Democratic party in Chile: in both instances, the CIA allied itself with ambitious middle-class elements in an effort to break the stranglehold of the oligarchy and thus defuse the threat from the left.

Military Reform and Civic Action

In building up the Armed Forces of the Philippines as an effective counterinsurgency force, Lansdale worked closely with the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG). With his sharp public relations instinct, Lansdale was able to project Magsaysay as a tough military reformer, rooting out military corruption with snap field inspections, spot promotions of competent troops, and tighter disciplinary measures. By reducing the widespread corruption which had led to equipment shortages in the field, Magsaysay

began to restore the military's sagging morale.

A key military reform targetted the inept and unpopular Philippine Constabulary (PC), which was perceived by peasants as no more than an extension of landlord power. Control over the PC was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of National Defense, and the hitherto "unblemished" Philippine Army took over its combat duties.²⁴

The most important innovation which refurbished the military, however, was "civic action." The idea here was to project the military as performing benign civilian duties. Not only were army units required to respect civilians and their property, but some were tasked to perform emergency relief activities, provide medical aid to villages, and undertake rural construction projects. The most effective civic action initiatives, however, were the EDCOR project, which was in essence a military-managed land resettlement scheme, and the army's policing of the 1951 and 1954 elections.

Magsaysay put a "civilian" face on the military and improved its image by personally going after a few cases of civilian abuse and by providing it with a civic action component. Like the political reforms, the military changes did not entail a wholesale cleaning up of the military; rather they were symbolic, designed more to influence troop morale and public opinion. To be sure, there were problems: at one point, for example, the head of the armed forces (AFP), resentful of Lansdale's interfering in military affairs, threatened to shoot him.²⁵ But within a relatively short period, Magsaysay, Lansdale, and JUSMAG were able to maneuver around and replace top officials and promote younger, vigorous professionals like Captain Rafael Ileto, a veteran of the U.S. Rangers' World War II campaign in the Pacific. At the urging of Lansdale and Magsaysay, Ileto helped found the Philippine Scout Rangers, an elite unit that was to play a significant role on the battlefield.

What accounted for the ease with which Lansdale and his associates influenced the Philippine political and military leadership?

For one thing, the financially strapped Quirino administration was over a barrel since the U.S. Congress had yet to approve long-delayed reconstruction funds to compensate for the massive destruction wrought by U.S. weapons during General Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines during the Second World War.

Another key factor was the experience shared by Philippine and American military personnel during World War II. This produced a core of officers in the AFP who maintained strong personal ties to many of their counterparts in the U.S. Army. As Lansdale put it in a 1985 interview:

Filipinos are very protective of their own army, they don't want dirty foreigners touching it. So that's part of the problem. They used to let [Paul] Bohannon [JUSMAG adviser to the AFP on unconventional warfare] get away with murder there but that was because we got to know the Philippine Army at a moment when we shared true comradeship and brotherhood, that was in World War II and right afterwards. . . . I trained the G-2 [intelligence] section so they were all people that I worked with very closely and I was a helping friend in '45, '46, and so on. . . . So later when I came in to work with them, it wasn't as a stranger coming back. . . . I was a guy who had done some things with them, done it with almost all of them including their commanders. . . . If they did anything wrong I would start teasing them about it.²⁶

In a society that put a premium on *pakikisama* or close camaraderie, the personal ties Lansdale had developed were probably more important than the formal connections between JUSMAG and the AFP. Lansdale's insight into the value that Filipinos put into the personal tie was translated into brilliant and bold moves, with

massive implications for the counterinsurgency effort. For instance, Lansdale invited Magsaysay to share his quarters at JUSMAG, and it was there, during informal "coffee klatsches" between Americans and Filipino officers visiting Magsaysay that creative innovations like EDCOR and the elite Scout Rangers were conceived.

Finally, one cannot overlook the fact that the degree of nationalist sentiment in the Philippines was not yet at a level where it hindered a direct U.S. hand in managing the counterinsurgency effort. After three and a half years of brutal occupation by the Japanese, American soldiers in the immediate postwar period were perceived as liberators, and many Filipinos had memories of ordinary GI's offering Hershey bars and Camel cigarettes. Moreover, the influence of American democratic ideology, which had shaped the political institutions of the fledgling Philippine Republic, was strong at all levels of society, softening the memory of U.S. colonial rule and blunting the resentment of the tremendous U.S. presence in the economy. Whereas the Americans were perceived as the successors to the hated French in Vietnam, in postwar Philippines they were regarded as benign. This was a massive problem confronting the Huks, who got much mileage from their antilandlord program but failed to get much positive response to their efforts to paint the United States as an oppressive imperialist power.²⁷

Tactical Innovations

Once political and military reforms were under way, full play could be given to innovations and improvements in battlefield tactics. One thing was apparently immediately ruled out: the introduction of U.S. troops to do the fighting, despite the poor state of the AFP. As one of Lansdale's proteges put it: "Local populations will shelter their own people against operations of foreign troops, even though those they shelter may be outlaws.... It would be rare, indeed, if

the use of foreign troops would not itself doom to failure an anti-guerrilla campaign.”²⁸

Reorganization of Combat Units

Up to 1950, the Philippine military and police forces were generally in a reactive or defensive mode against the Huks. Repeatedly, the small, fixed PC garrisons were overrun by larger Huk units of up to 500 guerrillas.²⁹ When the military did take the offensive, it was in large, slow-moving sweeps which invariably netted few Huks.³⁰

JUSMAG forcefully recommended sweeping reorganization in the spring of 1950.³¹ The first major innovation was in defense. A strategy of vigorous patrols by small units replaced that of static defense of fixed positions. In some areas, almost 90 percent of the time in the field was devoted to small-unit patrols.³² The most effective units were the newly formed elite Rangers, five-man teams which conducted extended patrols deep into Huk territory. By attaching Scout Rangers to the newly formed Battalion Combat Teams (BCTs), they could also serve to improve the morale of the regular forces.³³

For offensive purposes, BCTs—light mobile units of about 700 men at regular strength—were formed to take on large Huk units in positional combat. By late 1950, there were 58,000 men organized into 28 BCTs and supporting units.

Defense and offense came to be regarded as a continuum, not as opposites. Small unit patrols were designed to contain the area of Huk expansion and harass the Huks, wearing down their logistical system and morale. Then, to regain the military initiative, large-scale counteroffensives were mounted by the BCTs.

Intelligence

Under Lansdale's direction, the military's intelligence-gathering operations were developed and made more aggressive. In typical

understatement, he later recounted that, "I'd urge them to shake up units and get intelligence headquarters to get their people into Huk territory, which they did."³⁴

Different intelligence-gathering strategies were employed, depending on the level of Huk support. In some areas, cooperation was elicited by cultivating public support or through large cash rewards. In more difficult areas, where the local population was more intractable and composed preponderantly of Huk supporters, measures were more punitive. As the AFP regained the initiative, informers were aggressively recruited, agents were boldly planted, and defectors were systematically used in the effort to penetrate and break the Communist party and Huk organizational structure.

In one complex operation, detailed intelligence work enabled one military unit to pass itself off as a particular Huk unit from one region to the guerrillas operating in another area. The ruse was discovered too late by their hosts. In another, on the island of Panay, AFP agents so thoroughly penetrated the Huk command that all that was needed to complete the operation was for the second-in-command of the Huk forces — in reality an intelligence operative — to arrest the astonished commander.³⁵

The anti-Huk campaign scored a major victory in October 1950 when the secretary general of the Communist party and the Manila section of the Huk political bureau, the so-called "Politburo-In," was captured in the Tondo district of Manila. Military intelligence followed up this feat with the penetration and destruction of the Huk financial support system.³⁶

Psychological Warfare

"Psychological Warfare" was one of Lansdale's specialties, and it ranged from "dirty tricks" designed to confuse, disorient, and demoralize the Huks to public relations campaigns to win away their base and generate support for the government instead.

Lansdale recounted one example of low-cost but effective "psy-

war" in his autobiography. The body of a slain guerrilla was drained of its blood and puncture marks were made on its throat to make it appear like the victim of an *aswang* or vampire. It was then left on a trail. The trick apparently succeeded; prey to fears of the preternatural like so many other rural Filipinos, the guerrillas cleared the area.³⁷

Psy-war also included the "planting" of false stories by contacts who were carefully cultivated in the mass media. Anticommunist leaflets and films were also widely distributed. The selling of the land-resettlement program was psy-war at its most sophisticated: a carefully crafted image of plentiful land awaiting Huk surrenderees in the "virgin land" of Mindanao was skillfully disseminated through the media, and it achieved signal success in unsettling the Huk mass base.

The Insurgents' Mistakes

The success of the counterinsurgency campaign depended greatly on the Lansdale-Magsaysay innovations. But it cannot be divorced from the Huks' own strategic and tactical blunders. Indeed, there are analysts, especially on the left, who would point to the primacy of the insurgents' internal weaknesses to explain the Huk debacle.

One of the biggest errors of the Huk leadership, say influential critics on the left like Francisco Nemenzo and Amado Guerrero, was the decision to seize political power through an armed uprising fought with conventional tactics and brought to a decision quickly. The turn to armed struggle in 1948 was in reality a defensive move—a desperate response to the Philippine government's refusal to seat elected parliamentary representatives supported by the left and the government-sanctioned repression of left-led organizations by landlords' private armies.³⁸

The initial success of this defensive move led the leadership

impulsively to transform it into an overambitious offensive strategy intended to bring the Communist party (PKP) and the Huks to Malacanang (the Philippines' White House) in two years' time. To justify this development, the leadership invoked a bold theoretical rationale: with the United States losing China to Mao's communists through 1948 and 1949 and the world threatened by an economic cataclysm worse than the Great Depression, the United States — it was assumed — would withdraw from the Philippines and Asia and focus on rehabilitating Western Europe.³⁹

But the political, ideological, and military infrastructure for sustained warfare, necessary should the initial predictions go awry, had not been laid down:

- For one, prior to the decision to go “all out,” the political expansion of the Huks had not gone significantly beyond their traditional stronghold. They were, for the most part, still limited to one region — the Central Plain and southern Tagalog area of Luzon Island. (See maps 1 and 1A.) This meant that the Huks' area of maneuver was small, making the smaller Huk units vulnerable to massed, concentrated attacks by large AFP units.
- Huk supply and logistics, a great part of which consisted of World War II vintage weapons and ammunition, could sustain a short campaign but not a prolonged rebellion.
- 15,000 guerrillas would not provide the “critical mass” to seize and maintain political power. Thus, the Huks embarked on an ambitious recruitment program, labeled “geometric expansion,” which was designed “to swell the military arms by a factor of three in every quarter for two consecutive years.”⁴⁰ In practice this meant lowered political standards in recruitment and relaxed security.

The military weaknesses became fully exposed when one of the assumptions of the Huk strategy — that the United States would

withdraw from the Philippines—was proven wrong, and JUSMAG and Lansdale took a direct role in reorganizing the AFP. The large Huk units, which had been hastily constructed from small, mobile Huk bands, became easy targets for encirclement-and-suppression maneuvers by the new AFP Battalion Combat Teams. “Geometric expansion” brought in not only new recruits but also agents from the revitalized Military Intelligence Service.⁴¹ And in the period of retreat, Huk units “withered on the vine” as the primitive logistics system and the finance mechanism broke down.

But in the end, the political and ideological weakness of the Huk base was decisive. With political and ideological training taking a back seat to military considerations, the political consciousness of guerrillas and their supporters often did not go beyond land hunger and spontaneous class hatred. Thus, the Huk base became extremely vulnerable to such public-relations initiatives as the EDCOR program and the AFP’s policing of the 1951 and 1953 elections.

With their political appeal blunted by the government’s political moves, the Huks’ military weaknesses came to the fore. When the reorganized Philippine Army launched its counteroffensive in 1951, large concentrations of Huks “became easy prey for encirclement and suppression” by the swiftly moving BCTs.⁴² Huk units retreating into the Sierra Madre range in 1952 and 1953 found themselves hunted down aggressively by Scout Ranger units.

Thus, the demise of the Huk rebellion was as much an example of serious errors in revolutionary strategy as it was a showcase of successful counterinsurgency. This fact becomes especially evident when compared to the revolutionary process then unfolding 700 miles away, across the South China Sea in Vietnam.

To deal with the Communist Viet Minh, the Dulles brothers reassigned Lansdale to Saigon in late 1953, with a mission to make another Magsaysay out of Ngo Dinh Diem, the Americans’ choice

to run their new client state. Lansdale was leaving behind an insurgency whose back had been broken, largely by political rather than military means. A distinctive U.S. approach to containing insurgency had been formulated in the fight against the Huks, and Lansdale was tasked to apply it in the more inhospitable Vietnamese setting.

Social peace was returning to the Philippines. But it was a tenuous peace, and the government's fragile legitimacy depended on promised economic and political reforms that had yet to be implemented. Though it brandished a new image, the AFP continued to be viewed with deep ambivalence by the rural masses. Gen. Joseph Harper, who was with JUSMAG in the fifties, captured this relationship, inadvertently perhaps, when he likened the AFP presence to that of "U.S. Army units stationed at the cavalry and frontier posts throughout Indian country during the opening of our Western frontier."⁴³

LIC IN THE MARCOS ERA, 1969–86

The reforms expected from Magsaysay never materialized. A Congress dominated by landlords did not allow the passage of meaningful land reform legislation. The very restrictive conditions of the various “land reform” codes that were passed ensured that between 1955 and 1971, only 24,000 hectares were purchased by the government for redistribution to tenant-farmers.⁴⁴ Income statistics reflected the worsening lot of the peasants: between 1957 and 1971, the income share of the poorest 20 percent of rural families declined from 7 percent to 4.4 percent.⁴⁵

Given these conditions, the image of the AFP as a backer of populist reform was soon forgotten and rural discontent flared anew in the late sixties. In March 1969, the NPA was founded as the armed wing of the reestablished Communist party of the Philippines, and it soon began to set up guerrilla fronts in some of the old Huk strongholds in central Luzon, as well as in areas untouched by the Huk rebellion like the Cagayan Valley and Mountain Province in northern Luzon.

The founding of the NPA was but one element of the crisis of the social system in the sixties. There was also tremendous ferment in the cities as the nationalist left resurfaced after a decade of Philippine-style McCarthyism. Student demonstrations calling for withdrawal of the U.S. bases and an end to U.S. domination of the economy wracked the cities. Elite infighting for the spoils of political office intensified in the late sixties, and when Ferdinand Marcos won reelection to political office after the bloody and corrupt elections of 1969, the elite became irrevocably split.

The Marcos State

The imposition of martial law in September 1972 was a drastic effort to stabilize Philippine society at a period of great social ferment. The Marcos dictatorship represented the concentration and centralization of the formerly dispersed and shared power of the dominant class. In declaring martial law, Ferdinand Marcos was undoubtedly motivated mainly by a burning ambition to monopolize power. But the moves of historical actors oftentimes respond to objective necessities which may be imperfectly reflected in their subjective intent. In other words, if Marcos did not exist, he would have had to be created. For his centralization of elite power was, first and foremost, a response to a rising — though not immediately threatening — challenge from the nationalists, the left, and the popular classes. This challenge was difficult to contain under the prevailing condition of dispersed elite power that had been institutionalized in the parliamentary republic.

The Marcos state, however, also represented new relationships of power among different factions of the Philippine elite. The centralization of power benefited some sectors and marginalized others. The influence of the elite's nationalist faction, which favored protection for local industry and controls on foreign investment, was significantly clipped, while the center of gravity shifted from the traditional landed oligarchs like the sugar barons to what a World Bank political report described as "a new ruling coalition consisting of the Marcos family and personal associates, high-level technocrats, key bureaucrats and military officers, and some wealthy businessmen." Continued the report: "This alliance is cemented by the fact that many of these figures, even in the military, are from Marcos' home region of Ilocos."⁴⁶

There were four constellations of power in the Marcos state. These were both complementary and competitive, and each grouping was ultimately responsive principally to Marcos, who manipulated

them to consolidate his preeminent position and keep potential challengers off balance.

The first constellation of power was the network of local, provincial, and regional kingpins whom Marcos formalized into the New Society party (KBL). These included powerful “warlords” like Jose Durano in Cebu, Ali Dimaporo in Mindanao, and the Gustilo and Pacificador gangs in the western Visayas. Their large private armies functioned as a repressive structure paralleling the military command. Many of them were, in fact, given official status by being constituted into “Civilian Home Defense Forces.”

