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**THE PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES CAPACITY FOR UNITED NATIONS
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Philippine commitment to the United Nations' (UN) call for participation of member states in conflict resolution and maintaining international peace and security is largely dependent on the ability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to send a suitable contingent for that undertaking. The latest Philippine government reaffirmation of commitment to such a call has placed the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in conflict with the policy established by other priorities set in the Defense Department's developmental and transformation program.

This paper discusses the UN's role in conflict resolution and maintaining peace and security in the newly emerging international environment, the relevance of the Philippine participation in the UN crisis and conflict resolution, and the Philippine commitment to maintaining peace and security in the context of peacekeeping operations. It provides analysis of the current capability of the AFP vis-à-vis its current commitment to the UN. In the conclusion, it provides recommendations to enhance the AFP capacity to respond to the UN's call for international intervention.

THE PHILIPPINE ARMED FORCES CAPACITY FOR UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

The Philippine constitution states that “the Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy.”¹ With this as a basis, the Philippines organized its armed forces for the purpose of defending the state and never project forces outside the territory for conquest. It is also an avid adherent to regional and global peace and stability as part of its national interest, and it is committed to support any effort to sustain and maintain such circumstances with the use of the armed forces through peaceful operations and through regional cooperation with the United Nations (UN). Therefore, it has to prepare its armed forces for deployment for future conflicts that would threaten world peace and stability.

The end of the Cold War replaced the United States as the only remaining and dominant super power in the world. This situation had also limited the chances of another global conflict with conventional warfare of the same magnitude of the two World Wars that transpired in the last century. Although there might be conflicts that would erupt between nation-states in the future, these would be limited in scope. The end of the Cold War also gave rise to a new international environment where interests of nation-states and non-states actors are affected by globalization.

In this new international environment, the national security issues may be brought about by political and strategic impacts such as surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, and other environmental and social factors that may prompt mass migrations. These, in turn, might incite group conflicts, arousing the public and uniting assorted interests left over from the Cold War.² The dominant actors in the global arena are creating a new spectrum of risks, threats, and challenges. When these risks, threats, and challenges are not managed, they may lead to conflicts that could create instability and volatile security situations that would disrupt the current world order. These future conflicts are likely to be low-intensity and intrastate such as those in Bosnia, Somalia, and the Gulf War. They may focus mainly on the role of the UN and UN-sponsored coalitions to enforce Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter. The nature of these conflicts may require peacekeeping, peacemaking, or peace enforcement operations.³ Although regional collective effort may conduct intervention on their own for the purpose of peace and stability, it will not deviate from the UN intentions. However, the UN, being the most notable actor for restraint and mediation, still plays the most important role in conflict resolution and maintaining international peace and security.

One of the United Nations’ primary mechanisms to establish peace and stability within a region or state in conflict and among warring factions is the employment of peacekeeping forces

in peace operations. Peacekeeping is defined by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations as “a way to help countries torn by conflict to create conditions for sustainable peace.”⁴ The UN's Charter demands troop contributions from member states for peacekeeping to maintain and attain world peace. Victor Shale averred that “the achievements of the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping operations can be attributed to the cooperation of the member states by contributing troops to execute the United Nations' mandate in the countries where there is conflict.”⁵ These troop contributions are being managed by the Security Council through the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

The Philippines, as one of these member states, had manifested its support to UN peacekeeping. For some time now, the Philippines has been supporting the UN in peace operations by employing the AFP, initially during the Korean War in the 1950s and up to the current deployment in Haiti and Liberia. In such instances the country had participated in regional efforts like the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) initiated by Australia in East Timor and the Ache Monitoring Mission (AMM) in Indonesia under the Henry Dunant initiative, all of which were in the name of peace operations. Moreover, the Philippines will be likely to contribute often to the UN's initiatives in the future based on its renewed commitment to that world body and in fulfillment of its interests for world peace and stability. While it is not a contributor of major forces, unlike some neighboring countries from South Asia, its participation has brought home not only pride, distinction, and economic benefits, but also enormous problems generated by such operations.

