

PHILIPPINE COUNTERINSURGENCY DURING THE
PRESIDENCIES OF MAGSAYSAY, MARCOS, AND
RAMOS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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General Studies

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

PHILIPPINE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY AND COUNTERINSURGENCY DURING THE PRESIDENCIES OF MAGSAYSAY, MARCOS, AND RAMOS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES, by LTC Ryan N. Severo, 117 pages.

Communist insurgency had been a national security problem of the Philippines since the American colonial period. When the Philippines earned their independence in 1945, communist insurgency rapidly grew in Luzon due to the Philippines worsening condition caused by the aftermath of Second World War and political instability. In the early 1950s, the communist insurgents would have succeeded in taking power but Ramon Magsaysay was appointed as Secretary of Defense. In 1955, Magsaysay became president and defeated the communist insurgents. In 1969, a new Maoist-inspired communist insurgency prevailed replacing the old Soviet model. President Marcos declared martial law to stop the growing communism and transformed the democratic system into a new Philippine society in 1972. In a decade, the Philippine economy collapsed and corruption in government became worse while the communist insurgency grew in an unprecedented heights. Marcos was unseated by a “People Revolution” and democracy was restored in 1986. In 1992, President Ramos instituted economic reforms and implemented reconciliation and talks to end communist insurgency. This thesis will assess and determine the factors that led to the successes or failures of the government policy and security strategy during Magsaysay, Marcos and Ramos presidencies in fighting communist insurgency.

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ACRONYMS

AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
CARP	Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program
CHDF	Civilian Home Defense Forces
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
HMB	<i>Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan</i> (People's Liberation Army)
ISO	Internal Security Operations
KM	<i>Kabataan Makabayan</i>
NDF	National Democratic Front
NPA	New People's Army
NUC	National Unification Commission
PKP	<i>Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas</i>
PNP	Philippine National Police

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Communist insurgency had been a security problem of the Philippines since the American colonial period. Aside from rising nationalism; poor social, political and economic conditions prevailed.¹ Americans were believed to have more favorable treatment by wealthy landowners and politicians than the poor. Farmers and workers were deprived of equal economic opportunity to improve their way of life. These conditions had been widespread throughout the archipelago, except in some parts of Mindanao, where Muslim leaders governed themselves, but owed allegiance to the colonial government.²

In May 1924, a communist-inspired group, the *Kapisanang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* was founded in Nueva Ecija Province. This peasant group became the first Philippine communist party and spread across Luzon and into Manila. The *Kapisanang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* exploited such issues as poor social conditions, continued colonial status of the country, and the unequal land-tenure system. After three years, *Kapisanang Pambansa ng mga Magbubukid sa Pilipinas* was transformed into the Worker's Party and became the first legal communist

¹ Robert Ross Smith, *The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political and Military Factors* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief Military History, Department of the Army, 1963), 1.

² Ibid., 13-15.

political party in the Philippines. This party was associated with the Soviet Comintern and began the “class struggle” against the colonial government.³

On August 26, 1930, the party formally became the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*⁴ (PKP), with Crisanto Evangelista as the head. The renamed communist movement set forth five guiding principles: “to mobilize for complete national independence; to establish communism for the masses; to defend the masses against capitalist exploitation; to overthrow American imperialism; and to overthrow capitalism in the Philippines.” After two years, the Supreme Court declared the PKP illegal and imprisoned Evangelista and other leaders for plotting to overthrow the government. Other PKP members went underground and continued the struggle against the landlords.⁵ While the PKP was outlawed, a socialist organization, the *Aguman ding Madlang Talapegobra*, emerged in Pampanga, Central Luzon. The *Aguman ding Madlang Talapegobra* continued to espouse the same principles as the PKP and to exploit the country’s poor socio-economic conditions.⁶

On March 24, 1935, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was approved by U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, which would provide a ten year transition period for the Philippine independence on July 4, 1946. In the meantime, the Philippines would be under U.S. supervision. On November 1935, President Manuel Quezon became the first president of

³ Lawrence Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection, A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operations in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1995), 9.

⁴ In English, Communist Party of the Philippines.

⁵ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 10.