Marcos’ most-favored “cronies” constituted a second distinct constellation. Called “bureaucrat capitalists” by the left, their hallmark was using state power to expropriate their rivals and build up huge empires in all the key economic sectors—sugar, coconut, energy, telecommunications, and construction. While Eduardo Cojuangco and Juan Ponce Enrile converted the top-dollar-earning coconut industry into a personal fiefdom, Roberto Benedicto cornered sugar, and Marcos associates like Rodolfo Cuenca, Ricardo Silverio, and Herminio Disini built up huge conglomerates that were geared not for production but for quickly sucking up profits from existing operations.”⁴⁷

The technocrats constituted the regime’s third constellation of power. Though they were more cohesive than the fiercely competitive cronies, the technocrats—epitomized by Prime Minister Cesar Virata and chief development planner Gerardo Sicat—did not have an indigenous political base. But they made up for this disadvantage with powerful external support coming from the U.S. government, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The technocrats spearheaded the coordinated effort to transform the Philippine economy along free-trade, antiprotectionist, and export-oriented lines. This process brought them into loggerheads not only with local entrepreneurs dependent for survival on a protected internal market but also with Marcos’ business cronies. The latter’s practice of building up

private empires, creating monopolies, and exporting capital from these ventures to overseas private accounts conflicted with technocratic development planning and the pro-foreign capital bias of economic policymakers.⁴⁸

The principal pillar of Marcos' rule, however, was the military. The AFP leadership was intimately involved in planning the imposition of martial law, and it was military force that served for 14 years as the cement of a regime that enjoyed no constitutional legitimacy.

The Marcos Military Machine

The AFP under Marcos was very different from the small, professional counterinsurgency force that beat the Huks in the early fifties. With Marcos' ascent to the presidency in 1966, there developed a new dimension in the relationship of the army to Philippine society. Aside from maintaining them in their regular counterinsurgency and peace-and-order roles, Marcos expanded the "civic action" function which the military had taken on during the Huk rebellion. Engineering units of the army were used to build roads and bridges on an extensive scale during Marcos' first term in the president's effort to generate popularity.⁴⁹

More important, however, was the transformation of the armed forces into Marcos' personal instrument of repressive force. Vital in this process was the formation of the Presidential Security Command (PSC), composed initially of one battalion, to serve as a palace guard. Marcos' direct control of the military was facilitated with the formation in 1967 of the Metropolitan Command (METROCOM) for the greater Manila area. By 1968, this crack constabulary unit had expanded to 1,700 men. Its key tasks were student protests and working hand in hand with the PSC to provide security for the presidential palace.

Key in Marcos' consolidation of control of the military was the promotion of his Ilocano relatives and regionmates to strategic positions. The heavily Ilocano PSC, for instance, was headed by his cousin (and chauffeur) Gen. Fabian Ver, while commanding the Constabulary was another relative, Gen. Fidel Ramos.

In his first years as chief of state, Marcos also moved to dilute U.S. influence within the military. In this, Marcos closely resembled his Vietnamese counterpart Ngo Dinh Diem. Though both were fiercely anticommunist, meeting the guerrilla challenge was not the priority they set for their military machines, contrary to U.S. wishes. Though both were avowed allies of the United States and had an insatiable appetite for U.S. military aid, they strongly resisted direct U.S. control of their armies, correctly sensing that this would result in counterinsurgency getting the top billing and, consequently, in a diminution of their hold over their officer corps.

Marcos' effort to curb U.S. influence in a military establishment founded and shaped by the Americans was dramatized in his treatment of Gen. Rafael Ileto. The much-decorated veteran of the Huk campaign was known for his close relationship to Colonel Lansdale and well-respected in U.S. military circles. Though he was vice chief of staff in 1972, Marcos excluded him from the military elite that plotted the imposition of martial law, then exiled him as Philippine ambassador to Iran.⁵⁰

Expanding the Military

With those professionals closely tied to the United States like Ileto out of the way or silenced, the way was clear to restructure the Philippine military as Marcos' instrument of personal control. Expansion was his first priority. The AFP grew sixfold, from 45,000 in 1967 to 60,000 in 1972 to 250,000 by the end of 1975. Active generals rose from seven to over a hundred. The military budget increased by 500 percent in just four years, from 880 million pesos in 1972 to 4 billion pesos in 1976, and defense

TABLE 1: Strength of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), 1971–85

Regular Forces	1971	1976	1985
Army	17,600	45,000	70,000
Navy	8,000	17,000	28,000
Air Force	9,000	16,000	16,800
Constabulary	23,500	35,000	43,500
Total	57,100	113,000	158,300
Irregulars and Others			
Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF)	NA	25,000	65,000
Integrated National Police	NA	NA	51,000
Reserves	NA	45,000	124,000

SOURCES: Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1971–72* (London: Institute of Strategic Studies, 1971), 30; Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1976–77* (London: Institute of Strategic Studies, 1976), 60; *Manila Chronicle*, 23 Nov. 1986, 7.

NA—Not Available

spending as a percentage of total government expenditure doubled from 9 percent in 1972 to about 18 percent in 1977.⁵¹

To complement the regular forces in the battle against the NPA, the regime formed the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces (ICHDF), which were, in essence, village-based militia. By the early 1980s, the CHDF had swollen to about 75,000 men. And by the time the regime fell at the beginning of 1986, the defense establishment included about 325,000 regulars and paramilitary personnel, plus another 124,000 reserves.⁵² (See table 1.)

Centralizing Repression

Centralization of the military and security agencies was vital in this process of creating a more formidable military machine.

A vital step was the fusion in 1975 of all local and police forces into the Integrated National Police (INP), under the supervision of the chief of the Philippine Constabulary. This brought some 1,500 local forces throughout the archipelago under a single national command.⁵³

Also, military and political intelligence functions were centralized to a degree unparalleled in modern Philippine history, with the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) commanded by Gen. Fabian Ver forming the apex of a structure of interlocking army and constabulary agencies. Key agencies coordinated by NISA were the Military Intelligence Groups (MIGs) of the AFP, the constabulary's Intelligence Service (C2), Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group (MISG), the Constabulary's Criminal Investigation Service (CIS), and Army Intelligence Units (G2).⁵⁴

Under the guise of more effectively combatting the insurgency, control of the military under Marcos and his trusted lieutenants was enhanced with the creation of 12 Regional Unified Commands (RUCs) which integrated army, constabulary, air force, and naval units under one regional commander — one who almost invariably belonged to Marcos and Gen. Ver's trusted coterie of generals. As one expert on the Philippine military put it, RUCs were a "kind of military mobilization for control purposes."⁵⁵

Accumulating Political and Economic Power

As a quid pro quo for its continued loyalty, Marcos allowed the AFP to expand its influence beyond security. According to a confidential World Bank report, the military replaced "the earlier network of political mechanisms" that served as the route to power:

Military commanders have, for the first time in modern Philippine history, become an integral part of the power structure, particularly in provincial administration, and through their influence (both personal and official) in judicial and administrative matters.⁵⁶

In local areas, officers began to supplant politicians as “dispensers of political privilege,” and were approached by people on matters ranging from the release of imprisoned relatives to recommendations for employment.⁵⁷ Contributing to this erosion of civilian power and the enhancement of military influence was the transfer of control over local police forces from mayors to PC officers.

Military influence permeated the criminal justice system, particularly the area of “political crimes.” Up to the early 1980s, suspects were apprehended by the military security agencies, imprisoned and tortured at military camps or “safehouses,” prosecuted by military lawyers, and judged by military commissions. An Amnesty International mission in 1975 accurately summed up the essence of martial law justice:

In sum, stripped of its jurisdiction and its independence, the judiciary of the Philippines has become totally ineffective in preventing violations of human rights... The rule of law under martial law is authoritarian presidential-military rule unchecked by constitutional guarantee or limitation.⁵⁸

The military not only made deep encroachments in the areas of judicial authority, patronage, and political power but also accumulated social and economic privileges. “The power, emoluments, and prestige of the military establishment have never been greater,” asserted the World Bank report.⁵⁹ Not only were the pay and perquisites of the officer corps raised, but military men or ex-officers were appointed to head or staff key economic agencies of the state, like the National Electrification Administration, National Economic Development Authority, National Power Corporation, and the National Housing Authority. In 1978, a good 50 percent of the heads of the Presidential Regional Offices for Development (PRODS) were generals.⁶⁰ Noted the World Bank: “The unprecedented role of the military in the economy under martial law is moving the policymaking and business environment in the Philippines closer to that prevailing in Indonesia and Thailand.”⁶¹

Marcos and the Military Solution

The growth in size and power of the military, however, was not matched by improved effectiveness as a counterinsurgency force. Paralleling the growth of the military was the NPA's growth from less than one hundred combatants in 1969 to over 10,000 by 1982. Part of the explanation rests in the strategy adopted by Marcos, which was very different from that employed by Lansdale and Magsaysay. The centerpiece of counterinsurgency under Magsaysay was a set of political reform measures aimed at loosening the grip of the oligarchy on political power, coupled with civic action and other highly publicized initiatives aimed at providing the military with a beneficent face. But the AFP's counterinsurgency approach precluded political reform, given Marcos' refusal to yield his monopoly of political power. And in contrast to the engineering accomplishments of Marcos' first term in office, civic action projects languished under the dictatorship — perhaps a manifestation of Marcos' confident estimate that with his monopoly on power secured by armed force, he did not really need mass legitimacy.

In his speeches, Marcos declared that land reform would be his regime's "solution" to the insurgency. But two years after the declaration of martial law, the program had stalled, owing to Marcos' desire to retain the backing of the landlord class. Said one frustrated World Bank technocrat:

Land reform is not amenable to halfway measures. Either the landlord owns the land, or the tiller does. To make that radical change requires more commitment and energy than the Marcos administration has yet been able to demonstrate.⁶²

Another World Bank official, sensitive to the relationship of land inequality to insurgency, was reduced to hoping that "recent press reports (both in the United States and the Philippines) on the activities of the New People's Army in Central Luzon...would

translate itself into more effective implementation of the program.”⁶³

But contrary to the desires of some of its foreign backers, the regime continued to deal with the insurgency in a purely military fashion, employing conventional military tactics in battle, coupled with intimidation and repression of the guerillas’ actual and potential base.

In engaging the NPA, the AFP oftentimes resorted to battlefield tactics that imposed heavy collateral damage on the civilian population. These conventional “encirclement and suppression” campaigns were carried out by big units—companies, multicompany task forces, or even battalions. They were patterned after U.S. Army “search-and-destroy” tactics in Vietnam, based on mobility provided by expensive vehicles and on the employment of excessive and indiscriminate firepower. “The AFP,” concluded a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, “is said to use violence indiscriminately and without regard to political consequences. They have the reputation of trying to bludgeon a community into submission if it is suspected of harboring the NPA, and they tend to rely upon the example of massive firepower to influence people rather than on its selective application.”⁶⁴

What happened in the historic Muslim city of Jolo in February 1974 was repeated on a smaller scale in scores of Philippine municipalities throughout the seventies, as the government battled both Muslim secessionists in the southern Philippines and NPA rebels in the north. The army response to occupation of the town by Moro rebels was not infantry engagement, as the rebels expected, but massive artillery and naval gunfire, which levelled parts of the city and touched off fires that gutted it. Evoking the parallel with Hue in Vietnam in 1968, one correspondent concluded that the army “helped destroy a town in order to save it.”⁶⁵

The civilian alienation resulting from the army’s “capital-intensive” conventional battlefield tactics was deepened by its methods

of “pacifying” the population. Instead of trying to co-opt the civilian base, as Magsaysay and Lansdale had done with civic action initiatives, the Marcos military reached back to Vietnam and the Philippine-American War for its methods of dealing with noncombatants:

- “Zoning” involved cordoning off areas, like villages or several city blocks, forcing inhabitants to stay indoors, then engaging in intensive house-to-house searches for suspected subversives.
- “Food blockades” restricted, if not completely stopped, the shipment of rice and other essential foods to suspected NPA strongholds in order to starve out the guerrillas. “Psychological warfare,” noted one observer of a massive military operation in Mindanao, was one of the aims of food blockades:

Apart from a military show of force, enforcing the added measure of a food blockade against the population would...result in a situation wherein the residents of a locality feel themselves totally under the control of the military, their very means of life support possibly subject to the former’s whims and caprices.

In such a case, the desired effect is not only to “starve out” the rebels, but perhaps most importantly, to smash the “mass base’s” confidence in the guerrillas’ ability to fight the soldiers and drive them away. The result, it is hoped, would be a loss of faith in the revolutionary cause. Thus rendered hopeless both through terror and isolation, the population is rendered more receptive (or susceptible)...to government propaganda.⁶⁶

- In “free-fire zones,” anything that moved was declared fair game for shooting. Villagers forcibly evacuated from these zones were relocated in “strategic hamlets,” a tactic first applied by U.S. troops during the Philippine-American

War, then picked up by the British in Malaya in 1948 and by the Diem regime in Vietnam in the early sixties.

The first major hamletting effort by the Marcos military took place right after the imposition of martial law in 1972: 20,000 villagers were relocated from 100 to 200 villages in the far northern province of Isabela in an effort to destroy what was then the main base area of the NPA.⁶⁷ In the mid-seventies, the military sought to blunt NPA efforts at expansion with the same tactic in Montanosa and Samar, the Philippines' third largest island.

But it was in Mindanao, the second largest island, where the most massive case of strategic hamletting took place in the early 1980s. It is estimated that in 1982 alone, half a million people were displaced from their homes and put in ill-equipped "regrouping centers." The military's objective was described in a report by one human rights group:

The program was part of a new initiative of the military to counter the Communist insurgents' growing influence in rural communities by "winning hearts and minds" of their residents. Calling this strategy "a war without bullets," Gen. Jose Magno, chief of the Central Mindanao Command, explained: "We are fighting an invisible enemy." According to Magno, the program's strategic objective was control of people, not territory.⁶⁸

Without substantive reforms to offer, the military's methods for containing the insurgency were soon accomplishing the opposite: turning the people into NPA sympathizers. That the anti-insurgency war had become a war against whole populations soon dawned on many officers. For instance, in a frank account of an anti-insurgency campaign, the same General Magno of the Central Mindanao Command wrote that his task was to "pacify" an area, the Arakan Valley, where it "was estimated that about 85 percent of the resident population was somehow involved in Party associations or organizations affiliated with the armed forces of the

Party."⁶⁹ So long as the mass-based insurgent infrastructure remained intact, military sweeps and small-unit operations which occasionally pushed NPA field forces out of the area would be unable to prevent their return. "What was required," Magno concluded, "was the thorough dismantling of the entire CPP/NPA barangay [village] organization."⁷⁰

Though Magno did not acknowledge it, high doses of repression were applied in the Arakan Valley and elsewhere in the Philippines in the effort to break the organic connection that had developed between the insurgents and their civilian base. Thus, it did not take a visiting U.S. Senate investigating team too long to conclude that "the AFP tends to act towards the people as if they, the people, were the enemy."⁷¹ Nor were the statistics for the Marcos period surprising: 70,000 arrested between the declaration of martial law in September 1972 and the end of 1985; 602 "disappeared" during the same period, most likely suffering death at the hands of the military; 2,225 "salvaged" or arbitrarily executed by soldiers; and 300 women and young girls raped by military men between 1977 and the end of 1985.⁷²

Contradictions of the Repressive Machinery

AFP tactics were only partly to blame for the unravelling counterinsurgency effort. The military setup itself was structured more for personal control than for combat. As one Pentagon analyst put it, Marcos "created a command system which would permit him to direct the AFP from Malacanang [the presidential palace] and focused the AFP on preserving the security of the seat of government rather than the security of the countryside."⁷³

First, the massive military expansion diluted the small cadre of professional officers, creating problems in training at all levels of the organization. By the mid-eighties, there were about 14,000 officers, up from a few thousand in the late sixties. Second, much

of the increase in personnel was actually in support units rather than combat forces.⁷⁴ Only 80,000 of the 250,000 personnel as of 1985 were combat effectives. With 20,000 of these deployed in Muslim areas of Mindanao against the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), these left only 60,000 for deployment against an NPA guerrilla force of some 20,000 regulars, or a ratio of less than 1:3 — considered dangerously low by counterinsurgency experts. Third, most of the burden was absorbed by administrative, noncombat costs, “with little or no funds available for force modernization.”⁷⁵

With the budget stretched, corruption further eroded morale, since a “major portion” of the pay and allowance of enlisted men were “siphoned off into the pockets of senior officers at various levels of command.”⁷⁶ Upper-level corruption and the budgetary crunch led to incidents such as troops refusing to engage the NPA in combat for fear that they would die for lack of medical facilities and soldiers on patrol stealing food from civilians because they had few field rations.