Role of the United Nations in Maintaining Peace and Security

Importance of the United Nations (UN)

Since its creation 61 years ago by representatives from 50 countries, the United Nations has embarked on efforts to maintain global peace. It draws strength from the Charter which was ratified on 24 October 1945 by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States, and a majority of other signatories.⁶ The UN's Charter, being the constituting instrument, sets out the rights and obligations of member states and established the organization's organs and procedures. Although its paramount purpose is to maintain world peace and security, the UN also works to develop friendly relations among nations; to cooperate in solving international economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, and in promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and to be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in attaining these ends.⁷

The UN took over the responsibility for world peace and stability from the League of Nations after the latter failed in several instances to stop aggressions, particularly the one that led to the outbreak of World War II. The League of Nations was founded after the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and was composed of 44 countries; it can be traced to the 8 January 1918 message of the United States of America President Woodrow Wilson on the Fourteen Points for Peace which he delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of the American Congress wherein he identified the "fourteen points" intended to serve as the basis for world peace. In particular, point 14 stated that: "A general association of nations should be formed on the basis of covenants designed to create mutual guarantees of the political independence and territorial integrity of States, large and small equally,"⁸ which explicitly became the basis for the creation of the organization. However, its demise was preordained by several conditions at the outset. At the start, the United States (US) did not join the league after its Congress failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. Russia and Germany, two powerful states at that time, were not included in the league. Some powerful states that signed, like Britain and France, viewed the organization with antagonism. The League of Nations had no armed force and depended on the Great Powers to enforce its resolutions. These conditions undermined the power of the League's ability to maintain viable system of collective security and arbitration.⁹

Today, continuing the quest for peace as well as sustaining it has become more a difficult task since it entails the prevention of disputes from escalating into war, persuading opposing parties to negotiate rather than use force of arms, or restoring peace when conflict breaks out in this complex and volatile environment. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) article "Vital: UN Peacekeeping is a central Element of International Conflict Response" emphasizes "the fundamentally international character of the UN Security Council-authorized peacekeeping operations provides an unparalleled legitimacy to any interventions and demonstrates the commitment of the entire international community to take tangible actions to address crisis at hand."¹⁰ Moreover, the UN footprint was seen in most of the post conflict activities that were made immediately after either through humanitarian or reconstruction efforts. In fact, the UNDPKO article "Effective: UN Peacekeeping Enjoys a High Success Rate in Its Interventions" affirmed that "a recent study by the RAND Corporation compared different approaches to nation-building. The UN, it concluded, was the most suitable institutional framework for most nation-building missions, one with a comparatively low cost structure, a comparatively high success rate, and the greatest degree of international legitimacy."¹¹

In his article about the crisis in Iraq, "The UN Security Council: Ineffective but Indispensable," Berdal asserted the usefulness of the UN when he acknowledged that the Security Council's vital political function "has been to serve as an instrument for collective legitimization of state action, that is, a dispenser of politically significant approval and disapproval of the claims, policies, and actions of states."¹² Even the US, after having bad dealings with the UN on the Iraq issue, still looks at the later as an influential body. Berdal even went further to say that the US, despite frustration on the UN non endorsement of military action against Iraq, has indicated countervailing trends of re-engagement with the UN.¹³ Besides, the US will need UN support when the fighting is over, when the rebuilding of a decent Iraq will be in full swing.

From the words of Singapore's Kishore Mahbubani, "Distance has disappeared. The world has shrunk to a global village. Every village needs a village council. The UN represents the only real village council we have."¹⁴

Peace Operations under the Auspices of the UN

The UN handles the task of maintaining peace and security through the Security Council, which is in charge of handling numerous conflicts. Together with the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, the Security Council's role is crucial in fostering peace and security. It undertakes areas of prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and disarmament.

In his thesis paper, Colonel Mario Mendoza articulated that "peacekeeping is the most visible symbol of the UN's role in international peace and security. Soldiers all over the world, to include Philippine military personnel, have actively participated in various U.N. peacekeeping operations for the maintenance of world peace and security. This vital role of the UN in securing and maintaining peace is evident in the numerous countries needing its intervention in various crisis situations."¹⁵ The fact that UN or UN-authorized peacekeeping missions have averted further devastations in most of the conflict areas where it intervened is an assurance that it is a viable tool for peace and security. While UN-controlled peacekeeping may not be the only approach to peace, as there are others within the area of UN peace function as mentioned earlier, and related regional collective efforts of similar nature are being done, trends show that peacekeeping under the UN is the most widely employed.¹⁶ While the number of peacekeeping troops employed by regional organizations fell by 57% since 1999, UN forces have grown by nearly 500%. From 1999 to 2005, the number of troops in UN peace operations increased from