⁶ Smith, *The Hukbalahap Insurgency*, 18-19.

the commonwealth government.⁷ Quezon introduced minor reforms in favor of the peasants by imposing a 30 percent limit for landowners share on their harvest however, it was not implemented. Before Japanese occupation of the Philippines, Quezon released PKP leaders after they pledged allegiance to government and to American efforts against Japan. In November 1938, PKP had merged with the Socialist Party and opened new fronts to the islands of Cebu, Panay and Negros.⁸

In December 1941, the PKP declared its support to the United States and the Philippine Commonwealth governments. In 1942, during the Japanese occupation, the “Provisional National Committee of the United Front” was created following the arrest of the Crisanto Evangelista and other leaders of PKP by Japanese Army. The provisional committee created a political, an economic, and military sub-committees. The military sub-committee was headed by Luis Taruc, Chairman, and Casto Alejandrino, Vice-Chairman; this organization became the headquarters of the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon*⁹. The *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* or Huks became a significant anti-Japanese guerrilla force during the Japanese occupation in Central Luzon.¹⁰

During the 1946 Elections, PKP leaders merged with the Democratic Alliance (DA) party and supported the re-election bid of President Sergio Osmeña. Osmeña, under the *Nacionalista* party, lost the election but the DA party won six seats in Congress. The

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, s.v. “Tydings–McDuffie Act,” accessed April 22, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Tydings–McDuffie–Act>.

⁸ Smith, *The Hukbalahap Insurgency*, 10-11.

⁹ In English, Anti–Japanese People’s Army.

¹⁰ Smith, *The Hukbalahap Insurgency*, 22-28.

winning president, Manuel Roxas, denied elected DA candidates their seats in Congress, including Luis Taruc, who won a seat in Pampanga. In the Senate, Roxas also prohibited winning Nacionalista candidates to take their seats. Roxas' intent was to control both Congress and the Senate.¹¹ In May 1946, the PKP started to consolidate the Huks to fight the government's oppression and U.S. intervention. The *Hukbalahap* was later renamed *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan* (HMB) or People's Liberation Army.¹²

In July 4, 1946, the United States recognized Philippine independence. However, the communist insurgency exploited the continued U.S. neo-colonial attitude towards the Philippines. The U.S. Congress denial of Filipino veterans benefits in 1946 as promised by General McArthur, and prevention of the Philippine government from changing the value of peso without U.S. consent as stated in Bell Act of 1946 fueled the *Hukbalahap* propaganda.¹³

In 1951, the communist insurgency had a strong presence in Central Luzon and nearby provinces including Manila, the seat of national government. Congressman Ramon Magsaysay convinced President Quirino to appoint him as defense secretary promising Quirino he would stop the growing communist rebellion. With U.S. government support, Magsaysay instituted reforms in the military and police by increasing pay and professionalizing the ranks.¹⁴ After three years, the Hukbalahap

¹¹ Smith, *Hukbalahap Insurgency*, 66-67.

¹² Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (Durham, NC: Yale University Press, 1989), 16.

¹³ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 36-37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

rapidly declined with Magsaysay's leadership and successful anti-Huk program. Before Magsaysay's untimely death in 1957, the Philippine government had eliminated Huks in Luzon and Visayas areas.

The Philippines was relatively peaceful in the succeeding decade with the Huks defeated and PKP outlawed. Ferdinand Marcos was president, when the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), a faction of the PKP, was founded in December 1968. The CPP was composed of mostly student activists from highly reputable universities in Manila and followed the popular Maoist model. Three months later, the CPP formed the New People's Army (NPA) chosen from Huk remnants in Tarlac province.

In less than two years, the CPP led protests in Manila and the discovery of NPA threat in central and northern Luzon led the government to respond excessively. In 1972, Marcos declared martial law invoking the threat to national security caused by growing communist and Muslim insurgencies. Instead of stopping the rebellion, the insurgency grew rapidly due to government corruption, injustice, and military abuses. Fourteen years later, in February 1986, Marcos was ousted through a "people power revolution."

Cory Aquino succeeded Marcos after leading this revolution. She restored Philippine democracy and started a new strategy to fight the communist insurgency. In 1992, President Fidel Ramos opened peace talks with the CPP. After successful exploratory talks, the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines agreed to hold the negotiations in Netherlands with the Dutch government as third party facilitator. Ramos implemented major economic and political reforms and was successful. However, the peace talks with the communists collapsed at the end of his term.