As the regime’s popularity plummeted, more and more units were used for Marcos’ protection, tying down badly needed combat forces. The Presidential Security Command alone numbered 15,000 troops nominally attached to the constabulary, or a third of the 45,000 personnel making up this branch of the armed forces. Another 10 to 12 battalions were deployed in metropolitan Manila or the area surrounding it. The massive resources taken up by the needs of presidential security were captured in a key 1980 World Bank memorandum:

Presidential security is organized physically into several rings. At the center is the almost wholly Ilocano presidential guard, a large and well-equipped force barracked in the presidential palace grounds. Next comes METROCOM, the Manila area constabulary command which is also heavily Ilocano in composition. It can command the police forces of Greater Manila as well as various private security agencies, both of

which too consist largely of Ilocanos. North of the Capital are two more strong and reputedly heavily Ilocano units, the First Infantry Division at Fort Magsaysay, and Task Force Lawin, a multiservice force employed ordinarily to pursue the New People's Army.⁷⁷

Not only did security concerns for the president immobilize troops, they created severe problems in command and morale. To ensure the loyalty of military units, Ver and Marcos extended the terms of loyalist commanders, blocking the promotion of junior officers, especially those who were neither from Marcos' Ilocos region nor obsequious to Ver and Marcos. By 1985, a full 55 of the army's 100 generals were extendees.

As noted earlier, Ver, as a loyalty measure, created 12 Regional Unified Commands and filled the top slots with loyalists. Ver also initiated the practice of "compartmentalizing" members of the AFP General Staff, or severely limiting what one staff member knew of what the others were doing.⁷⁸ Aside from creating morale problems, these measures created command complications in the form of competing and overlapping hierarchies, thus sapping effectiveness in the field.

Even greater demoralization was created when, in his passion for complete control, Ver directed surveillance operations against the officer corps itself. Both officers considered "unfriendly" to Ver and those regarded as "uncooperative" were reportedly subjected to spying. All telephones at the AFP General Headquarters were said to have been bugged, leading one exasperated officer to remark that under Ver, the AFP leadership "knew who the girlfriends of military men were, but did not know the movements of the communists and others considered enemies of the state."⁷⁹

The surveillance of the officer corps was, in a sense, inevitable. For in his obsession to create a reliable instrument of control, Marcos could not help but unleash forces that undermined his goal. Under the dictatorship, the AFP officer corps became one

of the key avenues to power and social mobility and thus attracted hundreds of ambitious careerists from the middle strata. The aspirations of these individuals could only be met if Marcos and Ver were to release the grip that proven loyalist but overstaying generals had on the most strategic positions in the command hierarchy. Their refusal to let go created intense resentments among the substantial numbers of junior officers who saw their careers frozen at the rank of colonel or lower, blocked by people they perceived as deadweight above and bypassed by peers whose sole qualification for advancement was personal loyalty to Marcos and Ver.

Beneath the formidable exterior, fissures were developing in Marcos' bloated private army. How deep these were was to become evident to the whole world during the February 1986 uprising that dislodged Marcos.

Intelligence: Tactical Successes, Strategic Failure

The one area where the AFP enjoyed some success in the counterinsurgency battle was in the area of intelligence and covert penetration of guerrilla ranks, which had been a forte of the military since the Lansdale period. Intelligence units were responsible for the capture of Communist party (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison in 1977 and other key leaders of the left — a feat that led to Marcos' notorious boast that the "back of the insurgency has been broken." The AFP's relatively advanced methods in surveillance were matched by the great degree of sophistication it developed in the arena of covert warfare against the NPA in some areas of the country. In a number of instances, the use of "Deep Penetration Agents" (DPAs) was quite successful.

DPAs were military men or civilians planted in areas where the NPA was likely to expand. These individuals allowed themselves to be recruited into the guerrilla force, then waited for the signal

to be “activated” while pretending to absorb ideological and political training from the NPA.

DPAAs were particularly destructive of NPA operations in the southern Tagalog-Bicol regions of Luzon, where a systematic military operation was able to place agents in the middle levels of the NPA leadership. Further NPA expansion in the area had to await a “clean-up” effort which took several years.

Even more serious in terms of their impact on the NPA structure were DPA penetrations in Mindanao, which was the major NPA expansion area in the late seventies and early eighties. DPAs, tagged as “zombies” by the NPA, apparently entered the NPA and progressive mass organizations in Mindanao during a period of massive expansion in 1980 and 1981. They then went to work to recruit others from the regular NPA structure, taking advantage of their targets’ weaknesses like liquor or vulnerabilities like extreme financial need. Describing their methods of entry, one high-ranking guerrilla recounted:

Essentially, the infiltrators are tasked to commit breaches of discipline, to undermine the leadership of the people’s mass organizations. The infiltrators bore their way into people’s organizations by assuming a facade of good character and good work performance. Once inside the organizations, the DPA starts violating codes of discipline like stealing from people, destroying people’s property, sowing intrigues and in-fighting among members of the community, spreading anti-social vices like gambling and drinking, and even prostitution.⁸⁰

The NPA high command in Mindanao finally acknowledged that DPAs had been able to work their way up the command structure, with some reaching very high positions at the front guerrilla command. The zombies were able to sabotage NPA operations, coordinate with AFP units to hit NPA base areas, assassinate NPA

unit commanders (but in ways to show them as battlefield casualties), and conduct terrorist acts designed to discredit the NPA.

By the time the NPA regional operational command discovered the full extent of the penetration late in 1985, there were said to be 1,000 DPAs active in the ranks of the guerrillas.⁸¹ A major "cleansing" operation began, but this process was a propaganda boon for the AFP, which depicted the internal strife and executions which took place as a local "Killing Fields" situation, after the movie depicting Khmer Rouge atrocities in Kampuchea.⁸² For the NPA, the events proved to be a major setback in what was once a rapid expansion area.

But while the military enjoyed local intelligence successes with their penetration and disruption of regional NPA operations, the transmission of intelligence and its assessment at the upper rungs deteriorated. Judgments and projections of the balance of power between the AFP and the NPA were constantly subordinated to political considerations. Probably fed only information he wanted to hear, the president constantly underestimated the strength of the NPA; for instance, placing it at 5,000 in mid-1984 when informed sources were already estimating it to be twice that size. Indeed, worried by Marcos' refusal to acknowledge the failure of his counterinsurgency effort, the authors of the U.S. Government National Security Study Directive (NSSD) offered to "provide briefings for Marcos by a U.S. military intelligence team." It continued:

This would be a sensitive undertaking. Marcos is not uninformed about the NPA threat or the deficiency of the AFP to deal with them. However, he is probably unwilling to admit either fully to the NPA threat or to the deficiencies of the AFP because to do so would be an indictment of his nearly twenty years of rule.⁸³

Revolutionary Strategy: The Decisive Factor

Sophisticated intelligence and covert action operations, coupled with superior firepower and repressive military occupation, have worked in containing insurgent movements in other countries. Indeed, these tactics, coupled with the policy of "attraction" — involving rewards for surrendering — were sufficient to achieve a stalemate with, if not gain the edge over, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in western Mindanao and Sulu by the early eighties.⁸⁴

The vital difference between the NPA and the MNLF lay in the NPA's political and military strategy. In our opinion, this factor, more than anything else, accounted for the AFP's steadily losing the conflict to the guerrillas.

Learning from the devastating defeat of the Huks in the 1950s, the NPA, which functioned as the military wing of the new, "reestablished" Communist party of the Philippines (CPP),⁸⁵ developed a strategy with three key prongs: political organizing, multiple bases, and decentralized operations.

The Primacy of Political Organizing

Whereas the Huks put priority on a quick armed seizure of state power, the NPA stressed the patient development of a political and ideological base in the countryside, limiting armed confrontations with the military to a minimum until a secure political infrastructure among peasants had been laid.

Base building among the peasantry, who were seen as constituting the "main force" of the Philippine Revolution, was regarded as an essentially political process wherein revolutionaries won local confidence by tackling local concerns like landlessness and usury, expanding people's consciousness by showing the "systemic" character of social problems, then setting up mass organizations. At this stage, the key guerrilla unit was the Armed Propaganda

Unit (APU) or Semi-legal Team (SLT). The main work of the APU was political, and its firepower was regarded mainly as providing a defensive shield behind which political organizing could take place. Only when "solid organizing" had prepared the ground could regular NPA military units be formed that could initiate "tactical offensives" to gain arms from the AFP on a regular basis.

Multiple Bases

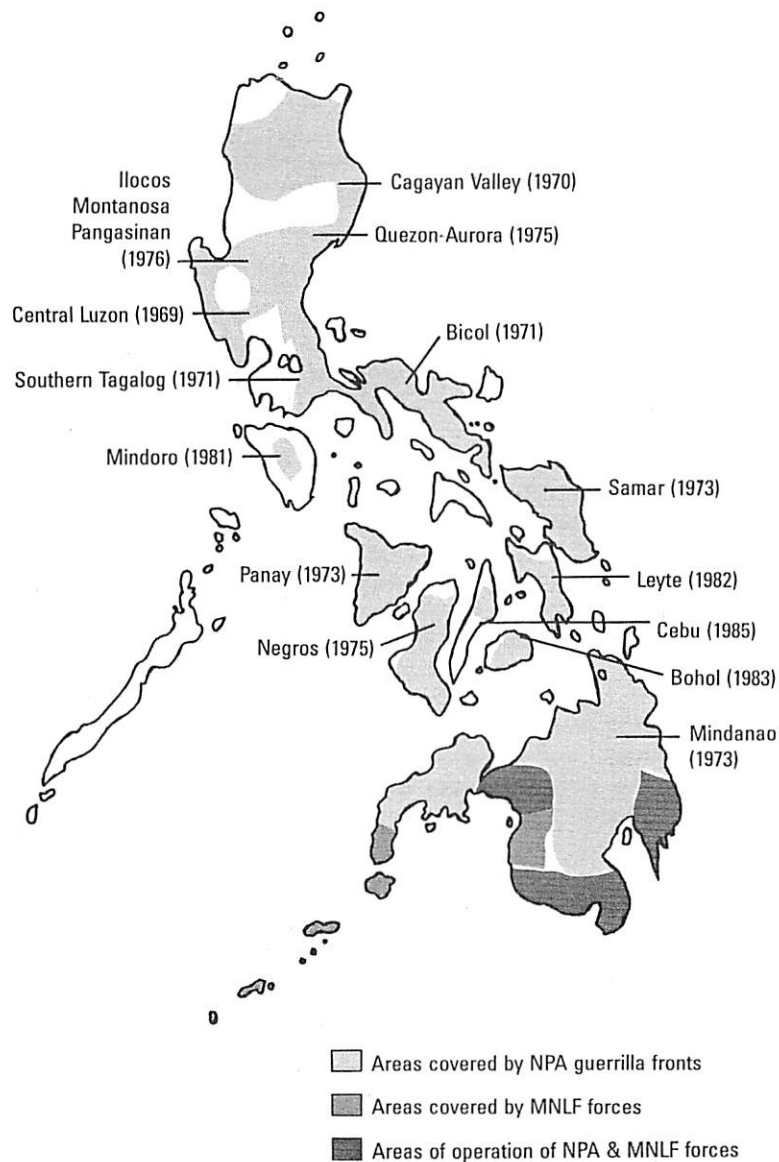
While the Huks were largely limited to one region, central Luzon, which was vulnerable to concentrated, large-scale AFP offensives, the NPA developed multiple base areas in an effort to disperse the AFP.

"Solid organizing" enabled the NPA to establish 20 guerrilla fronts on the main island of Luzon in the five years between its founding in 1969 and 1974. It was, however, hard-pressed by encirclement-and-suppression campaigns carried out by the AFP, then vastly superior in both men and firepower. Though it was solidly rooted in peasant populations, the NPA was in severe danger of being ousted by the AFP's superior military force from its two main areas of operation in the Cagayan Valley and the Bicol Peninsula.

Amado Guerrero's classic *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*, which appeared in 1974, posed the fundamental military problem confronting a fledgling guerrilla force battling the superior resources of the Philippine military: "We have to fight within narrow fronts because the entire country is small and the countryside is shredded."

To overcome this disadvantage, Guerrero proposed two innovations which had strategic consequences. First, the NPA had to create multiple guerrilla fronts throughout the archipelago instead of focusing its energies on creating just one central base area, as Mao Zedong did in Yenan.⁸⁶

MAP 2: Expansion of the New People's Army, 1969-86



This would have the effect of forcing the military to disperse his superior force to several major islands, thus stretching it thin. Second, the NPA needed to exploit the mountainous character of the Philippines to maximum advantage. By skillfully operating from the mountain ranges which "sew up" and crisscross the major islands, the NPA could exert political and military influence on the various lowland provinces bordering each range.

Attempting to turn geographic constraints into advantages, APUs fanned out of Luzon Island — where they had been confined to 20 fledgling guerrilla fronts — to other major islands of the archipelago in the mid-1970s, especially to Samar, Negros, Panay, and Mindanao. (See map 2).

Mindanao provided an illustration of the explosive potential of the NPA "formula." From one APU in 1974, NPA strength grew to 20 full-fledged guerrilla squads spread out over five fronts in 1978. In the early stage of organization, the bulk of the APU's work was nonmilitary political work, such as popular education, land reform, health delivery, rooting out local criminals, and building mass organizations.

With the formation and deployment of SLTs to carry out political organizing, however, the APU's mass work became secondary to its military functions. This increasing specialization, coupled with greater numbers of recruits, allowed the NPA to deploy numerous "undersized companies" or "oversized platoons" to ten guerrilla fronts which covered 2,200 town centers on the island. The achievement had momentous implications for the NPA's national expansion, for the swift spread in Mindanao drew AFP units from other parts of the country and thus provided much-needed breathing space for expansion and consolidation of NPA fronts on Luzon and other major islands.

Needless to say, the process of expansion and consolidation was not smooth. Much of it was characterized by trial and error, and scores of urban middle-class cadres were captured or killed before

TABLE 2: Strength of the New People's Army (NPA), 1969-85

	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983-85
Guerrilla Fronts	2	10	21	28	59 ^a
Area Covered:					
Towns	7	43	135	376	NA
Provinces	2	9	31	43	59
Rifles	35	600	1,000	4,000	10,000
Guerrillas					
(full-/part-time)	35	1,000	1,500	8,000	30,000 ^b
Militia	NA	NA	NA	NA	20,000 ^b

SOURCE: *Liberation* 1, no. 1 (Mar-Apr. 1985), 4-5

^a 1984 Figures

^b Estimate

NA-Not Available

the NPA could forge an "organic" connection with the peasantry.⁸⁷ Also, as noted earlier, swift expansion, especially in Mindanao, had its costs, one of them being the easier entry of military informers and agents into the ranks of the guerrillas.⁸⁸

In any event, by 1985 the NPA had an estimated 30,000 full-time and part-time troops deployed in 59 guerrilla fronts, and its units were operating in 59 of the country's 73 provinces.⁸⁹ (See table 2.) The AFP's worst nightmare had been realized. NPA units, reported a 1984 U.S. Senate investigating mission,

now challenge the AFP across the length and breadth of the Philippine archipelago. Although the AFP still has greater numerical strength...it is already spread thinly trying to divide its attention and forces throughout the countryside on numerous islands. If in the future, the intensity of the fighting should increase significantly, or the NPA expands the scale of its operations, the AFP would probably be

hardpressed to contain the insurgency without a substantial increase in its strength.⁹⁰

Urban Organizing

While the progressive movement placed the main stress on organizing the countryside, the cities were not neglected. By 1975 the basis for a militant workers movement had been laid in Manila, the capital city. Among the ranks of the lower clergy, which had become receptive to new concepts of Christian social doctrine stemming from Vatican II, there emerged a strong network of supporters of the anti-imperialist struggle. Among lawyers, medical workers, teachers, professionals and students, similar networks of supporters and sympathizers were forged. As in the countryside, organizers followed essentially the same steps: champion justice issues of particular concern to a sector, such as rises in student tuition fees; organize and boldly lead mass struggles around these issues and stretch the limits of legality set by the regime; raise political consciousness by linking the various issues as abuses emanating from a system of fascism supported by U.S. imperialism.

By the time of the assassination of Benigno Aquino on August 21, 1983, the progressive movement had built up an impressive intersecting array of "sectoral," "cause-oriented" organizations cooperating at the legal, semi-legal, and underground levels. Thus, a great number of the massive demonstrations and marches that shook the cities nationwide for two years were not simply spontaneous. Sustaining many of them was a sophisticated and firm scaffolding that had been creatively and carefully constructed over the previous decade.

By the last year of the Marcos regime, urban mass actions not only posed a major problem for urban security forces but heightened the dilemma of the AFP. Intensified urban protest, by drawing army forces from the countryside, took the

heat off the NPA units working in adjacent rural areas. And when breathing space was needed to accelerate urban organizing, the NPA stepped up its tactical offensives against Marcos troops, forcing the latter to request assistance from urban garrisons. As leaders of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the broad progressive coalition to which the NPA belonged, put it, "The armed struggle in the countryside and the people's struggles in the cities are the two faces of the same war."

Decentralized Operations

The NPA broke with the heavily centralized Leninist organizational methods that had characterized the old Communist party (PKP) and Huk Command, and evolved more decentralized methods adapted to the country's archipelagic character.