12,700 to 60,700. During that same period, the total number of peacekeeping troops deployed by regional organizations fell from 108,000 to 46,000.¹⁷

A good reason to this is best explained by the claim of The Challenges Project that “a major conclusion arising from reviews of peace operations over the last few years is that the ability of most regional and sub-regional organizations to respond rapidly to urgent demands for peace operations, and to conduct operations effectively once deployed, is quite limited. In particular, the capacity for such organizations other than North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) to plan, mount, and sustain operations without a lead nation providing the core of the deployed resources, is limited. Furthermore, where regional organizations have deployed, they have often quickly (within a few months) sought significant support or replacement by the UN.”¹⁸

In UN peacekeeping operations, soldiers, civilian police officers, and other civilian personnel are employed to monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas and assist ex-combatants in implementing the peace agreements they have signed. Assistance will include confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development.¹⁹

The UN Security Council is vested by its Charter the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. The international community usually looks to the Security Council to authorize peacekeeping operations. Under the Security Council is the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) that undertakes peace efforts around the globe. Examples of such missions, which include intervention that typically requires the consent of all parties and the maintenance of neutrality following a cease-fire, are the UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG). Peacekeeping operations can also be humanitarian in nature like in Sudan through the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army. The UN mission there implements the agreement, performs certain functions relating to humanitarian assistance, and protects and promotes human rights.

Like the League of Nations, the UN does not have its own forces. It depends largely on the contributions of its members. However, without the needed resources, it will suffer the same fate as its predecessor. Fortunately, so far, it has been more successful than the League of Nations in calling its member states to contribute to peace operations.

The UN Call for Contribution of Peacekeeping Forces from Member States

The UN calls for contributions from member countries because it does not have its own standing armed forces to undertake the gargantuan task of maintaining international peace and security as mandated in its Charter. Chapter VII of the Charter requires its member states to contribute to keep world peace by sending in or joining peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), launched in 1948, was the first peacekeeping mission conducted under the UN. The purpose of this mission was to supervise the ceasefire reached between the Israelis and the Arab states over the creation of Israel. It had a total of 153 observers deployed until it was terminated by the UN Security Council.²⁰

The end of the Cold War and the ensuing dramatic shift in the nature of conflict has made the UN peacekeeping more complex. This situation demanded a surge in contributions from member states to cope with requirements of peacekeeping operations. Also, the demand for UN peacekeeping missions did not only require involvement of military forces but often also saw increasing participation of non-military elements to help implement comprehensive peace agreements between protagonists in intra-state conflicts and civil wars. Aware of the complexity of the peacekeeping mission brought about by the change in the international security environment, the UN created the DPKO to provide focused attention and address the increase in demand for such an operation. At the end of October 2006, current UN operations are at a historic high of 95,976 personnel serving in 18 different missions all over the world.²¹

The Role and Contribution of the Philippines to UN Peacekeeping Operations

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Peacekeeping Efforts

The Philippines' participation in UN peacekeeping efforts has provided the opportunity to show good international relations, foster regional integration and cooperation, and on the less altruistic side, provide economic benefits to our soldiers and improve the quality of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. While the Philippines can decline participating in peacekeeping operations, it has become imperative that it take active part being a member of the UN and in furtherance of its national interest. The President Executive Order number 97 (EO 97) signed on 23 April 2002 explicitly recognized the UN's role in maintaining international peace and security, and honors obligations under the Charter through participation in peace initiatives.²² With this as an anchor, the Philippines had reaffirmed its commitment not only to the UN but to the international community in helping troubled nations attain peace and stability. Also, by virtue of this commitment, the Philippines is bound to send contingents that will perform tasks outlined in the UN mandate.

The Philippines' first contribution to peacekeeping operations dates as far back as the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 when North Korean crossed the thirty-eighth parallel and violated the UN Charter. The Philippines response to the UN call was to send the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea (PEFTOK). Other participations include the UN peacekeeping operations in Congo (ONUC) in 1992-1993, in Iraq (UNGCI) from 1991-1992, Cambodia (UNTAC) from 1992-1993, Haiti in 1994, and Kosovo from 1999 up to the present. The Philippines sent military personnel to the INTERFET. The UN Transition Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) Peacekeeping Force, initially led by Lieutenant General Jaime S. De Los Santos, was the first UN multinational force commanded by a Filipino and Asian national.