The author believes that studying the historical conditions of the Philippine communist insurgency and counterinsurgency will provide a better understanding of the root causes of the longest running insurgency in Asia. In so doing, appropriate government responses can be identified to address the challenges posed by the insurgency.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the historical lessons of the Philippines counterinsurgency strategy used during the presidencies of Ramon Magsaysay, Ferdinand Marcos and Fidel Ramos. Their presidencies brought new strategies in fighting the communist insurgency. Magsaysay centered his counterinsurgency strategy on professionalizing the armed forces and leading an honest government focused on helping the poor. Marcos, in response to resurgence of communist insurgency, implemented an authoritarian rule to stop worsening security conditions. Ramos's multi-stakeholder approach and reconciliation gave the people role in peace and nation building.

Analyzing the government strategy and military actions during those periods will provide a window to a comprehensive way to defeat communist insurgency. This study will describe the condition that fuels the insurgency and how the government sometimes poorly, or sometimes effectively, responded to threat of insurgency.

Primary Research Question

What are the factors that led to successes or failures of the Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos administrations in fighting the communist insurgency?

Secondary Research Questions

This study will address the primary question by answering the questions listed below. These questions will help understand the environment or condition before each presidency and assess the effects of the president's counterinsurgent policy and military strategy after his term.

1. What were the social, political, and economic conditions at the onset of the Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos administrations?
2. What was the status of communist insurgency in terms of popular support and armed capability at the beginning of their administrations?
3. What were the government strategies to fight the communist insurgency in terms of governance, economic, legal and security during Magsaysay, Marcos and Ramos administrations?
4. What were the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) operational approaches during the Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos administrations?
5. What was the status of communist insurgency in terms of people support and armed capability at the end of their terms?

Definition of Terms

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP): the government arm that plays the major role of the Philippines' counterinsurgency efforts.

Cadre: refers to a CPP party member.

Counterinsurgency: the Philippine government strategy to socio-political, economic and military activities or actions geared to solve or eradicate insurgency.

Ferdinand Marcos: was the 10th President of the Republic of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986. He declared Martial Law from 1972 to 1981, but was overthrown by a “People Power Revolution” in February 1986.

Fidel Ramos: was the 12th President of the Republic of the Philippines from 1992 to 1998. He was the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary and a key figure during the People Power Revolution that toppled down the dictatorship of Marcos.

Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB): popularly known as *Hukbalahap*, the military wing of the PKP. They were later renamed to *Bagong Hukbong Bayan* or more popularly known as the NPA.

Insurgency: refers to CPP political and armed struggle in order to change Philippine democracy to socialist form of government.

National Democratic Front of the Philippines: a core group of CPP members that is responsible for establishing an alliance with different political party and sectoral groups in the Philippines and other international organizations.

Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP): more popularly known as Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The leftist political party that believes in the Soviet model. Later, followed the Maoist doctrine during the leadership of Jose Maria Sison.

Ramon Magsaysay: was the 7th President of the Republic of the Philippines from 1953 to 1957. He was a guerrilla leader that fought alongside with Americans against Japanese invasion. He won a congressional seat after the defeat of Japan and was appointed as Secretary of Defense.

Limitations

This study is limited to the communist insurgency and counterinsurgency during the presidencies of Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos between 1950 and 1998. Aside from the limited amount of time to conduct the research, their administrations appear to have more lessons to offer to military students and other professionals interested in the subject. Each president had his own peculiar approach to fight insurgency, despite the fact that all of them served the military. The study focuses on the presidents' governance, economic development, and security policies including the AFP operational approaches to fight insurgency. Resources used in this study are limited to unclassified books, theses, researches, articles, government documents, and news articles.

Scope and Delimitations

The thesis will assess the successes or failures of government policies and military strategies in fighting communist insurgency during the stated periods. The purpose is to determine the factors that made each president's administration a success or failure, and derive lessons which can be used on contemporary counterinsurgency in the Philippines. The researcher chose the administrations of the three presidents because they have some commonalities and differences which can produce substantial analysis and generalization of the Philippine insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The researcher chose not to begin with the administration of Elpidio Quirino since it will be covered with the discussion of Magsaysay. Also, the researcher opted not to consider Cory Aquino's administration since the first three years of her presidency were devoted to political, economic, social, and military reforms. However, it will be describe as part of the condition before the Ramos Administration.

The paper will not consider the Muslim secessionist and terrorist groups in Mindanao. The Muslim secessionist groups are the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The Moro National Liberation Front made peace with the government in 1996. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front is currently waiting for the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law, which will support the final peace agreement made by President Benigno Aquino's administration. The Abu Sayyaf Group is a terrorist group affiliated with the Al-Qaeda with a small base of support in Sulu-Basilan.