The operative organizational principle, said Guerrero, was "centralized leadership and decentralized operations." Guerrilla warfare under archipelagic conditions, he stressed, required cadres "who are of sufficiently high quality to find their own bearing and maintain initiative not only within periods as short as one or two months...but also within periods as long as two or more years, in case the enemy chooses to concentrate on an island or a fighting front and blockade it."⁹¹

With the premium placed on self-reliant local units, CPP and NPA training stressed the development of strong ideological commitment and the rigorous internalization of "dialectical methods" of analyzing, breaking down, and solving problems. Every cadre, in short, was expected to be a leader, and the sort of blind, unthinking loyalty to party leadership that had been cultivated by the old PKP was discouraged not only as undemocratic but also as disastrous in the conduct of revolutionary war. The success of these methods was described in a U.S. Foreign Relations Committee report:

Operating successfully requires a high order of discipline as well as individual initiative...Many we interviewed feel that this is one of the NPA's great achievements. They credit the NPA's national recruitment scheme for much of the success. It brings in both new intellectuals from the campuses and young people under its influence, and tests them under battlefield conditions. The best of the new and old are then sent to expand the revolution into new areas.⁹²

The flexibility that the principle of decentralized operations imparted to the NPA's military capability was, nevertheless, missed by the AFP. "It is regrettable," noted the Senate Foreign Relations Committee report, "(and indicative of a fundamental misunderstanding of the NPA threat) that some AFP officers we talked with counted the CPP/NPA's 'decentralization' as proof that the government has succeeded in breaking up the insurgency's high command. Precisely the opposite seems to be the case."⁹³

In the twilight years of the Marcos regime, the position of the left was stronger than it had ever been since the debacle of the early fifties. True, the picture was not all that rosy for the NPA. There were, as noted above, setbacks in eastern Mindanao created by DPA infiltration. But nationwide, the guerrilla army had the military initiative, and the National Democratic Front enjoyed the political initiative.

BACK TO THE THIRD FORCE

Like the relationship between Ngo Dinh Diem and the United States, that between Marcos and Washington was complex. As noted earlier, though both were avowed allies of the United States, they strongly resisted direct U.S. control of their armies. In both cases, however, Washington—beguiled by the strong anticommunist rhetoric of its clients—tolerated military inefficiency and accepted their assessments of the military balance until it became crystal clear that the insurgents were gaining the upper hand.

Right up to the assassination of Marcos' rival Benigno Aquino in 1983, the United States was content to give the dictator a free hand with his military. The Pentagon, in particular, was impressed with Marcos' anticommunist pronouncements and reluctant to do anything which might jeopardize the tenure of the U.S. bases—Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base—following the expulsion of U.S. forces from mainland Southeast Asia upon the American defeat in Vietnam.

Despite some criticism of human rights abuses emanating from officials of the Democratic administration between 1977 and 1981, President Carter signed a new agreement governing the tenure of the bases that handed Marcos \$300 million in military aid and \$200 million in military-related economic aid (ESF) between 1979 and 1984. Yet more supportive of Marcos, the Reagan administration concluded a new agreement in 1983 promising the Filipino strongman an even higher price: \$425 million in military aid and \$475 million in ESF over five years.

Though the Pentagon was not yet ready in the early eighties to

acknowledge that Marcos' military was in serious trouble, it was nevertheless aware that the latter had become heavily dependent on U.S. aid for survival. The Philippine economic crisis which began in 1979 forced an estimated 4.5 percent annual decline in the military budget. By 1984, U.S. military assistance came to 10.5 percent of the total defense budget. Indeed, the Pentagon claimed that U.S. assistance "provided funds for most of the force modernization programs over the past several years. IMET [training] funds have helped meet some of the critical deficiencies in the AFP's professional and technical training programs."⁹⁴

This provided the United States with great potential leverage, which it did not use until after the assassination of Benigno Aquino upon his arrival in Manila on August 21, 1983. The event shocked the world. More shocking to the Reagan administration and the Pentagon was the realization that the regime had very little political legitimacy left.

This was hardly news to many foreign service personnel, however, especially to those in the field like G. S. Sheinbaum, the U.S. consul stationed in Cebu. After a three-month tour of eastern Mindanao, Sheinbaum cabled Secretary of State Alexander Haig on April 13, 1982, pointing out that the NPA had filled "the vacuum that existed" in many parts of the region and warning that "whatever is good there may only be temporary, and whatever is bad may only get worse. This may sound like a worst case scenario, but present circumstances are not encouraging and the future is ominous."⁹⁵ It is unlikely that Haig ever read the telegram, or if he did, that this made the slightest dent on Washington's conviction that Marcos remained the best guarantee of U.S. interests in the Philippines. This belief was underlined by the warm welcome that the Philippine dictator received from President Reagan during his visit to the United States in September 1982.

A year later, however, a major reevaluation of U.S. support for the regime began. A more critical posture toward Marcos could be

seen in a shift in the Pentagon's analysis of the state of the Philippine insurgency.

Prior to the Aquino assassination, Pentagon officials had routinely accepted the Marcos regime's severely understated figures on NPA strength and repeated its assessment of the rebels as constituting a "long-term threat" to stability. In February 1984, however, a Defense Department official testifying before Congress sounded the alarm. Using figures much closer to the NPA's than the government's, James Kelly, deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, informed the House of Representatives' Asia-Pacific Affairs Subcommittee headed by Representative Steven Solarz, Democrat of New York, that 10,000 NPA guerrillas were active "in nearly all areas of the country" and that about one-fourth of all Philippine villages were "affected by guerrilla activity." "We do not know how many noncombatant NPA supporters there are among the Filipino people, but NPA efforts to build more support in the countryside have been impressive."⁹⁶ By late 1985, the Pentagon was prepared to confirm the claim of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the leftist political coalition to which the NPA belongs, that it had "influence" over 10 million out of 55 million Filipinos.⁹⁷

Reform had become essential, but for the cautious Pentagon, the essential reforms envisioned following the Aquino murder were military reforms. The State Department, on the other hand, sought to push a bolder, more overtly political strategy. It wanted to distance the United States from Marcos and pressure the dictator to make significant concessions to the elite opposition.

The massive urban demonstrations and apparent coalescing of the left, middle, and right wings of the opposition following the Aquino assassination enabled "pragmatists" at the State Department, who had always been uncomfortable with Reagan's stance of full support for Marcos, to come to the fore and exert influence over the direction of U.S. policy. Michael Armacost, who was promoted to undersecretary of state for political affairs in the

spring of 1984 after serving as ambassador to Manila, emerged as the leader of the pragmatists.

The pragmatists' strategy was not preplanned then imposed on events; it developed in interaction with the fluid situation. Taking a low profile in an atmosphere of growing nationalism was essential. Shortly after Marcos was overthrown, Armacost delivered a closed-door speech on April 23, 1986 in which he described the State Department strategy as one of "cueing in to initiatives pushed by the business class and the middle class," which he described as "the ultimate arbiter of the succession." Nor was the end the overthrow of Marcos. Rather, it was to force him to share power. "Ultimately," Armacost said, "our role was one of helping Marcos reach the right conclusions from events and developments." ⁹⁸

Policy Struggle in Washington

The State Department strategy was, in essence, a throwback to an earlier era. For CIA operative Edward Lansdale during the anti-Huk campaign, the key variable was political — setting up a viable and attractive Third Force between the corrupt Quirino administration and the Communists. In 1984 and 1985, the State Department was groping toward a similar formula of outflanking the left by creating a viable noncommunist opposition and forcing Marcos to share power with it as an initial step toward easing the country to a pro-U.S. post-Marcos order.

The military dimension was not absent from the calculations of the pragmatists, but political decompression was seen as a necessary condition for an effective counterinsurgency effort. As then assistant secretary of state Wolfowitz put it, elections "can serve as the cornerstone of an effective counterinsurgency campaign by demonstrating the government's commitment to meeting the people's aspiration for a responsive leadership of their choice."⁹⁹

The Third Force strategy, however, did not receive active backing from other sectors of the U.S. government. Throughout 1984 and 1985, however, the United States' management of the Marcos problem evinced some of the same bureaucratic tensions that had plagued U.S. policy toward Diem. The State Department and CIA wanted to remove Diem, but key U.S. military men objected, fearful of the destabilizing impact of such a development. In the Philippines, the Defense Department was initially cool to the State Department's aggressive power-sharing strategy, and this was reinforced by President Reagan's own reluctance to dump an old, loyal ally. That the pragmatists faced an uphill struggle was revealed during the second presidential debate with Walter Mondale on October 21, 1984, when Reagan gave a strong endorsement of Marcos' rule, alleging that the alternative was a "large communist movement to take over the Philippines."¹⁰⁰

But pressures to do something about the Marcos problem were too strong. Reagan could not continue dealing with the issue in the conventional right-wing fashion — unwavering support simply because of the client's strong anticommunism. A loose "Inter-Agency Group" set up after the Aquino assassination moved to forge a common approach after Admiral William Crowe, Jr., chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, came back from a visit to Manila with an alarming report on the growth of the insurgency.¹⁰¹ The result was a National Security Study Directive (NSSD) completed in November 1984 and adopted as policy in January 1985.

The NSSD: A Compromise Approach

The NSSD was, in fact, a compromise. The report highlighted two points. First, reflecting the posture of the State Department, reforms were urgently needed. The key reform demanded was "a more open political system that would offer a credible promise of democratic reform."¹⁰² Also vital were "a more open economic system that ends or substantially alters 'crony capitalism' and

agricultural monopolies" and "an effective military capable of carrying the fight to the communist insurgency while controlling abuses of its own power." These measures were seen as "likely in the short run to weaken some bases of support for the current government, which will resist many of them."

The second point responded to the White House and Pentagon's strong hesitations about dumping Marcos: the reforms had to be implemented *with Marcos in place*. "The U.S.," it declared, "does not want to remove Marcos from power or to destabilize the GOP [Government of the Philippines]." In the directive's now classic formulation:

While President Marcos at this stage is part of the problem, he is also necessarily part of the solution. We need to be able to work with him and to try to influence him through a well-orchestrated policy of incentives and disincentives to set the stage for a peaceful and eventual transition to a successor government.

Moreover, the document advocated establishing some distance between the United States and the developing situation. It cautioned:

An overriding consideration should be to avoid getting ourselves caught between the slow erosion of Marcos' authoritarian control and the still fragile revitalization of democratic institutions being made hostage to Marcos' political fortunes, being saddled with ultimate responsibility for winning the insurgency, or tagged with the success or failure of individuals in the moderate leadership.

Nevertheless, the NSSD reflected interagency agreement that real pressure was to be exerted on Marcos, and steps were outlined which would be taken "if there is no agreement, or if agreement is dilatory." In such cases, the United States would:

-
- reiterate our concerns;
 - send signals that noncooperation in Manila leads to noncooperation in Washington, e.g., delayed disbursement of funds, delayed program approvals, negative votes in multilateral forums;
 - discreetly publicize the fact that cooperation is not forthcoming on matters important to the welfare and security of the Philippines. These signals should increase pressure on Marcos from the public, opposition, business leaders, and even from his own close associates. If economic assistance is not forthcoming, the deteriorating situation itself should increase the political and economic pressures on Marcos.

Reforming the AFP

The military reforms advocated by the Pentagon were designed to make the Philippine military a more effective counterinsurgency force. This process could not begin, however, without the "restoration of professional, apolitical leadership."¹⁰³ "It is obvious to all of us," said Armitage, "that the people at the top have to be the ones that those down below can emulate. They can't be affected by habits of corruption."¹⁰⁴ In other words, Ver, who was indicted for allegedly planning the Aquino murder by a special investigating commission, and his clique of overstaying generals had to go.

A second reform demanded by the Pentagon was curbing the abuse of civilians, which was seen as one of the main reasons for the NPA's popularity. This was to be achieved not only by tightening up on discipline but also by providing better pay to reduce the incentive to steal food from villagers, upgrading troop training, and rotating units more frequently to enhance morale.

Third, the AFP had to improve what Armitage called its "counter-

propaganda" or civic action activities, which were seen as "a necessary adjunct to military action."¹⁰⁵

Despite much-publicized programs like "Operation Plan Kata-tagan," which supposedly "integrated" political, economic, and military components, the government "has been unable thus far to implement its strategy and to integrate the appropriate ministries."¹⁰⁶ As a first step in upgrading AFP skills, the NSSD proposed to "concentrate" Philippine participation in joint RP-U.S. military exercises "on tasks which will advance civic action capabilities."¹⁰⁷

Fourth, the Pentagon sought to reorient "force modernization" and the logistics system. It discouraged the Philippine government from purchasing high-tech items for external defense like ultramodern F-16 jet fighters in favor of practical counterinsurgency weaponry. Armitage called the latter "move, shoot, and communicate items" — trucks, armored personnel carriers, helicopter spare parts, and field radios.¹⁰⁸ To cut down on corruption, aid would be transformed from commercial purchases using U.S. government credits to direct grants of equipment.

Fifth, the Pentagon sought greater influence on the officer corps through a more active training program. After a period of "neglect" during the 1970s, the Defense Department doubled the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) allocation to nearly \$1.1 million in 1982, before the crisis triggered by the Aquino assassination. By 1986, the program had again doubled to \$2.2 million and involved the training of about 460 Philippine personnel annually. The majority of them were going to U.S. military schools and specializing in "civil" military operations, psychological operations, political warfare, and counterinsurgency operations. The NSSD envisioned an even more ambitious program, proposing to "[a]ssist in reestablishing training programs throughout the AFP, ranging from basic to advanced courses."¹⁰⁹

Essentially, through the expanded training program, the Pentagon sought to recreate the close inter-military ties of the 1950s which

had permitted the dynamic intervention of U.S. advisers like Lansdale in the day-to-day running of the counterinsurgency campaign. As one key Defense Department official noted:

Most importantly, the program promotes rapport with the younger AFP officers who will be its future leaders. The special friendships among American and Philippine military personnel which were forged during World War II have strengthened the formal bonds between our governments and added a human dimension which makes U.S.-Philippine ties a special relationship for both countries. If we are to have such special relationships among the future American and Philippine military leaders, we must invest in them now by providing opportunities to train and associate together.¹¹⁰

The pro-Marcos military leadership was not, of course, unaware of the strategic agenda of the training program. As a staff report evaluating IMET for the Philippine Command and General Staff College put it: "Thus, it is apparent that other than providing security assistance, IMETP[hilippines] aims at gaining allies for the host country in the guises of education and training packages."¹¹¹

Pentagon pressure on Marcos was consistent throughout 1984 and 1985. But true to form, Marcos promised reforms and decreed changes, but he never delivered. Instead, after a whitewash in the Aquino murder trial, Marcos reinstated General Ver in early December 1985, and Ver then proceeded to extend the terms of retireable loyalist generals—advancing the rationale that "the insurgency problem 'is so serious' that the expertise of older and mature generals are [sic] needed by the military establishment."¹¹²

No neophyte in these matters, Marcos knew that acceding to the reforms would mean handing over substantial power to the Pentagon, and this would be tantamount to digging his own grave. He was well aware of what had happened to Diem when the latter allowed the Americans a strong hand in upgrading his military.

That this was the essential thrust of the reforms was also evident in the statements of Pentagon officials who often lapsed into the collective, imperial "we" while discussing the AFP, as in "we need more troop rotations." In another instance, Armitage told Congress, "There is a certain frustration that we're not omnipotent and we can't do things our way."¹³

The Pentagon's pressure for reforms had the effect of encouraging the emergence of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), a network of disgruntled lieutenant colonels and other junior officers which spread throughout the AFP in 1984 and 1985. The movement surfaced dramatically in the spring of 1985 when officers on review at the Philippine Military Academy stunned Marcos and the high command by distributing leaflets critical of the regime. Seventy percent of the officer corps backed RAM, claimed its manifestoes, which also asserted that the objectives of the movement were to root out "boot-licking incompetents," revive professionalism and *esprit de corps*, and form a "stronger, more motivated counterinsurgency force."

RAM members who were eventually to instigate the military revolt that ousted Marcos could only be encouraged by Pentagon statements praising "those dedicated, patriotic officers who want to see the Armed Forces restored to their former effectiveness...and aggressively pursuing a successful counterinsurgency strategy."¹⁴ Once RAM surfaced, Pentagon officials stepped up their public encouragement. Overstaying generals were RAM's *bete noire*, and the young officers could only take heart from Armitage's words on Nov. 15, 1985:

even the most brilliant operational plan is bound to fail without competent and credible leadership at all levels of the command structure. Now, more than ever, the Armed Forces must be led by officers of the highest professional standard and of the deepest loyalty to their country. Overstaying generals, who do not meet this criteria [sic] will stifle the

emergence of new vigorous leadership and stifle the positive contributions of our security assistance program."¹⁵

The Third Force Strategy Triumphs, Again

By then, with growing polarization between Marcos and the opposition and almost daily reports of NPA assaults on AFP units, the U.S. government had passed from a period of drift, undecided on how much pressure to exert on Marcos, to one of greater resolve. At a large interagency gathering at the National Defense University in late July 1985, officials from the State Department, Pentagon, and the intelligence agencies heard a panel recommend that "while the United States should not work for the overthrow of Marcos, it should take an open view about his removal from office."¹⁶ The panel was also said to have suggested that the NSSD's formulation of the premise of U.S. policy—that the "United States does not want to remove Marcos from power or to destabilize the GOP"—be dropped.