Since the publication of Executive Order 97 in 2002, the Philippines has sent four groups to UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and two groups to UN Mission in Haiti since December 2004. The Commander-in-Chief, through Executive Secretary Eduardo R Ermita, has approved the detail of the 165-member contingent to Liberia, and the 155-member contingent to Haiti, and the fifth group of the Philippine Contingent to Liberia (PCL). The third batch of the Philippines' United Nations Mission to Haiti (UNMH) was dispatched in December 2005.²³

Philippine Peacekeeping Operation Considerations

Although the Philippines abides with its obligation to the UN, its participation in peacekeeping missions considers the following factors: national capabilities, the domestic peace and order situation, and ultimately, national interest and national goals.²⁴ The Philippines puts highest priority on missions conducted in Southeast Asia. The government takes into consideration its affiliation to the states within the Asian region and does not compromise its commitment to its neighbors. While there is no geographical limit to the Philippine participation in peacekeeping, in terms of strategic priorities, Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region rank the highest. Ethnic and racial affiliation plays an important role in peacekeeping in Asian societies as it foster better relationship between peacekeepers and the community where they work. Military personnel who worked with the UNTAC in Cambodia observed that Filipino soldiers and other Asian contingents were more welcomed by the locals compared to European or American peacekeepers. Similarly, experience with UNTAET in East Timor showed parallel tendencies. More importantly, establishing regional peace and security, as well as cooperation with neighbors, is in consonance with the Philippine national interest. However, this does not mean that the Philippines will not respond to the situations in other regions. Its participation to several missions in Africa, Middle East, and Latin America is an indication of its commitment not only to regional, but also to global peace and security.²⁵

The Philippines greatly considers the safety of personnel involved in these operations. Thus, it will only participate in operations that satisfy the following: authority from the UN Security Council, a clear and achievable mandate, a determinable if not definite time frame and exit strategy, and consent of the receiving state for the UN peace operations.²⁶

Another serious consideration is the availability of funding to support participation since in most cases the contributing nation has to shoulder the financial burden of sending a contingent. The country relies mainly on the reimbursement of the UN once the contingent had already been deployed. The source of initial funding requirement has always been a contentious issue that impacts many UN peacekeeping participants. In some instances, this consideration likewise becomes the factor in non-participation by the AFP to regional collective initiative for peace operations.

Effect of the Internal Security Environment

The most glaring consideration of the Philippines' participation in UN peacekeeping, perhaps even in regional collective efforts, is the domestic security environment. Often times, to participate or not will have to be decided on the basis of its implications on the national security situation. If it affects the ability of the country, particularly the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), to address the prevailing condition of national security, then non-participation would definitely be the choice.

The country is besieged by several security problems that from time-to-time increases in tempo of incidence and which greatly affect the decision to participate in peacekeeping. Firstly, it confronts the almost four-decade old insurgency led by the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army/National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF), a Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse Tung-inspired group that uses armed struggle and united front building to attempt to topple the government by using the peasant and labor sectors. As of June 2006, the strength of the Communist movement is posted at 7,262 with 6,051 firearms; with various influences in 2,129 of 42,000 total villages and 105 guerrilla fronts. Secondly, in the Southern portion of the country, several groups threaten the country's national security. These groups are: the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which espouses the establishment of a Pan-Islamic state; the breakaway faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF); and the Abu Sayaff Group (ASG), which had formed an alliance with the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah and some foreign jihadists. The MILF, although historically engaged in semi-conventional warfare, has since engaged in guerrilla warfare. With the impasse in the GRP-MILF peace talks, the MILF might launch atrocities anew. The MILF has an estimated total strength of 11,148 with 8,172

firearms and operates in 1,628 barangays. The MILF had forged an alliance with the CPP/NPA, and its Special operations Group had been trained by foreign terrorists who are bombing and demolitions experts from the Jemaah Islamiya. The ASG is a local terrorist extremist group that was behind the kidnapping of foreign nationals to generate funds as well as bombing operations in Mindanao and in the National Capital Region. It has 522 members with 346 firearms influencing 178 villages. The group of Nur MISUARI (an MNLF breakaway) has 699 members and 324 firearms.²⁷