Significance of Study

The study will provide an analysis of three different periods in the Philippines' counterinsurgency efforts. The study will also attempt to provide a deeper insight into the communist insurgency. This research can further evaluate existing counterinsurgency theories and principles which may provide a new model or support an existing theory about contemporary insurgency. The researcher's analysis may provide a different viewpoint that can be used as key inputs in evaluating contemporary military strategy to defeat the armed struggle of the communist insurgency.

The next chapter will present the literature review and methodology that will drive the discussion, comparison and analysis of the study in the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand the historical lessons of the Philippines' counterinsurgency strategy during the presidencies of Ramon Magsaysay, Ferdinand Marcos and Fidel Ramos. It was during these periods that the country's political, social and economic challenges became most challenging. Their presidencies were important periods in which insurgencies challenged the government's ability to institute reforms and improve public confidence.

Literature Review

A number of studies have been conducted about Philippine insurgencies and counterinsurgencies specifically focused on the communist movement. The most common counterinsurgency operation cited was Magsaysay's successes which led to the defeat of Huks. A number of studies have been conducted about the AFP strategy to fight the CPP and the NPA after their resurgence and growth during the Marcos presidency. With the presence of U.S. military bases in the Philippines, the United States has been directly and indirectly involved in assisting the Philippines through financial aid and military assistance.

In this research, the author has used most of the documents which have been previously utilized in the different studies. In addition, the researcher used the more important studies to generate a new general theory or to support existing theories about the peculiar strategic situation of the Philippine insurgencies and counterinsurgencies.

Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin M. Gray wrote *The Magsaysay Story* (1956), which examines the leadership qualities and decisiveness of Magsaysay's presidency. Romulo and Gray argue that Magsaysay's vision as minister of defense to defeat the Huk rebellion continued even when he became the president. As president, he secretly negotiated with the highest communist leader for his surrender and end the communist rebellion. Although unsuccessful, he eventually secured the surrender of Luis Taruc after providing a development project to Taruc's hometown, in San Luis, Pampanga. Romulo and Gray called Magsaysay's approach an "all-out force and all-out friendship," a successful strategy in ending the Huk rebellion.

Robert Ross Smith wrote *The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political, and Military Factors* (1963), to determine how the Philippine armed forces fought and solved the insurgency with the U.S. military support. From a military point of view, Smith contends that organizational reforms of the Philippine armed forces, in particular the transfer of jurisdiction of the Philippine Constabulary from the Department of the Interior (now Department of Interior and Local Government) in 1951 to the Department of National Defense proved to be effective in fighting the Huks. He further argues that unfavorable economic, political, and social conditions in the Philippines were the main reasons for the communist and Hukbalahap insurgency to flourish particularly in Central Luzon. Nonetheless, an effective implementation of combined military and civic actions prevented the communists from attaining their objective. He also contends that, aside from the leadership of Magsaysay, a well-developed military campaign successfully neutralized the Huks' capability.

Internal Defense Against Insurgency: Six Cases (1966), written by Adrian Jones and Andrew Molnar, provides an account of how the military and police forces were employed to preserve internal security against the threat posed by the expansion of communist ideology in developing nations. For the Philippines, Jones and Molnar argue that the Japanese postwar situation influenced the dramatic growth of Huk rebellion. They concluded that the major reorganization of the constabulary and armed forces had positive effects on the counterinsurgency efforts of the government.

The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines (1977), written by Benedict J. Kerkvliet, argues that seeking a military solution is not the right approach to the Philippine communist insurgency. Instead, the government should implement social, economic and political reforms. Kerkvliet's research was focused on the Huk rebellion by taking into account the perspective of the rebels and their sympathizers. He concludes that the peasants, rebels, and sympathizers were uncommitted to communism or to taking up arms against the government. Moreover, what they really wanted to have was a decent living, equal opportunities, and fair treatment by the government.

The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955 (1995), written by Lawrence M. Greenberg provides current and future U.S. Army planners an example of a successful U.S. involvement in a low intensity conflict. He argues that U.S. advice, economic aid and material support to the Philippines were significant factors that allowed Magsaysay to reform the AFP and provide resources for development projects. He asserts that under Magsaysay's leadership and guidance, the Huks were beaten at their own game.

The Philippines After Marcos (1985) is a collection of essays edited by R.J. May and Francisco Nemenzo about the Philippine society and politics during and immediately following Marcos regime. The book provides a narrative of the social, economic, political and military conditions of the Philippines during this era. Hill and Jayasuriya argue that during Marcos' dictatorship, the degree of inequality increased over the colonial period.