In mid-October 1985, Senator Paul Laxalt undertook his crucial journey to Manila with a toughly worded message to Marcos from President Reagan to stop "screwing up" the counterinsurgency effort. Then followed an orchestrated outpouring of administration statements that sounded an apocalyptic note. Typical of this was Paul Wolfowitz's warning to Congress on October 30 that "time is running out, but time is not being used well." Only "dramatic action" would "turn back the tide of communist insurgency."¹⁷

On November 3, in response to mounting pressure from Washington, Marcos dramatically announced on U.S. television that he had decided to hold presidential elections sooner than 1987, when they had originally been scheduled. On November 6, on the occasion of a visit by Richard Holbrooke, former assistant secretary of state for East Asia, U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires

Philip Kaplan assembled key leaders of the anti-Marcos political parties and, according to a confidential Embassy cable,

emphasized the need for the opposition to get its act together given the limited time left before the campaign starts, if the election is going to be held on January 17 or some date soon thereafter. He said the U.S. cannot get involved in the issue of the date of the election — this was something to be worked out in the Philippine political process. The charge emphasized that what we can do — and are doing — is to press for free and fair elections.¹¹⁸

The cable also revealed that “both the charge and Holbrooke... underlined the importance of avoiding being portrayed as anti-bases or soft on communism. These postures would not play well in the U.S.”¹¹⁹

The State Department pragmatists had apparently come to the conclusion that an electoral victory by the opposition would be in the best interests of the United States. As early as February 1985, Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, Armacost’s successor in Manila, had cabled Washington:

If the opposition should succeed in uniting behind a single candidate, and that candidate should be elected president, what would be the overall impact on U.S.-R.P. relations? Based on our frequent contact with most of the opposition leaders, our judgment at this time is that the opposition could be expected to act responsibly and that the U.S.-R.P. relationship would prosper.¹²⁰

Millions of Filipinos rallied behind the candidacy of Corazon Aquino to bring down the Marcos dictatorship. The U.S. strategy during the elections was, in Armacost’s words, to “encourage the constraints” on Marcos by sending an observers’ delegation from Congress, encouraging Western media coverage, and pressing Marcos to set up the legal framework for free elections. Less

obvious was U.S. funding of various opposition initiatives. U.S. government funds, for instance, went to NAMFREL.¹²¹ This reincarnation of the citizens' electoral watchdog body during the Magsaysay period was set up to neutralize Marcos' Commission on Elections. U.S. funds, Armacost later revealed, also went to the Catholic Church-run Radio Veritas via the Asia Foundation, a well-known conduit of CIA and State Department money.¹²²

Even the cautious Pentagon exerted its own forms of political pressure. Given the widespread expectation that Marcos would use the AFP to steal the February 7 elections, Armitage's appeal on December 18, 1985, came across as virtually a call to the Philippine officer corps to disobey their commander in chief.

The AFP would be faced with a supreme challenge during the electoral process. At stake would be nothing less than the credibility of the AFP and, in particular, the honor of its officer corps. The conduct of the Philippine military during this critical period would determine whether the AFP is, in fact, loyal to the constitution and a true pillar of support for the democratic process or whether the AFP is a more perverse entity, bent on a course which will accelerate the spiral of instability.¹²³

By then, the military reformists were "meeting with other sectors of the military, printing and distributing leaflets, and organizing 'prayer rallies' for soldiers to gather together and pray for clean elections."¹²⁴

According to one account, U.S. support for RAM went beyond the rhetorical. The organization apparently received U.S. financial backing via NAMFREL.¹²⁵

While the United States actively intervened in favor of the opposition, the leftist National Democratic Front boycotted the elections with the rationale that they were another "meaningless contest among reactionaries." This was a major tactical blunder.

It was an uncanny repetition of history: convinced that the 1951 elections were the last gasp of the old order, the left had also boycotted the congressional polls and lost momentum when they turned out to be relatively fair.¹²⁶ In February 1986, Marcos tried to blatantly steal the elections. But, marginalized from the mainstream of events, the left lost both the political and moral authority to seize the leadership of the mass movement angered by the dictator's brazen moves.

The United States, however, nearly squandered this gift from the left. In the critical period following Marcos' theft of the elections, Ronald Reagan, still undecided on Marcos' fate, hesitated, remarking that the elections had been marked by "fraud on both sides." This brought to a boil the frustration of State Department officials with the ideologues surrounding Reagan. Veteran diplomat Philip Habib was sent on a last-ditch effort to set up a "power-sharing arrangement" between Marcos and Aquino, but events in the Philippines could no longer be contained within the State Department formula.

On February 22, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, AFP Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos, and RAM staged their daring mutiny with an initial strength of only 200 out of 250,000 troops, after their plans for a coup were discovered by Marcos. Hundreds of thousands of civilians, hearing the plea of Cardinal Jaime Sin aired by the U.S.-financed Radio Veritas, rushed to Camp Aguinaldo to protect the vastly outnumbered rebels. On February 24, Reagan finally decided to abandon his old, trusted ally, and asked Marcos to step down. On February 25, under cover of darkness, Marcos and his entourage were ferried by U.S. Air Force helicopters to Clark Air Base and from there to exile in Hawaii. "We played a constructive role in getting him out of the country," Undersecretary of State Armacost recounted frankly later on. "He wanted to go north [Marcos' stronghold in the northern Philippines], but this would have provoked civil war since there were elements in the military still loyal to him."¹²⁷

Despite the bad feeling among Aquino forces created by Reagan's sticking to Marcos till the eleventh hour, the State Department pragmatists knew that their full-court press on Marcos for fair elections had saved the day for the U.S. government. As William Sullivan, the former envoy to Manila put it, they had "saved the Reagan administration from its worst instincts and stopped it from snatching defeat from the jaws of victory."¹²⁸ It was 1951 all over again for some U.S. officials, who recalled that it had been the combination of the PKP's boycott policy and the AFP's "benign" electoral presence which had assured relatively clean elections and salvaged the legitimacy of the political system in the face of the advancing Huk insurgency. As one senior State Department official summarized it, "the coming to power of the Aquino government constitutes a setback for the insurgency because:

- The new government, in contrast to the previous government, enjoys widespread popular support
- The principal propaganda target of the communists, the Marcos regime, is gone.
- The communist election boycott was repudiated by the majority of Filipinos by an even greater margin than during the 1984 national assembly elections."¹²⁹

The Third Force strategy had worked, at least temporarily. As a triumphant Michael Armacost put it before foreign service officers on April 23, 1986: "Our objective was to capture...to encourage the democratic forces of the center, then consolidate control by the middle and also win away the soft support of the NPA. So far, so good."¹³⁰

LIC TODAY

As the dust settled, however, it gradually became clear that the situation was more complicated than such euphoric statements indicated. A government dominated by centrist elements had come to power and had seized the political initiative vis-à-vis the left. Yet, as events quickly made clear, there were two developments that could derail the U.S. stabilization plan: the presidential aspirations of Defense Minister Enrile, and clashes between President Aquino and influential AFP sectors over counterinsurgency strategy.

Consolidating the Third Force

The most explosive issue in the immediate post-Marcos period was the conflict between Aquino and Enrile. Enrile, called an "old friend" by U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, was regarded in Washington as an important asset in the U.S. effort to unite the still fragmented Philippine elite into a cohesive anti-insurgent bloc. As Armacost put it in April 1986, "Enrile and [Fidel] Ramos are important as a bridge between the old regime and the new to help contain excessive zeal in dealing with the past."¹¹ Even more important, however, was Enrile's insistence on a hardline approach to the insurgency—an outlook that far more closely accorded with Pentagon views than Aquino's "soft" approach.

Enrile's presidential ambitions, however, prevented the new government from achieving a degree of political stability—Washington's principal aim at the time. While the United States was attempting to buttress the Aquino "center," Enrile was cultivating the support of conservative landowners and businessmen and adroitly maneuvering to become a rallying point for elements

of the old Marcos coalition that were in disarray following the February Uprising.

Enrile's chief drawback, however, was that he was an obstacle to a key U.S. objective: the military's withdrawal from active politics to devote its energy to combatting the insurgency. He became the voice within the cabinet of military men who had been accustomed to wielding great political influence and enjoying economic privileges under Marcos. Enrile coddled pro-Marcos military men, and he could count on the loyalty of a significant bloc of officers.

Provoked by rumors of an impending coup, Aquino fired Enrile as defense minister in late November 1986. It was a move that implicitly carried the backing of the United States, which issued statements of "full support" for Aquino throughout the showdown.

The United States restated its firm support for Aquino following a military mutiny that resulted in the takeover of a Manila radio station by rebel soldiers in late January 1987. Warning the faction-ridden AFP against further attempts at destabilization, Armitage asserted on March 17, 1987:

Over the past year disaffected elements of the NAFP disrupted the stability of the country by perpetrating a series of plots aimed at destabilizing the Aquino government.... Whatever their intentions, their actions threatened Philippine democracy and, to the extent that their actions added to the sense of instability, they unwittingly furthered the cause of their communist rivals. We categorically condemn any and all attempts to destabilize the legitimate government of the Republic of the Philippines.¹³²

We are also obviously deeply disappointed that a small segment of the NAFP, at least temporarily, repudiated the tradition of non-involvement in politics and adherence to the chain of command.

Yet the United States could not but be pleased with the outcome of the Aquino-AFP tensions. For one, it achieved greater leverage over Aquino and thus greater influence over the conduct of the counterinsurgency program because she had sought—and gotten—explicit U.S. backing during the showdown with Enrile. Another positive fallout for the United States was the appointment of Gen. Rafael Ileto (retired) as defense minister to replace Enrile. This brought to the top of the country's military-civilian hierarchy a staunchly pro-U.S. professional counterinsurgency expert, a man who helped found the Philippine Scout Rangers and worked with Colonel Lansdale to suppress the Huks in the early fifties. With Ileto as defense minister and Ramos as chief of staff, the military appeared to have a viable team to front the counterinsurgency effort. Both were U.S.-trained, considered professionals, and regarded as “incorruptible.”

Indeed, other members of the old Lansdale-Magsaysay team landed key positions within the new government: Gen. Luis Villareal (retired), a famous “Huk Hunter,” became head of the National Intelligence Coordinating Authority (NICA), while Jaime Ferrer was appointed head of Cory Aquino's Ministry of Local Governments. However, the tenures of both were short-lived: by August 1987, Villareal had resigned and Ferrer had been assassinated.

The Struggle over Strategy

The tensions between the State Department pragmatists and Pentagon officials, allied with hardline Reaganites, over the conduct of the counterinsurgency in the Philippines resurfaced in the first year of the Aquino administration. The issue was Aquino's emphasis on a negotiated, political solution to the insurgency.

Like her slain husband, Aquino and some of her closest advisers saw bringing the left into the parliamentary process as a way of taming it, confident that as in Europe and Japan, the revolutionary

alternative would remain a minority view in the arena of formal democracy. For this process to take place, however, the left had to be induced to abandon the armed struggle. Bludgeoning the NPA into submission had not worked under Marcos. Aquino and her key advisers proposed instead a plan that combined initiating peace talks with the NPA and NDF, co-opting the "soft core" of the NPA with a rehabilitation program, and launching a propaganda campaign designed to deprive the insurgents of the moral basis for waging war.

The use of force was not absent, but as in the Lansdale-Magsaysay approach, it was secondary. Aquino provided the most cogent description of this approach in her speech to the U.S. Congress on September 18, 1986, on the occasion of her state visit to the United States: "Yet, I must explore the path of peace to the utmost, for at its end, whatever disappointment I meet there, is the moral basis for laying down the olive branch of peace and taking up the sword of war."

The State Department, in its public statements, tended to be supportive of the Aquino strategy. For instance, Gaston Sigur, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told Congress on March 17, 1987 that "the Philippine government is addressing the insurgency problem realistically and effectively."¹³

The Pentagon and Reaganites, however, saw nothing but danger and illusion in such negotiated agreements. Thus, skepticism, if not outright disagreement, marked the public response of key Reagan administration officials to Aquino's peace initiative. "As a general proposition," said Armitage,

we support any program that would reduce bloodshed and eliminate the prospect of Filipinos killing each other. However, the continuing brutal attacks by the NPA and the CPP's continuing adherence to the doctrine of armed struggle leaves little doubt that at the end of the day, military action will be required to defeat the insurgency.¹⁴

In less diplomatic terms, another official asserted, shortly after preliminary negotiations with the rebels were underway in late August 1986, "She had to make this [peace] effort and she has made it and now it's time to move to the next step."¹³⁵

In this instance, the Pentagon found itself backing the hardliners within the Philippine military and in outright opposition to key civilian officials, like Joker Arroyo, Aquino's executive secretary, who had been targetted by the right wing as a "communist sympathizer." The Aquino government nevertheless persisted in the peace negotiations, which resulted in a 60-day ceasefire by the end of the year. In justifying the effort to talk to the Communists, one Manila official contrasted Aquino's political approach to the Pentagon's "territorial mentality": "You don't work in terms of territory in a guerrilla war. And since Mrs. Aquino came to power, their influence has receded enormously. They have been losing popular support to Cory."¹³⁶

The Pentagon was unconvinced, and after the NDF withdrew from the peace negotiations in late January 1987, following a massacre of peasant demonstrators by security forces, Armitage issued his strongest attack yet on the government's peace efforts:

As with the Marcos regime before it, the Aquino government has also regrettably failed to develop a comprehensive counterinsurgency plan that integrates military, political, economic and social programs. Marcos erroneously relied exclusively on military action. Some members of the Aquino administration believe that they can rely almost exclusively on symbolic political acts to cure the insurgency. They continue to cling to the forlorn hope that the insurgents will fade from the scene and that coordinated civil and military action will not be necessary.¹³⁷

The Aquino strategists, however, interpreted the collapse of the peace talks in a different way. They knew that popular perception blamed the insurgents for the end of the talks, lessening the left's

political credibility and legitimacy. Indeed, the more than 75 percent voter approval rate of the new "Cory Constitution" during the February 2 plebiscite, following the killing of 18 leftist peasant demonstrators by security forces on January 22 and a right-wing coup attempt the next week, was seen by Aquino and her advisers as a popular repudiation of both the left and the right.

In their view, the political and moral basis for unleashing armed force on the insurgents had been carefully laid over the previous year, and it was now time for Aquino to "draw the sword of war." This she did on March 23, 1987 at her commencement speech at the Philippine Military Academy: "The answer to the terrorism of the left and the right is not social and economic reform but police and military action," she told the troops. Then she called for "a string of honorable victories."¹³⁸

The smashing victory of the administration candidates and the withering defeat of progressive, leftist candidates in the elections of May 10 was interpreted as another blow to the legitimacy of the left and a boost to the "moral basis" for counterinsurgency. It is not surprising then that shortly after the elections Aquino called for the formation of "unarmed" civilian vigilante groups nationwide to defeat the insurgency (a topic to which we will return).

By the spring of 1987, the government was ready to embark on the "military solution," but, contrary to the prescription of the AFP and the Pentagon, Aquino and her advisers believed that the military effort was one that was blessed with political legitimacy, popular backing, and a strong public perception that the rebels had had their chance to make peace and had blown it.

The Left on the Defensive

A crucial element in the debate over the counterinsurgency strategy between the Aquino government and the Pentagon was

the perception of the state of the left. By the middle of 1987, the NPA was intact and had, in fact, made some territorial gains. However, the political and moral initiative that it enjoyed during the Marcos period had slipped. The NDF and the NPA, in short, were in the unprecedented situation of being on the political defensive while still maintaining the military initiative. Its leaders knew, however, that without regaining the political and moral initiative, the military equation would also change.

The change in the fortunes of a movement that had anticipated that it would achieve the "strategic stalemate" by the end of the eighties began with its fateful decision to boycott the presidential elections of February 1986, which were characterized as a "circus of the reactionaries."¹³⁹ The decision, as one self-critical document put it, marginalized the left from an event that in fact "constituted the climax of the people's long-drawn struggle against the Marcos regime."¹⁴⁰ It continued: "The boycott policy not only failed to give enough value to the question of reaching and mobilizing the majority of the people. It directly and openly went against the desire of the broad masses to pursue the antifascist struggle by means of critically participating in the elections."¹⁴¹

The boycott decision left the movement with very little leverage on the direction of the new government. A belated move to "critical support" did not improve the left's position. Instead, it was placed even deeper on the defensive by the government's offer of peace negotiations. On the political and moral defensive, the left had no choice but to negotiate or risk isolation, given the strong appeal of the pro-peace posture of the Aquino government. It sought, however, to use the talks to turn the tables on the government. By making the negotiations an arena for pressing the government on major social and political reforms in a highly visible fashion, the NDF hoped to blunt the government's aim of disarming the NPA and seize the moral and political high ground.