Capacity of the AFP to Respond to UN Peacekeeping Operations

The Philippine current total contribution to the UN peacekeeping is minimal compared to Pakistan who leads as the number one contributor. It ranked only 26th among the 37 contributing countries that have contingents deployed all over the world.²⁸ In the recent years there has been an increase in the Philippine intention to commit to the UN peacekeeping operation based on prodding from the UN Philippine permanent mission in New York to send contingents in several deployment opportunities. While the enthusiasm to join in most of the UN request for peacekeeping troops is very high, the AFP is hindered by its limited capacity to generate the required formed units and to sustain its contingents once they are deployed. Although the first Philippine contingent sent on UN peace operations in Korea in 1950 under the PEFTOK was robust enough to meet its mission, a few of the more recent deployments were not.

In the event of requests for a contingent for peacekeeping either by the UN or UN-led missions, the Philippines responds in the soonest time possible. The nature and composition of the contingent would depend on the availability and adequacy of resources. With the increase in the Philippine participation in these requests, it appears that there is additional strain in the AFP. Especially in the last five years of participation, contingents were not prepared. Experience shows that in the absence of the availability of previously organized units, ad hoc composition is resorted to in order to respond to the request. Col. Dante Balao, Commanding Officer of the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center (AFP PKOC), asserted that “the absence of a pool of fully equipped and organized contingents resulted to the ill preparation for the deployment because of time constraints.”²⁹

The Philippine Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) authorized the AFP 4 UN deployments of 600 each at a time with another 600 on standby for replacement for 2006.³⁰ The current number of deployed AFP personnel is 352, but standby personnel, as a rotation pool, are not generally available until the approval of the next rotation is done. Again, this condition results in

ad hoc selection of members since, normally, approval for the next rotation is not done until the UN submits a request for rotation of forces, usually with not enough lead time for preparation. Current AFP capability also allows only for employment of a formed force headquarters support type unit with modest contingent-owned equipment. A maximum of two of this kind of unit can be deployed at one time. At the moment, two units are in Liberia under UNMIL and Haiti under MINUSTAH. Other deployments are in an individual capacity performing staff functions and observer's duty scattered through out the world. There is an evident shortfall in mobility and communication equipment as well as protection systems that makes the contingent rated just enough to meet the minimum standard of the UN. Filling up the shortfall has been a difficult task because of the unavailability of funding, as in the case of Haiti and Liberia units. One observer noted that in six years of peacekeeping, and particularly with regard to UNTAET, there was never an instance that the Philippine contingent got an average rating beyond a maximum of 70%.³¹ As such, invitations for more deployments beyond the two already deployed units had been declined, a common reaction to the UN. Requests for one mechanized infantry company for Haiti in 2005, and also the Force Headquarters Support Unit in Sudan, the Congo and in Lebanon, had been declined due to limitations in funding for equipment and sustainment. If a more robust contingent were to be deployed, the Philippines would need to pull out resources and equipment from units in the field already addressing current internal security problems. This would mean also a reduction of capability in addressing such internal challenges.

In the DPG, peacekeeping mission is listed as one of the AFP's activities, but it is the lowest priority. In fact, the Department of National Defense has not programmed allocation of any resources from its budget requirement submitted to Congress for the last six years. The main source of funding for peacekeeping activity in the AFP is taken from the UN reimbursement from previous deployments. The current AFP budgetary program has not even included any capability development for peacekeeping even though it had been a priority commitment at the foreign policy level.³² As a matter of practice, no prepared and ready peacekeeping unit is organized and readied until a request from the UN is received.