Security and Development-An Integrated Approach to Counterinsurgency in Region 02 (1986), is a thesis written by Artemio Arugay, aims "to strengthen and improve the security and development operations as an effective counterinsurgency measures in Region 2." The security and development operations were implemented during the last few years of Marcos' dictatorship. Arugay's research provides a detailed examination of the Executive Order of President Marcos that paved way for the organization of peace and order council (POC) at the regional, provincial and municipal levels. This organization is a mechanism for the military and local government, under the Municipal Mayors and Provincial Governors, to coordinate and form collaborative efforts against the alarming threat posed by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)—New People's Army (NPA). Arugay concludes that the POC is ultimately ineffective because of poor coordination between the civil and military authority. He continues that coordination and collaboration should be strengthened to fight the insurgency.

Gary Hawes' book, *The Philippine State and the Marcos Regime* (1987), is a study about the major agricultural industries affected during the Marcos dictatorship. Hawes argues that the coconut and sugar industries in Luzon and Visayas were manipulated and controlled by Marcos and his cronies to stay in power and amass wealth. The exploitation of coconut and sugar industries provided an opportunity for CPP—NPA

to recruit and solidify their presence. The fruit production industry in Mindanao, owned by foreign multinational companies and local elites, were less affected by Marcos' economic policy. Despite the higher earnings of multinational companies, they failed to improve their farm workers' way of life. CPP—NPA took advantage of the government's inaction to protect the farm workers' wages and benefits. These farm workers became a major manpower source of communists' expansion in Mindanao.

Richard J. Kessler's *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (1989) provides an examination of the growing communist threat and the military's ineffectiveness during Marcos era. He argues that Marcos corrupted the military for political reasons. Ranking military officials were given key government positions, which became the focus of its senior leaders. Paramilitary groups were the main solution during martial law to prevent the spread of communist ideology and NPA threat in the communities. The military and paramilitary caused excessive human rights abuses by silencing political opponents of Marcos. Student activists in colleges and universities throughout the country became easy prey for communist recruitment because their only option was to join the NPA. As such, the CPP—NPA gained a higher public approval and support in their fight against the corruption of Marcos and abuses of the military.

Gregg R. Jones' *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (1989) offers a detailed story about the resurgence of the communist insurgency. Jones personal interviews with key individuals at different levels of the CPP—NPA hierarchy gives more credibility to his book. He argues that the CPP split in 1992, creating the reaffirmist and rejectionist factions, brought an unprecedented effect on the legitimacy of CPP's armed struggle and expansion of united front building.

Silent War (1989), written by Victor Corpus discusses the CPP—NPA strategy and tactics and assesses the AFP counterinsurgency operations. Corpus, a company grade officer turned NPA rebel in 1970, explains the resurgence of communist insurgency in the context of the rebels. In the foreword, Fidel Ramos, then Secretary of National Defense said, “understanding the true nature of the problem in order to come up with suitable and winning strategies for the Government.” Corpus, released from detention and reinstated in the AFP in 1986, provided the military and government with first-hand knowledge about the communist struggle, its capabilities and weaknesses. He argues that the communist strategy of protracted war should be resolved by a “war of rapid conclusion.” His expertise helped the government to understand the insurgency and change its attitudes in dealing with the communists.

The Political Economy of Reform during the Ramos Administration (1992–98) (2008), by Romeo L. Bernardo and Marie-Christine G. Tang, argues that the de-monopolization of telecommunications, oil-deregulation and water privatization were successful economic reforms during Ramos presidency. Bernardo and Tang assert that Ramos’ political will and vision of economic growth benefited the country in terms of providing better services and more opportunities to the labor force. The oil-regulation revealed to the public the trend of oil prices in the world markets, ending their blaming of government price control that provoked street protests.

Impact of Agrarian Reform on Poverty (2002), written by Celia Reyes, is a study evaluating the effects of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) on poverty. CARP, passed into law during President Corazon Aquino in 1988, allows the government to redistribute lands from landowners to their qualified tenants. The study

conducted a survey from 1990 and 2000, covering 2,500 respondents from agrarian reform beneficiaries. Reyes concludes that the program had positive effects in terms of higher income and reduced poverty incidence. In addition, she relates that natural calamities, such as typhoons and El Nino, had significant effects on the farmers' capacities to recover without government assistance. The positive findings of the research does not reflect other farmers that are non-CARP beneficiaries.