The strategy did not work. All the NDF gained was some favorable publicity during the negotiations and at the beginning of the

60-day truce. It was Aquino who reaped the political windfall for bringing peace to a war-weary country. The ceasefire also slowed the NPA's momentum while providing the AFP with breathing space to upgrade its counterinsurgency capability. Indeed, the military used the occasion to improve its tactical position in many areas of NPA strength.¹⁴²

It was not until the massive government victories during the constitutional referendum of February 1, 1987 and the congressional elections on May 10 that the leadership of the revolutionary movement realized the extent to which it had lost the political initiative and moral ascendancy. Aquino was genuinely, overwhelmingly popular and enjoyed massive popular support that cut across class lines. In the face of the Aquino moral juggernaut, admitted *Ang Bayan*, the Communist party organ, "the question of seizing political initiative and achieving moral ascendancy on the part of the revolutionary forces will indeed be complex for as long as the broad masses of our people have not yet grasped by their own experience the correctness of revolutionary strategy and tactics."¹⁴³

The Pentagon only saw the continued growth of the NPA and rang the alarm. But to many on both the left and in the Aquino government, the military situation could not be divorced from the question of who had the political and moral initiative. The loss of political initiative stemming from the inability of the left to make its political program credible, legitimate, and necessary to greater numbers of Filipinos would soon erode the NPA's military initiative vis-à-vis the military. Many on the left were painfully aware of the fact that in the 1950s the Huk revolutionary forces had first been defeated politically before they were defeated militarily, and this lent a special urgency to the movement's efforts to recapture the moral and political high ground.

Why was Aquino so successful in her political initiatives in relation to the left during her first sixteen months in office?

A genuine war weariness and desire for peace after 14 years of dictatorship and civil war was certainly a factor, and this phenomenon cut across class lines. There was also the strong appeal of the Aquino forces' slogan that she had to be "given a chance" and not be judged after only a few months in office. Also, whether by design or not, Aquino was able effectively to project herself simultaneously as the noble widow of a martyr, an uncompromising enemy of dictatorship, a Joan of Arc out to save the Filipino nation, an antipolitical personality who wielded power reluctantly, and an upholder of moderation against the "extremes of both right and left."

A key factor was Aquino's identification with the return of formal democratic processes. The left could rightfully criticize the elections of 1987 as representing the return of traditional elite democracy, where only those with money and influence could win elections. Nevertheless, the sense of participating in free elections after 14 years of rigged elections was very heady for the people. Formal electoral democracy, moreover, had deep cultural roots that could not be dispelled simply by a rational critique of its limitations. From the time it was introduced by U.S. colonial authorities early in the twentieth century, the electoral system had served to perpetuate elite rule by serving as a regulator of intraelite conflicts and acting as a "safety valve" for lower class resentments. The exercise of free choice was real, but the structuring of that choice by elite power, money, and influence was not fully appreciated by the populace: herein lay the dilemma of the left in confronting Aquino's electoral offensive and upholding the legitimacy of the armed struggle. And when Aquino offered elections as the route to stability and peace, as providing a mechanism for the population to resolve differences peacefully, the ideological challenge of the new government was very strong indeed.

The AFP: A Continuing Obstacle

The government's momentum, however, was broken barely three months after its massive victory in the May 1987 congressional elections. And it was the right, not the left, that was responsible. The August 28 coup attempt led by Col. Gregorio ("Gringo") Honasan—who had earlier served as Enrile's chief aide—was the sixth frustrated putsch during Aquino's first 18 months in power. It underlined the fact that the AFP was a major roadblock to a successful counterinsurgency.

The dominant U.S. view that the insurgency was primarily a political problem, to be solved mainly by political measures, was one that found favor with some people in the AFP high command. On this point, no statement could be more succinct than that made by General Ramos:

The insurgency is primarily political and only incidentally military. . . . We need to coordinate the middle forces, civilian authorities, religious and civic groups in our anti-insurgent campaigns; reform the social, political, and economic systems; improve intelligence and combat capability; and intensify civic action and public information programs.¹⁴⁴

The RAM Problem

The fly in the ointment was not Ramos but the junior officers, particularly those in RAM. While the United States could admire RAM for its emphasis on professionalization, RAM's emphasis on a military solution to the insurgency did not harmonize with the dominant U.S. strategy, which laid the stress on political solutions. But even more distressing to the United States was RAM's drive to politicize the military.

RAM's leadership, made up mainly of graduates of the class of 1971 at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), sought political power for the military. This goal had to some extent been disguised

in February 1986, when the RAM leadership positioned itself behind Defense Minister Enrile against Ferdinand Marcos. But the August 28, 1987 coup could no longer be regarded as an effort to bring a civilian to power. It was the inevitable conclusion of a process that had begun two decades earlier, when Marcos started to politicize the AFP by converting it into an instrument of personal power. Honasan and RAM were merely carrying the process to its "logical conclusion": the AFP as an institution serving as the political guardian of the nation.

RAM's rhetoric was an ideological brew typical of ambitious "young colonels": condemnation of the corruption of traditional politics coupled with calls for national sacrifice and a harder line against communism. But it was, in essence, a prescription for the installation of the military as a directing elite. Feeling that they were cheated of their rightful place in the sun by Aquino's shutting them out of power after the February 1986 Uprising, RAM's leaders tried to complete their "revolution" in August 1987. They have not yet given up.

RAM's challenge to Aquino has upset the whole U.S.-sponsored stabilization strategy, for it meant that the two prongs of the counterinsurgency campaign — Aquino and the AFP — were badly "out of sync." For the United States, the conflict was especially serious since the RAM group was precisely the set of officers that the United States needed to work with Cory Aquino to professionalize the AFP. Honasan and his colleagues were very similar to the ideologically motivated anticommunist junior officers with combat experience that the United States used to transform the Salvadoran military.

The conflict between Aquino and the AFP meant that the United States was called upon to play a more active role as referee, thus intensifying U.S. intervention. By the end of 1987, Cory Aquino's only effective protection against military coup attempts was the active intervention of the U.S. Embassy. And at times, this intervention had to be literally on the ground. For instance,

during the August 28 coup, Lt. Col. Victor Raphael, an assistant military attache at the embassy, tried to dissuade loyalist troops from assaulting rebel soldiers holed up at Camp Aguinaldo in an effort to contain the widening spit between the pro-Aquino and rebel factions of the AFP which was wreaking havoc with the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy.

Continued Factionalism

Although RAM has apparently gained much influence among the AFP's 14,000-man officer corps, it has to contend with two other key factions. One is the still dominant constitutionalist, pro-Aquino faction led by Ramos and made up largely of the general staff and senior colonels. The other is the troublesome group of pro-Marcos officers who resent both RAM and Ramos and continue to plot to bring back their Bonaparte from Honolulu.

Indeed, many observers contend that the constitutionalist/RAM cleavage has merely temporarily superseded the many other factional rivalries that have made the AFP a seething cauldron of factionalism. For instance, the semimilitary Philippine Constabulary, which functions as a national police force, is locked in a bitter conflict with the Philippine Army and the small but highly professional Philippine Marines for the leading role in the struggle against the insurgency. Most of RAM's members are PMA graduates, who are known to constitute a jealous upper caste. This has forced those officers who entered the ranks via the Reserved Officers' Training Corps and other means to form the rival fraternities "Irog," "Brothers," and "Guardians" to effectively jockey for key command positions.

Ironically, when RAM dislodged Marcos in February 1986, it also removed the linchpin of the AFP and triggered a surge of centrifugal forces that will make it difficult, if not impossible, for it to successfully impose its authority over the rest of the military should it succeed in supplanting Ramos and the constitutionalists.

But unbridled factionalism is but one of the accumulated problems that stand in the way of a "rationalization" of the repressive machinery. To maintain the military's fragile unity, Ramos jettisoned many proposed reforms which would have touched the interests of influential sectors. Thus no effort was made to cut down the bloated size of the military, as proposed by some military reformers who believed that this would *increase* rather than hamper the effectiveness of the AFP. U.S. observers, like former generals Richard Stilwell and Bernard Trainor, have in fact estimated that only 30,000 of the AFP's 250,000 personnel were combat troops.¹⁴⁵ Also, the Regional Unified Commands (RUCs), which had originally been created to place pro-Marcos generals in control of key armed forces units, were not disbanded in spite of their superfluity from the perspective of military rationality.

Corruption and patronage are endemic, and promotions and assignments to key command positions are largely determined by patronage, kinship, and fraternity ties rather than by field experience and command abilities. And throughout the ranks of what the *London Economist* labelled the "world's worst army," demoralization has spread.¹⁴⁶

The continuing politicization, factionalism, and low morale of the AFP led newly installed defense minister Ileto to remark in February 1987 that "before I got this job, I thought it would take about a year or two to reform the military, unite everybody, and weed out the bad ones. Now I'm convinced it will take 20 years — a generation."¹⁴⁷ The U.S. National Security Council echoed a similar frustration in an early 1987 assessment that "the Armed Forces still lack the unity, morale, equipment, and level of professionalism needed for a nationwide push against the rebels and that an all-out military option would not succeed at the moment."¹⁴⁸

Strategic Confusion

That there was nothing new about the New Armed Forces of the Philippines, as Ramos christened them in the euphoria of the

February Uprising, however, was most evident in the strategy of dealing with the insurgency.

A key 1986 AFP intelligence assessment illustrates the problem. The document asserted that “the nationwide spread of the CPP/NPA is vulnerable to a region by region campaign since it has thinly overextended itself and is not capable of reinforcing or putting up a stand on that basis.”¹⁴⁹

According to one report, one plan backed by the United States was concentrating firepower on one island in a “decisive show of force against the insurgents.”¹⁵⁰ The island under consideration was apparently Negros, the depressed sugar area where the NPA has experienced one of its fastest rates of growth over the last few years.

The proposed strategy reveals the AFP’s and Washington’s inability to understand one cardinal truth about the NPA insurgency: that it has been carried out by an organizationally decentralized people’s army whose units are expected to be self-reliant, depend on their own local resources to increase their support, numbers, and guns. Isolating Negros will not hamper NPA operations in the rest of the archipelago. But the NPA’s likely response—stepped-up attacks in other parts of the archipelago—will prevent the thinly stretched AFP from concentrating its resources on Negros for an appreciable amount of time.

The Same Old Army

The idea of “concentrating firepower” catches the continuing contrast between the AFP-Pentagon approach and Aquino-U.S. State Department strategy. Firepower and repression continue to be the military’s solution to the insurgency. Indeed, in 1986, with the redeployment of military units formerly stationed in metropolitan Manila for presidential security, AFP battalions in the countryside rose from 56 to around 67.¹⁵¹ In areas like Cagayan, Negros, and Davao, massive counterinsurgency campaigns were launched

that involved bombing, food blockades, relocation of peasants, and torture. The ceasefire merely provided a respite for repressive military operations; the truce, in fact, did not prevent troops from carrying out the massacre of peasants demonstrating in front of the presidential palace on January 22, 1987.

Indeed, in some respects, the human rights situation has actually worsened since the ouster of Marcos. An alarming new development is the proliferation of armed vigilante groups which aim to flush communists and communist sympathizers from rural and urban communities. Most of these groups, such as the *Alsa Masa* (Masses, Arise) in Davao City and *Nakasaka* in Davao del Sur, have been set up or actively encouraged by the military.¹⁵² Many suspected leftists have been dealt "swift justice" in the form of summary execution, leading many alarmed observers to view the rise of these thinly-disguised death squads as the prelude to the "Salvadoranization" or "Guatemalanization" of the counterinsurgency campaign. The specter of indiscriminate repression promised by these groups was evident in the statement of *Alsa Masa*'s founder and Davao City military commander Col. Franco Calida: "In the fight between democracy and communism there is no way to be neutral. Anybody who would not like to join *Alsa Masa* is a Communist."¹⁵³

The rise of the right-wing vigilantes poses critical questions for the Aquino government. In El Salvador in the early eighties, military-backed death squads conferred so much notoriety on the army that they encouraged the spread of the insurgency rather than contained it. At the instigation of the United States, the death squads were reined in and repression became more selective and "strategic" in 1983 in an effort to manufacture popular legitimacy for the government.¹⁵⁴ Allowing the Philippine Army free rein in forming vigilante groups could, in a similar fashion, become the Achilles' heel of the government's counterinsurgency strategy, which has so far depended mainly on populist political initiatives. But with Cory Aquino and key advisers like Ileto now actively endorsing "civilian defense" against the communists, the legiti-

macy and popularity of the civilian government — the most effective weapon so far against the insurgency — could very well erode as vigilante abuse and terror spread.

Thus the vigilante phenomenon is a sign of weakness rather than of strength. It is a quick fix, which may bring short-run gains for the military but creates even greater civilian alienation and rebel support in the medium and long term. Terror exercised by local criminal elements has never been a viable method for stable political control. The proliferation of vigilante groups is also an indication that the United States still has to gain full control of the counterinsurgency campaign, since the thrust of its policy has been to move the military away from random to more selective or “strategic” repression. U.S. apprehension that the vigilantes could become the problem rather than the solution was evident in the statement of one embassy official shortly after Secretary of State Shultz backed President Aquino’s endorsement of the vigilantes: “We have to be a little careful about that one, I think...I mean some of this is fine as long as it is, you know, kept under control so to speak...one always has to be careful about such groups.” That the concern was an inter-agency one was reflected in the comment of influential Pentagon advisor Stilwell that the vigilantes were “a mixed blessing: in the short-term, a welcome augmentation; but in the longer term, a potential source of problems as they are generally not responsive to duly constituted authority.”¹⁵⁵

The Limits of Social Reform

In the 1950s, it was the promise of social and economic reform which served as the key to defusing the insurgency. And it was the lack of substance to this promise that accounted for the resurgence of mass dissent in the late sixties.

While strong on the question of political reform, the Aquino government was hardly reformist when it came to social and

economic issues. An important measure in gaining popular legitimacy was her promise of much needed recovery, development, and equity. Yet the government did not break with many of the policies of the Marcos regime that had brought about a 10 percent fall in gross national product in the last two years of the dictatorship.

Rather than seek substantial relief or take other bolder measures on its \$28 billion foreign debt, the Aquino government promised to fully repay it. This meant that a substantial volume of national resources continued to be channelled away from development and siphoned out of the country in the form of interest payments; in 1986 alone, this came to about \$2 billion or more than 30 percent of export earnings. Rescheduling payments, which was the route preferred by Aquino and her conservative finance minister, the late Jaime Ongpin, would at best reduce the debt service burden from 45 percent of foreign exchange earnings to 25 to 30 percent — still a massive drain for a developing economy.¹⁵⁶

Other socio-economic policies followed by the new government promised neither development nor equity. On the most important “pacification” measure, land reform, there was hardly any movement. Agrarian reform had been one of Cory Aquino’s promises during the February 1986 elections, with the candidate asserting that her family’s 14,000-acre hacienda would be among the first subjected to the reform. Shortly after the elections, however, the president began to backtrack on the land question, declaring in one interview that “it is not so much a matter of distributing land but of enabling people to share profits. By sharing out the land, you only create more problems because sugar cultivation, for instance, is definitely uneconomic if carried out in small plots.”¹⁵⁷

Surprisingly, the World Bank turned out to be more sanguine about land reform than Aquino. Probably motivated by the priority it assigned to containing the insurgency, the bank came out in favor of a land reform program that would be decisive, comprehensive, and cheap for tenant beneficiaries. In a May 12 report to the government, a World Bank mission wrote:

Undertaking an agrarian reform program involves taking difficult decisions which affect the interests of vast numbers of people, and calls for a strong and unwavering political commitment on the part of the government...If, fortified by the constitutional mandate it received, the Government decides that this is the right time to move ahead with a serious land reform program, then the Mission would recommend that the coverage be comprehensive, that the program be undertaken as swiftly as possible, and that the implementation not be allowed to drag out as was the case under previous land reform programs....Land reform is an unavoidably wrenching experience for a country. It is therefore of the utmost importance that it be implemented as effectively as possible, so as to achieve the intended results once and for all.¹⁵⁸

Such a reform, if successfully implemented, would "remove the need for a substantial expansion in civil defense expenditure."¹⁵⁹

The Aquino government did not follow the bank's advice. The land reform decree it issued on July 22, 1987, sidestepped the fundamental demands of tenant-farmers and landless workers. For instance, it did not specify how much land the landlord could retain, leaving that up to the landlord-dominated Congress. Moreover, it provided that the basis for compensating landlords would be "fair market value" for the land rather than the tenants' capacity to pay.