On the brighter side, the AFP has established the AFP PKOC to cater to the administrative requirements of contingents while deployed in peacekeeping operations. It has also the job of training contingents on individual skills, unit training and enhancement, and preparation for deployment.³³

The apparent insufficiency of some ingredients for a well prepared contingent and a successful mission performance are balanced by individual capacity gained from long exposure and experience to counterinsurgency operations among the Filipino peacekeepers. In a study

conducted by Lt. Micheller S. Logronio for his CGSC commandant's paper, among the findings, regarding the strengths of the Filipino soldier in peacekeeping missions, are the advantages of experience in internal security operations and the ability to speak, write, and understand the English language.³⁴

With the active involvement of the AFP PKOC in training the peacekeepers and the individual capacity of these soldiers, the AFP can generate personnel for deployment up to the required number programmed in the DPG and can even muster more, if time is not constrained. Organizing the contingents for the deployments, though a very slow process due to its ad hoc character, has been institutionalized through the current AFP standing procedures. AFP Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) Number 5 dated 29 March 2005 prescribes the guidelines in the deployment of military personnel on foreign duty which include procurement, processing and organization, and conduct of other related activities of a Philippine contingent or military force to any UN-initiated international missions outside the country. The AFP peacekeeping operations contingent members are sourced from among the major services and the AFP-wide support units in which a screening committee selects from the recommendation made by their respective major services. In addition, the SOP states that volunteers for AFP peacekeeping operations should possess the following general qualifications: adequate experience in military or security work, have training or expertise in special warfare and with other special combat operations skill, physically and mentally fit, proficient in English or other international language, psychologically prepared for tour of duty abroad, and other qualifications that may be required or specified by UN. Qualified personnel will then be directed to report to AFP PKOC for the physical, administrative, and operational training for predeployment preparations. During the predeployment phase, selected personnel are placed on duty with the AFP PKOC at least 45 days prior to deployment which the AFP service components normally cannot provide on time.³⁵

Problems that Prevent the AFP from Developing Its Capacity to Respond to UN Mandated Peacekeeping Operations Mission

There is an apparent lack of appreciation for the participation in a peacekeeping mission despite the fact that such involvement can bring training benefits for military personnel through their experience gained in the mission area, economic benefits, and enhancement of capability. UN remunerations can be used for AFP development, add prestige to the country, and alleviate humanitarian concerns. The AFP leadership seems to look at UN peacekeeping deployment as a cost rather than investment. To make UN remuneration have a positive impact on the capability, the AFP must employ more formed units of peacekeepers with at least 95%

capability rate. Of course this needs initial investment of resources, but the potential payoff is great.

The Philippines' focus on its internal security situation prevents the country from developing its capability to perform UN peacekeeping operations mission. The current internal security operation is taking much of the AFP's resources. Most of the resources are focused on addressing the internal security situation, leaving peacekeeping operations in the sideline as a consequence.

Relatedly, the AFP has no budget allocated for the training, logistic, and sustainment requirements of peacekeeping operations. While it used to spend for such and wait for reimbursements later, it could no longer apportion a part of its budget to participate in another peacekeeping operation.

The government's legal basis of peacekeeping operations, EO 97, is more focused on military participation leaving out the involvement of the other civilian agencies; thus, the burden of the international commitment relies heavily on the AFP. Such a case puts peacekeeping commitments on the shoulders of the Department of Defense, which considers international peacekeeping a low priority.

Efforts Done to Enhance Capacity to Meet UN Requirement

As an offshoot of several delays in the rotation of the current deployed contingents in Haiti and Liberia, a Peace Support Operations Seminar was held at the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) in May 2006. The seminar tackled issues concerning peacekeeping operations policy and legal basis, funding source, training selection and composition, inter-agency coordination, and inability to comply with the UN timeline. The conferees came up with several solutions to the nagging problems in peacekeeping operations that were recommended to concerned agencies and institutions for adoption.

The government is also trying to revise EO 97 which will institutionalize Philippine participation in international peace operations and humanitarian efforts as an interagency activity. EO 97 was made into law in 2002 and provides the policy framework and guidelines for Philippine participation in UN peacekeeping operations. The Department of Foreign Affairs-United Nation International Organization (DFA-UNIO) is in charge of this revision and is now on the way to improve the policy.

The Commanding Officer, Armed Forces of the Philippines Peacekeeping Operations Center (AFP PKOC), had presented a position paper which suggests the institutionalization of the AFP participation in peacekeeping operations by building up a unit with a capability that

matches the standard UN requirement and would be accepted to the United Nations Standby Arrangement Systems (UNSAS).³⁶ The UNSAS is based on conditional pledges by member states to contribute specific resources within an agreed response time and restrictions into UN peacekeeping operations.³⁷ Its purpose is to have precise understanding of the forces and other capabilities a member state will have at a given state of readiness for movement from the country if it agrees to contribute to a peacekeeping operation.