Thus, by mid-1987, Aquino might already have lost her "window of opportunity," as landlord groups consolidated their opposition to any substantive reform effort. Landowners were not only promising to block any reform effort in the new Congress but also warning that they would "go to war if their farms are taken from them."¹⁶⁰ Failure on the land reform issue, which was the number one concern of the vast majority of the 70 percent of the population that lived in the countryside, would be a key factor in giving the initiative back to the insurgents. This was very clear to the

government's U.S. backers like Roy Prosterman, who helped design U.S.-backed land reform programs in Vietnam and El Salvador, and Representative Steven Solarz, Aquino's most influential supporter in Congress. As Solarz put it, "The Philippines will see either agrarian reform or an agrarian revolution."¹⁶¹

DIRECT U.S. ROLE IN THE CURRENT COUNTERINSURGENCY

In its effort to assist the Aquino government to contain the insurgency, the United States is, of course, advising the government at various levels. Again, given the importance of the personal tie to the Filipino psyche, the ability of U.S. Ambassador Stephen Bosworth to forge a close friendship with Aquino was a master stroke in getting her to move closer to U.S. positions throughout 1986.

The U.S. role, however, goes beyond giving advice to Aquino and her cabinet. In the area of security, the U.S. presence in the Philippines has evolved along the lines laid out in the 1984 NSSD, with the emphasis on propaganda and psychological warfare, civic action, training, and assistance in battlefield communications and logistics.

Psychological Warfare and Propaganda

A dramatic indicator of the importance the United States attaches to this area of counterinsurgent warfare is the Reagan administration's recent authorization of a 10 percent increase in CIA personnel attached to the U.S. Embassy in Manila and a \$10 million budget for surveillance and covert action.¹⁶²

The CIA is likely to be involved in computerizing military and police files, says Ralph McGehee, a retired CIA agent who served as an adviser to the South Vietnamese National Police during the Vietnam War. McGehee, who recently visited the Philippines as

part of a human rights investigating mission headed by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, stated: "We'll also see more recruitment of journalists and the planting of stories to create anticommunist hysteria. Propaganda activities of this sort is a CIA specialty."¹⁶³

The Clark mission also suspects CIA involvement in the recent proliferation of vigilante groups and death squads. According to McGehee, who participated in the notorious "Operation Phoenix" which took the lives of some 40,000 Vietnamese, there is a "distinct parallel between the counterinsurgency operations with vigilante groups in the Philippines and those conducted by the United States during the Vietnam War. The vigilantes are like the 'provincial reconnaissance units' which were actually assassination teams sent to 'purify' villages of alleged communists."¹⁶⁴

If the CIA is, in fact, actively behind the vigilantes, this would further indicate that the agencies of the United States have yet to arrive at a coordinated Philippine counterinsurgency strategy. As noted earlier, some elements, like pragmatists at the State Department, are apprehensive about backing such groups.

U.S. officials were more uniformly overt in their support of counterrevolutionary "agitprop." As a model, Pentagon officials cited the activities of Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, when he was still in Davao as commander of the Third Marine Brigade. Through "dialogue sessions," films, and propaganda depicting the NPA as another Khmer Rouge, Biazon sought to head off linkage between "middle forces" and the left.¹⁶⁵ After Aquino's coming to power, Biazon went on to become superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), where he revitalized the training of a new generation of officers in anti-insurgent propaganda and psychological warfare.¹⁶⁶

Biazon's activities in Davao were either directly or indirectly assisted by the United States Information Agency, which was

active in the anticommunist propaganda campaign by distributing films and other written materials. A local USIA officer said that the propaganda campaign "could do more than an F-16 could ever do" for counterinsurgency. "We could blanket Mindanao for the price of a plane."¹⁶⁷ As indicated by the recent showing of the anticommunist film *Amerika* in places like Cebu City, USIA propaganda efforts against the insurgency are likely to step up in various parts of the country.¹⁶⁸

The activities of the Asian-American Free Labor Institute (AAFLI), an arm of the AFL-CIO, should also be seen as a component of the U.S. government's counterinsurgency strategy. According to AAFLI director Charles Gray, its programs "have evolved beyond traditional trade union activities" to encompass development and organizational activities in "just those areas where the communists are most active, such as Mindanao, Negros, Iloilo, and Cebu."¹⁶⁹

In 1985 alone, AAFLI spent up to \$4 million on such programs in the Philippines, the bulk of the money coming from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a private agency created by Congress which is active in funding right-wing causes worldwide. AAFLI officials claim that the program is effective in developing self-help organizations to compete with NPA and other leftist programs. For example, a program to train some 3,000 health care workers is said to "have enjoyed considerable success in combatting communist propaganda."¹⁷⁰

U.S. funding for other propaganda organs or activities is also likely to increase, though much of this effort might be said to be covert. As noted earlier, U.S. funds were supporting the Catholic Church-run Radio Veritas during the last months of the Marcos dictatorship. Given the influential role of the church in Philippine society, U.S. efforts to cultivate conservative Church circles to play a leading ideological role in the counterinsurgency campaign are likely to step up.

Civic Action

To fortify the AFP's civic action capabilities, the United States is currently providing bulldozers and other equipment to upgrade its engineering battalions. "The NAFF," the Pentagon has advised, could "make a substantial contribution to the government's effort to revitalize the rural economy if it had the resources to procure the engineering equipment that would be used to build bridges and roads."¹⁷¹ The United States is also expected to enlarge the civic action component of joint U.S.-Philippine military exercises like the annual "Tangent Flash" maneuvers and step up civic action operations around the U.S. military bases to defuse the strong NPA presence in these areas.

Direct U.S. civic action is apparently also being stepped up. Between October 1984 and May 1987, the Pentagon transported over 358,000 pounds of "surplus, nonlethal military goods" donated by private-aid groups to the Philippines. This made the country the second largest recipient of "humanitarian civic assistance," next to contras based in Honduras.¹⁷² Said Robert Wolthus, director of the Pentagon's humanitarian assistance office, "It's a tool in helping people feel better about the U.S. military presence and local military forces."¹⁷³ Admiral James Lyons, commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet was also quite candid about U.S. objectives in sending the U.S. Navy hospital ship Mercy to the Philippines in April and May 1987, with instructions to provide medical care for both civilians and military personnel at seven ports:

Cory Aquino needs some quick successes, and we think we can make a major contribution. Last July I got the idea of having a brand new hospital ship called the "Mercy," just constructed, sent to the Philippines to treat people.... To the man on the street the millions we pour into the Philippines is too abstract. But if I can give him a pair of eyeglasses or fix his teeth, they feel it and we have raised the quality of life.¹⁷⁴

**TABLE 3: Selected Items in U.S. Military Aid to the Philippines,
FY 1987, 1988**

Trucks (665)	Field telephones
Bell UH-1 helicopters (10)	Radios
Armored personnel carriers (10)	Field switchboards
M-60E3 light machine guns	Tractor dozer
81-mm mortars	Road grader
40-mm HE grenade launchers	Scoop loader
Patrol Craft	Boots
Aerospace ground equipment	Ponchos
Spare parts for helicopters	Survival equipment
C-130, L-100, S-76, S-70	Weapon spare parts
T-28D, F-5, T-33 aircraft	

SOURCE: Richard Armitage, assistant secretary of defense, Statement to the House Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Washington, D.C., 17 Mar. 1987; *Malaya*, 25 Oct. 1987.

Many civic action projects are likely to be funded out of the Economic Support Funds (ESF) provided for under the Bases Agreement of 1983. In fiscal year 1988, the United States requested \$124 million in ESF, part of which was intended to "contribute to improving economic and social conditions in the vicinity of U.S. military facilities by providing schools, roads, community markets, and other needed infrastructure."¹⁷⁵

Move, Shoot, Communicate

Political maneuver and psychological warfare are vital, but "at the end of the day," says Pentagon official Richard Armitage, the NPA will have to be defeated in the field of battle.¹⁷⁶ Military assistance and military training continue to be vital elements in Washington's stabilization program for the Philippines.

In fiscal year 1987, the U.S. Congress removed Marcos-era restrictions on "lethal equipment" that could be delivered to the AFP. Over the course of the year, \$64 million—the highest volume of security assistance deliveries in the last five years—reached the Philippines.¹⁷⁷

Most of the deliveries in fiscal year 1987 were not heavy weaponry or sophisticated aircraft but items that would enable the AFP to "move, shoot, and communicate" in irregular counterinsurgency war. (See table 3.) The AFP, in the United States' view, needs ground and air mobility. Six hundred sixty-five trucks were delivered to upgrade ground mobility in 1986 and ten V-150 armed personnel carriers arrived in October 1987. Air mobility and striking power were augmented with the donation of ten refurbished Huey helicopters used during the Vietnam War.¹⁷⁸

Providing more aircraft, however, is not seen as the solution to air mobility. The AFP already has a relatively large complement of counterinsurgency aircraft. In addition to the 10 recently donated helicopters, the army, for instance, has about 45 other Bell UH-1 helicopters, while the air force possesses about 60 of them, plus 12 AC-47 gunships, 18 OV-10 Bronco counterinsurgency aircraft, and 32 T-28D ground-support planes. U.S. assistance is thus being concentrated on a wide variety of spare parts to allow the large number of grounded AFP aircraft to fly and perform reconnaissance and air-support missions for ground troops.

The military assistance request for fiscal year 1988 is \$112 million—substantially above the level of the last few years. Of the current request, \$2.6 million is earmarked for "advanced professional training of junior, mid-level, and noncommissioned Philippine Army officers."¹⁷⁹

U.S. LIC ASSETS IN RESERVE

Should local capabilities to deal with the guerrilla threat fail to improve, U.S. special warfare units based at Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base may acquire added significance. So may "private" unofficial assets represented by international right-wing groups now active in the Philippines.

Special Warfare Units

In the 1960s, U.S. Air Force planes at Clark occasionally provided reconnaissance for AFP troops hunting down guerrillas.¹⁸⁰ Aerial surveillance today can be provided by the MC-130E Talon aircraft of the Air Force Special Operations Squadron currently based at Clark. These planes are capable of clandestine, day and night, long-range, infiltration, "exfiltration," reconnaissance, and resupply into hostile areas. Although there have been no confirmed reports of these craft being engaged in reconnaissance for AFP units, it is significant to note that two MC-130's were hit by small-arms fire while on "routine low altitude training missions," one of them suffering \$250,000 worth of damage.¹⁸¹

Another "asset" is the U.S. Navy SEAL (Sea, Air, Land) team currently based at Subic Bay. This unit, known as NSWU-1 (Naval Special Warfare Unit One), is said to be the largest forward-deployed team.¹⁸² In addition to their exclusive maneuvers, the SEALs regularly exercise with and reportedly train Filipino counterinsurgency forces in "riverine" operations. That the SEALs are less than detached in their attitude toward the current insurgency was revealed by one patrol boat pilot formerly posted at Subic:

We had a number of operations cancelled because of NPA guerrilla activity. We would carry live ammo on board depending on how far we were going and what intelligence told us. There was often a good chance that we'd take fire from the NPA's.¹⁸³

He added that "these PBR [river patrol] boats would be perfect for the Philippines if we have to go back there again."¹⁸⁴

The Right-Wing Network and the War at Home

As the public hearings on the Iran-Contra affair have revealed, the network of right-wing private organizations has played a critical role in carrying out the Reagan administration's policies in Central America. The same cast of characters is also in the Philippines.

Gen. John Singlaub (retired), the head of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) who has been heavily involved in procuring arms for the Nicaraguan contras, has been in and out of the Philippines since October, 1986. Using the cover that he is hunting for treasure left by General Yamashita in the Second World War, Singlaub has been actively meeting with local right wingers including former defense minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Luis Villareal, former chief of the National Intelligence Coordinating Authority (NICA) and head of the Philippine chapter of the WACL. According to various reports, Singlaub has been trying to sell arms and equipment useful in counterinsurgency operations and offering financial support to anticommunist sugar planters on the island of Negros.¹⁸⁵

Also on the scene are the Heritage Foundation, Christian Anti-Communist Crusade and the Unification Church or "Moonies." According to the *New York Times*, "Causa, the political arm of the Unification Church headed by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, appears

to have sought to capitalize on growing right-wing propaganda in the Philippines."¹⁸⁶ Causa literature is widely circulated and used by such notorious figures as Jun Pala, a right-wing broadcaster in Davao City.¹⁸⁷ Within the Philippine military itself, the extreme right-wing preaching of the Moonies is reported to be gaining influence.¹⁸⁸ Also, through the liberal dispensation of money, Causa and other Moonie fronts have managed to ensnare not only conservative politicians but also liberal academics and personalities to front conferences aimed at discrediting the progressive movement.¹⁸⁹

The international right-wing network is important not only for its local activities but also for "the war at home." As Sara Miles has stressed, "for better or for worse, American citizens are participants in the low-intensity war that is being played out in Central America. The public's ability to read the indicators of this kind of warfare may have a real effect on the nature, severity, and duration of the conflict."¹⁹⁰

In the case of the Philippines, the "private" right wing has been active in lobbying for more military aid to the Philippine military. They have also worked hard to change the United States and international public's perception of the progressive movement in the Philippines. In fact, the administration's efforts in this area have lagged far behind those of the private sector. One of the most successful of these nonofficial propaganda initiatives was the article "The New Khmer Rouge" which appeared in the December 1985 issue of *Commentary*. Despite the use of biased sources, outright lies, and hearsay, this piece by *Time* correspondent Russ Munro helped erode the image of the NPA as the "Nice People Around" and effectively painted it as a potential Khmer Rouge.

Following Munro's footsteps, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade led by John Whitehall and the Heritage Foundation have waged an hysterical international propaganda campaign against the Philippine progressive movement. One of the targets of the right-wing campaign has been the progressive church network.

The Task Force for Detainees in the Philippines, which was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, as well as other religious bodies in the Philippines have been attacked as "communist fronts," and these allegations have surfaced in respectable publications like the *Washington Post*.¹⁹¹

Aside from smearing the international image of the Philippine progressive movement and progressive church, the private right has also sought to "expose" their allies in the solidarity movement. For instance, in typical McCarthyite fashion, the Heritage Foundation recently "revealed" scores of U.S. and other groups as fronts for the National Democratic Front. Among other things, it called for "holding congressional hearings to investigate private U.S. groups that support the CPP. These could be similar to the 1985 and 1986 hearings into the hidden wealth of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos. The results of such hearings should be delivered to the European Parliament, many members of which have been influenced by the NDF."¹⁹²

CONCLUSION

While U.S. military strategists look back to the Philippine-American War of 1899–1902 as an example of the successful application of the military solution to insurgency, the unique characteristic of the U.S. LIC experience in the Philippines since World War II has been its emphasis on political and ideological manipulation. Often referred to as the strategy of the Third Force, the key elements of this approach have been promoting reformist leaders, pressuring for the return of elections as a means of regulating conflicts within the elite and defusing popular pressures, cultivating the influential and traditionally pro-Western middle strata, and projecting the United States as a supporter of democratization.

In the early fifties and again in 1985–86, key U.S. officials were instrumental in encouraging the growth of a “democratic” elite alternative to both a corrupt right-wing regime and the revolutionary left. Cory Aquino certainly is no U.S. puppet and her rise cannot be traced solely to U.S. moves, but her coming to power cannot be understood without the U.S. pressure on Marcos to open up the political system and hold fair elections. U.S. officials might have been surprised at the chain of events to which their acts contributed, but one thing is clear: the dominant pragmatist faction of the foreign policy bureaucracy immediately knew that the popular Aquino and her projection as the “democratic center” constituted their most potent weapon against the insurgent left.

Rob the revolutionary movement of its legitimacy and initiative, then supplement this political-ideological blow with military action: This is the current thrust of U.S. counterinsurgency strategy in the Philippines. The Marcos approach stands out precisely because of its deviation from this pattern and its similarity to the equally unsuccessful strategy followed by the Diem regime and the United States in Vietnam.

Even when focused on the military realm, the main thrust of the U.S. strategy has been the manipulation of images: the old visage of an army prone to abuses and corruption would be replaced by the image of a "new" army committed to civic action. True, the honing of traditional military skills has not been neglected. But rather than enlarge the army and provide it with massive firepower, as was the case in Vietnam, here the Pentagon has emphasized "streamlining" the AFP into an effective, modern counterinsurgency army. The intention is not to make the AFP more humane. It is to get it to cease the random abuse that has alienated the population and focus it, instead, on selected, strategic targets like guerrillas and their mass base.

What relevance does the Philippine experience have for U.S. LIC strategy elsewhere?

Probably not very much. One key difference with other societies like Vietnam is the peculiar colonial history of the Philippines. When the United States came on the scene as a colonial power, colonialism was already regarded as a politically antiquated and morally questionable system among significant sectors of the population of Western countries. Moreover, having been a product of an anticolonial and democratic revolution, the United States found it difficult to justify the adoption of the forms of classical colonial domination. These contradictions expressed themselves in peculiarly American colonial behavior: The Philippines was annexed, but with the justification of preparing it for democracy and "responsible" independence. The United States reduced the Philippine economy into an appendage of the United States, but it also introduced formal democratic processes as the regulator of intralite conflict and as a safety valve for nationalist and class resentments. As a result, the image of the United States as a font of democracy (and a consumerist paradise) is one that has become deeply ingrained in the Filipino national psyche, and one that could not be wiped out by the reality of 14 years of U.S. support for the Marcos dictatorship. For the last 80 years, this image has served as a strong counterpoint to the fact of imperialist domina-

tion, so much so that there are few places in the world where the United States and its institutions are viewed with such deep ambivalence as in the Philippines. It is a point of vulnerability that the United States has not hesitated to exploit, as it did, effectively, in the early fifties and again in 1985 and 1986.

The Philippine elite adopted the ideology of formal democracy, largely because it provided them with a means of alternating in power without resorting to violent conflict. Over the years, the elite became adept at using formal democracy both to regulate its internal conflicts and to defuse mass resentments and thus prevent real social change. Marcos violated these norms, which is one reason most of the elite eventually abandoned him. The Aquino government is, in a very real sense, the restoration of the old ways of governing conflicts within the elite and between the elite and the Filipino masses.

The combination of Corazon Aquino's Joan of Arc image, middle-class millenarianism, the elite's renewed identification with electoral democracy, and the United States' image as a pillar of democratic restoration has proven to be a very powerful force indeed. In 1985, the National Democratic Front exuded massive political confidence and enjoyed the political initiative. A year and a half after the February Revolution, Aquino has the political and moral initiative. The left is on the defensive, having lost its appeal to significant sectors of the middle strata and trying hard to counter the war weariness and vulnerability to Aquino's politics evident among the lower classes that are the revolution's natural base.

Throughout 1986 and the first half of 1987, the Aquino presidency scored a series of victories, the most important of which were the overwhelming approval of the new constitution in February 1987 and the elections to the new Congress three months later. By the latter half of 1987, however, the Aquino phenomenon lost some of its momentum. Though Aquino remained popular, her "revolution" began to bounce against its limits.

What are those limits? What are those factors that make a repeat of the 1950s counterinsurgency victory unlikely?

First, the Aquino government's failure to enact an effective and equitable land reform program is likely to deepen discontent among the tenant-farmers and landless workers that make up the bulk of the rural population. It is unlikely that the peasantry will again allow itself to be dazzled by cosmetic programs like the Lansdale-Magsaysay land resettlement scheme. The land question — the central issue for the 70 percent of the population that lives in the countryside — is likely to be the key issue that will make or break the government.

Second, the economic situation today is very different from the fifties when the Philippines' gross domestic product was growing by some 10 percent a year. Currently, the country is saddled with a \$28 billion external debt. After contracting by 10 percent in 1984–85, the economy grew by less than 1 percent in 1986. The recession will not go away soon, since, following the advice of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the Aquino government has placed the priority on repaying the foreign debt rather than reinvestment and development. This is a surefire prescription for continued deepening poverty and discontent.

Concerned with the massive budget deficit, the U.S. government is in no position to bridge the gap with massive military and economic aid. The Reagan administration had to fight hard to restore \$50 million in military aid for the Philippines in 1987, after Congress cut the original request of \$100 million by half to satisfy congressional budgetary restrictions aimed at ending the deficit. The economic underpinning for a successful counterinsurgency program simply does not exist at present.

Third, again unlike the situation in the 1950s, the Philippine military is proving to be a very difficult institution to reform. Under Marcos, it became the principal instrument of political control; and to keep the officer corps loyal, the dictator provided

them with a host of privileges. The military is unwilling to part with these prerogatives. Moreover, an influential group of junior officers favors having the armed forces assume direct control of government. The Aquino government, like the Cerezo government in Guatemala, appears to have arrived at an accommodation with the military, one that is based on recognizing it as a virtual "state within a state" and giving it a blank check in its conduct of counterinsurgency operations. Continuing notoriety because of the lack of basic reform and growing factional strife are likely to sabotage a serious AFP counterinsurgency effort — a process that is difficult to pull off in the best of circumstances, even with a professional army.

Finally, today's generation of insurgents have proven to be far more sophisticated practitioners of guerrilla warfare than the Huks. They have patiently rooted themselves in peasant and urban working class populations, carefully expanded their influence throughout the country, and relied mainly on political organizing and ideological influence. Now a political force in almost all of the Philippines' provinces, the insurgents continue to have an infrastructure of support that reformist ideas and AFP assaults will find very difficult to destroy. The left may be on the defensive, and its work in the cities and with the middle classes may be in some disarray, but its rural bases remain intact for the most part. These areas will undoubtedly serve as springboards for future political initiatives.

To conclude, political and ideological manipulation may register temporary successes in containing the revolutionary left, but how lasting these will be is in doubt. Provided it can keep its head above water in the receding tide of Corazon Aquino's "Yellow Revolution," the progressive movement is likely to find time on its side.

NOTES

1. Major Alan Marple, "The Philippine Scouts: A Case Study in the Use of Indigenous Soldiers, Northern Luzon, Philippine Islands, 1899" (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., 1983), 5-7.
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3. *Low-Intensity Conflict Issues and Recommendations*, vol. 2 of *Joint Low-Intensity Conflict Project Final Report* (Fort Monroe, Va.: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1986), C2-2-C2-3.
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5. Allen Dulles to CIA General Counsel Lawrence Houston, memorandum, 21 Apr. 1964, Dulles Collection, Mudd Library, Princeton University. See also letter of Allen Dulles to President Harry Truman, 7 Jan. 1964, from the same collection.
6. Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake* (New York: Random House, 1973), 116-117.
7. "Bringing a Third Force to Bear," *Time*, 10 Mar. 1986.
8. Quoted in Steve Shalom, "Counterinsurgency in the Philippines," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 7, no. 2 (1977), 154.
9. The Huks had emerged as the most organized and effective guerrilla fighting force in the Philippines during the Japanese Occupation 1942-45. The name *Hukbalahap* was a contraction of the Tagalog phrase *Hukbo ng*

Bayan Laban sa Hapon or "Anti-Japanese People's Army." With the departure of the Japanese, the name was changed to *Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan* (HMB) or Army of National Liberation.

10. Huk strength from Lt. Col. Tomas Tirona, "The Philippine Anti-Communist Campaign," in Franklin Mark Osanka, ed., *Modern Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), 206.

11. Ibid.

12. Paul Bohannon, comments in "Counter-Guerrilla Operations in the Philippines, 1946-53" (Seminar on the Huk Campaign, Fort Bragg, N.C., 15 June 1961, Mimeo), 54.

13. Edward Lansdale, comments in "Counter-Guerrilla Operations," 4.

14. Lansdale, comments in "Counter-Guerrilla Operations," 6.

15. This point is repeatedly underlined in one of the contemporary left's most influential works, "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," authored by Amado Guerrero, which served as the foundation document for the "reestablishment" of the Communist party of the Philippines on 26 Dec. 1968. A brief account of the contents of this document is provided in the preface to Amado Guerrero, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (Oakland, Calif.: International Association of Filipino Patriots, 1979).

16. Edward Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

17. David Sturtevant, "Filipino Peasant Rebellions Examined: Lessons from the Past," *CALC Report* 12, no. 3 (May-June 1986), 6.

18. Benedict Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1979), 237.

19. Luis Taruc, quoted in Kerkvliet, 238.

20. Interestingly enough, this tune, said to have been composed by Raul Manglapus, one of Magsaysay's whiz kids, was aired, with the appropriate change in lyrics, during the February 1986 Uprising against Marcos. The best critical account of the 1953 elections is Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Manila: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 248-260.

21. Amando Doronila, "The Transformation of Patron-Client Relations and Its Political Consequences in Postwar Philippines" (Revised version

of paper delivered at the Third National Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Brisbane, Australia, 24–29 Aug. 1980), 17.

22. According to Ray Bonner, Magsaysay was knocked out cold by Lansdale on one occasion when he refused to read a speech written by another CIA officer. See Bonner's *Waltzing With a Dictator* (New York: New York Times Books, 1987), 40. In an early draft of *In the Midst of Wars*, Lansdale recounts that during a plane trip to Mexico, he and Magsaysay got into a big, noisy verbal fight because he insisted that the latter change his speech for a Mexican audience. Magsaysay relented. The incident was excised from the final version. Draft is available at Edward Lansdale Collection, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.

23. Doronila, 17.

24. Francisco Nemenzo, "An Irrepressible Revolution: The Decline and Resurgence of the Philippine Communist Movement" (MS., n.d), 28–29.

25. See *In the Midst of Wars*.

26. Edward Lansdale, interview by Erik Guyot, Maclean, Va., 30 Dec. 1985.

27. Kerkvliet, 228.

28. Lt. Col. Luis Villareal, "Huk Hunting," in Franklin Marki Osanka, ed., "Guerrilla Warfare Readings" (Human Resources Research Office, George Washington University, 1962, Photocopy), 107.

29. Large Huk units were more often in the range of 250 armed guerrillas. See Ismael Lapus, comments in "Counter-Guerrilla Operations," 23.

30. Ibid.

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32. Col. Napoleon Valeriano (retired), comments in "Counter-Guerrilla Seminar," 30.

33. Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars*, 49.

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35. "Counter-Guerrilla Operations," 24.

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39. Ibid.
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44. Joel Rocamora and David O'Connor, "The U.S., Land Reform, and Rural Development in the Philippines," in Walden Bello and Severina Rivera, eds., *The Logistics of Repression: The Role of U.S. Assistance in Consolidating the Martial Law Regime in the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: Friends of the Filipino People, 1977), 71.
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48. See, among others, Walden Bello, David Kinley, and Elaine Elinson, *Development Debacle: The World Bank in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1982), 183-195.
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80. Carolyn Arguillas, " 'Bad News' on 'Deep Penetration' Against NPA," *Veritas*, 3 Apr. 1986, 10-12.

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82. See Anthony Spaeth, "Philippines Finds Its Own Killing Fields," *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 25 May 1987, 1, 9.

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86. By tying up most of the combat forces of the AFP in the early and mid-seventies, the MNLF-led rebellion in Mindanao also provided the NPA with the opportunity to expand without massive military harassment. In the early seventies, as much as 80 percent of AFP combat-effective units were in Mindanao fighting the Muslims.

87. See, for instance, Jose Lacaba's poignant account of his brother Eman's pioneering activities as member of an NPA APU in Mindanao in *Salvaged Poems* (Manila: Salinlahi Publishing House, 1986), 11-17.

88. Looking back at the Mindanao expansion, one NPA cadre stated: "Education work was neglected to the extent that... we learned that those we recruited in 1980-81 had not undergone the basic party courses. We didn't have the time to go over the personal and political biodata because, first of all, they looked like everything was in order, and second of all, there were so many memos coming in, especially in 1983-85. There was also too much expansion, mass organization all over the place." According to him, "premature recommendation" for recruits to become members of the Communist party was another factor leading to penetration by government agents. Quoted in Marinas.

89. *Liberation* (International), Mar.-Apr. 1985, 4.

90. U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Staff, 30.

91. Guerrero, 186-187.

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95. Sheinbaum, A-03-1.

96. James Kelly, deputy assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, "Fiscal Year 1985 Security Assistance for the Philippines" (Statement to the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs,

Washington, D.C., 7 Feb. 1984), 9–10.

97. Armitage confirmed the figure in response to a question from Rep. Steven Solarz, head of the House Asian-Pacific Affairs Subcommittee, at a hearing on 12 Nov. 1985.

98. Michael Armacost, Speech at Foreign Service Institute, Rosslyn, Va., 23 Apr. 1986.

99. Paul Wolfowitz, Statement at hearings of House Subcommittee on Asian-Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., 12 Nov. 1985.

100. *Washington Post*, 22 Oct. 1984.

101. For an account of Crowe's assessment, see Nayan Chanda, "A Gloomy View of Reform and Rebellion from the U.S.," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 Aug. 1984, 28–30.

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110. Kelly, 4.

111. Command and General Staff College, Armed Forces of the Philippines, *The AFP Foreign Training Program for Officers: An Assessment* (Manila: AFP, 1983), 25–26.

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Subcommittee on Military Construction, 5 Dec. 1985), 8.

115. Armitage, Statement to House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Washington, D.C., 15 Nov. 1985, 1-2.

116. Nayan Chanda, "Dear Mr. President...", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 Oct. 1985, 17.

117. Wolfowitz, Answer to questions at hearings of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., 30 Oct. 1985.

118. U.S. Embassy, Manila, Confidential cable to secretary of state, 6 Nov. 1985. This cable was leaked by State Department sources to the author, who provided it to the press.

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120. Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, "The Opposition: Uniting or Fragmenting" (Cable to secretary of state, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., Feb. 1985).

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131. Ibid.

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134. Armitage, Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 3 June 1986, 10.

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140. "Party Conducts Assessment," *Ang Bayan*, May 1986, 1-2.

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142. For instance, there were continuous military operations during the cease-fire period in northern Luzon in which, according to the February 1987 issue of *Ang Bayan*, up to 90 members of the NDF were killed and over 320 barrios were subjected to forced evacuation and food blockades. Summing up the gains of the military during the period, Defense Minister Rafael Ileto is reported to have said: "We now have an increase of 25 percent in our intelligence."

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"Tense Manila Debates How Best to Fight the Rebels," *New York Times*, 1 Nov. 1987. Interestingly, the *Times* has not informed its readers that defense correspondent Trainor, who has done a spate of promilitary, anti-NPA articles, is a former deputy chief of staff at the Pentagon who was eased out of office by President Reagan after he told the Naval War College that war with the Soviet Union in this generation is an "almost inevitable probability" because the Soviet Navy "is going into our turf." Quoted in "Limited Soviet War Held 'Almost Inevitable,'" *Washington Post*, 22 June 1984, 15.

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147. Pam Belluck, "The Hamstrung Philippine Army," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 Feb. 1987, 9.

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165. This is based on interviews and research conducted by Erik Guyot in Davao in early 1985. For a summary of Guyot's findings, see Erik Guyot, "Hearts and Minds (Again)," *Progressive*, Jan. 1986, 28-31.

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175. Gaston Sigur, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs, "The Philippines: Recent Developments and U.S. Assistance" (Statement to the Subcommittee for Asian and Pacific Affairs, 17 Mar. 1987), 3-4.
176. Armitage, Statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 3 June 1986, 10.
177. Armitage, Statement to the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, 17 Mar. 1987, 3-4.
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181. Brian Massey, "Hurlburt Planes Hit by Gunfire," *Log* (Fort Walton Beach, Florida), 15 Aug. 1985, 1A, 2A.
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184. Ibid.
185. See, for instance, Douglas Cunningham's excellent piece "Singlaub Recruits His Own Army in the Philippines," *The National Reporter* 10, no. 3 (Spring 1987), 6.
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189. For instance, the Moonies got a number of prominent Filipino

liberals and academics to stage a conference on "The Ninoy Aquino Phenomenon" in Manila in 1984. The aim of the Moonies in bankrolling such "academic" conferences are to gain contacts, to corrupt and soften liberals to get them to eventually acquiesce to their right-wing views, and to give their views respectability by having them aired at the same forum as liberal views. A good example of the Moonies' modus operandi was the conference on "The Philippines and U.S. Policy" sponsored by the Moonies' Washington front, the Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, Inc. The Moonies got Carl Lande, a top liberal scholar on the Philippines, to organize the conference, and Lande used his connections to invite about 32 leading specialists. Many of the speakers were paid about \$1,000 each to deliver a paper—far above the going rate for academic talks! The Moonie book edited by Lande is now out under the title *Rebuilding a Nation: Philippine Challenges and American Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute Press, 1987).

190. Miles, 44.

191. William Branigin, "Philippine Rebels Targeting Rights Groups, Churches," *Washington Post*, 18 Oct. 1986.

192. Richard Fisher, "The International Anti-Aquino Network: Threat to Philippine Democracy," *Backgrounder* (Asian Studies Center, Heritage Foundation), no. 61 (4 May 1987), 12. The research is—typically and woefully—shoddy. The author, for instance, is identified as a member of the Union of Democratic Filipinos, which he is not, and as a political prisoner under Marcos, which he never was, p. 6. Then, on the next page, Rene Cruz, editor of the Union of Democratic Filipinos' newspaper, is wrongly identified as the head of the Alliance for Philippine Concerns. These are but two of numerous mistakes and distortions.

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