Analysis

Fulfilling the UN commitment for peacekeeping seemed to have put the foreign policy at odds with the capacity of the country. The current AFP's capacity to support future peacekeeping operations may not be well suited to the demand of the numerous commitments. Employing contingents beyond currently deployed forces is not an option at the moment. This situation is an outcome of the several conditions. First, there is no additional program fund to support organizing and sustaining another formed unit. UN remunerations to the currently deployed contingents are just enough to support their rotation. Committing another contingent of the AFP to a new mission will place the Philippines in a compromised situation because it may not be able to organize a well prepared unit. Second, although the AFP considers the country's commitment to peacekeeping as one aspect of its capability, there is a more pressing mission that it is confronting-the internal security situation in the country. The natural tendency is to put resources where they are most needed. The government relied too much on the AFP in answering the call of the UN for peacekeeping, thus forgetting other the aspects of the overall national security mission. Peacekeeping is not solely a military activity; it is a combination of military and civilian effort. In fact, there are a more than 15,000 international and local civilian employed in different missions all over the world.³⁸ The focus on the military forces prevented the use of the other agencies that should have put an interagency effort against the commitment rather than resting the burden to the AFP alone. Further, if an interagency action had been the approach, funding problems could have been addressed since all agencies would be aware of the requirement and put efforts towards addressing it at the cabinet level.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Until capacity is increased, the AFP cannot deploy more capable and robust peacekeeping units, and will have to commit to UN support on a case-by-case basis only. The government will have to rely on other civilian agencies to fulfill obligations to the UN if it wants to maintain its relevance to the world community.

What follows are recommendations that will enhance the Philippines' peacekeeping capacity.

First, institutionalize through legislation similar to other countries like Fiji, Bangladesh, and India, the capacity of the country to support peacekeeping operations. With the legislation of peacekeeping operations, there will be a programmed fund that will be dedicated for the requirements of peacekeeping missions. This will solve the problems on manning, training, and equipping and lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness. Also, it will trigger up-front interagency efforts and therefore remove sole reliance on the Defense Department and the AFP for compliance with international commitments. Anyway, peacekeeping operations today require the involvement not only of the AFP but civilian agencies as well. The peacekeeping must be instrumental in raising the morale of the contingent. The effort will erase hitches that had been hindering better performance of troops. In this regard, the AFP must initiate and submit to Congress, for its legislation, a bill that would ensure permanent and sustained support to peacekeeping operations. The approval of the bill into law should assure an annual budget appropriation which can be used for the capability build-up of the AFP peacekeeping operation.

Second, use a portion of foreign military assistance to address capacity building and capability development for peacekeeping, since the country's image is at stake. The US for one had been helping sustain Philippine defense capability. It has always earmarked certain amount for military assistance to the Philippines. In Fiscal Year 2005 for example, the US has earmarked \$55M in military assistance.³⁹ Better equipment will boost the morale of any contingent and improve their operational capability, thus improving our image in the international community. The capability of the AFP peacekeeping contingent should be modernized to allow full accomplishment of their mission. The move-shoot-communicate capability as well as individual protective gear must be included in modernization and upgrade programs. This should be initiated by the AFP Peacekeeping Capability Development and Acquisition Plan.

Third, develop a doctrine on peacekeeping operations to prevent the AFP PKOC from resorting to ad hoc preparations to address UN request for troop contributions to peacekeeping mission. It will also institutionalize the AFP peacekeeping operations' systems and procedures. The writing of an AFP Peacekeeping Operations Manual may be required to achieve this goal.⁴⁰

Fourth, establish an AFP Liaison Office with the Philippine UN Mission. An AFP Liaison Officer could assist the country's permanent mission in UN Headquarters in New York in facilitating exchange of communications between UN DPKO and the AFP for an effective coordination and cooperation between the two entities.

Implementation of these recommendations would serve to reconcile the disconnections between the Philippines policy objective of supporting UN peacekeeping operations and the AFP's current shortfalls in capabilities, preparation, and operational tempo. Participation in UN peacekeeping operations strengthens the reputation of the Philippines as a stable and contributing member of the greater worldwide community of nations. It would enhance the ability of the Philippine contingents to deploy globally while not interfering with AFP capabilities directed at countering the internal threats to national integrity.

Endnotes

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