W. Scott Thompson and Federico M. Macaranas, authors of the book, *Democracy and Discipline: Fidel V. Ramos and His Philippine Presidency* (2007), argue that Ramos was one of the Philippine's greatest presidents and successful leaders among developing nations. Thompson and Macaranas claims that Ramos' honest leadership and effective policies benefited the country during series of crises, including the Asian financial crisis in 1997. With his vision of a newly industrialized country, Ramos' consistent economic accomplishments in the agricultural, industrial, and service sectors were dramatic and outstanding from 1993 to 1997.

Research Methodology

This thesis is a qualitative historical analysis of the Philippine government's policies and military strategies during the presidencies of Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos. The researcher will compare and assess each period using three highlighted ideas in the concept of lines of operations, as described in Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, on the efforts undertaken to address the root causes of the communist insurgency. Moreover, the this paper will examine the AFP's operational methodology and assess its effectiveness in fighting the Huks and NPA.

The author will examine the Philippine counterinsurgency by exploring the conceptual model of counterinsurgency by U.S. Major Mark G. Kappelmann. Major Kappelmann proposed the three basic elements of counterinsurgency: the insurgents, the counterinsurgents and the population. He further explains that the population is not only the centerpiece but the most complicated among the elements. This model is also the same recommendation of the author's committee in the analysis, which will be discussed in chapter 6.

In this paper, the author will use the term people instead of population. The author will evaluate the insurgents' and counter-insurgents' strategies to fight and win the people's support and legitimacy. For the communist insurgents, they rely heavily on their ideology and propaganda machinery to win the people's support and justify their illegal actions. For the counterinsurgents, the government's effective programs in terms of governance, economic development, and security, increases their ability to defeat the insurgents and maintain their legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

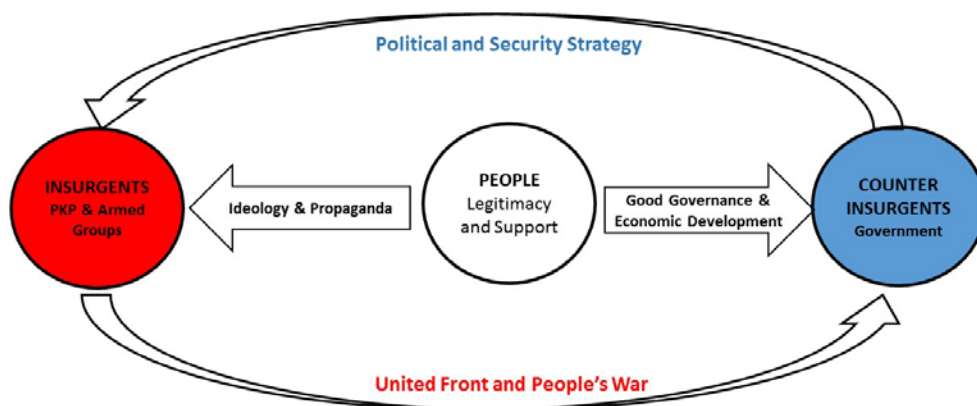


Figure 1. Philippine Counterinsurgency Model

Source: Created by author.

This study discusses concepts of governance, economic development, and security. Governance will examine programs that affect public perception of government's delivery of essential services and justice. Economic development will discuss efforts to solve the roots of insurgency, focusing on larger and long-term programs that improved Filipinos' way of life. Security will look at the relationship and legal basis of the military and police roles in counterinsurgency operations. An additional section will also cover the AFP's operational methodology implemented to fight the rebels.

Chapter 3, examines Ramon Magsaysay's successful leadership in the defeat of Huks. Magsaysay, as Secretary of Defense, personally and relentlessly pursued and led the successful campaign against the Hukbalahap in Central Luzon. In his first year as president, he convinced Luis Taruc, a top Huk leader, to surrender by providing economic opportunities to his hometown in San Luis.

Chapter 4 explains how the corruption of Ferdinand Marcos inflicted serious damage to the Philippines and led to a stronger communist insurgency. According to ranking CPP cadres, Marcos was the best recruiter for their insurgency. Despite tremendous communist success, the CPP failed to exploit the political and economic crisis and injustices to seize power from Marcos.

Chapter 5 illustrates the economic growth of the Philippines under Fidel Ramos' presidency. A visionary leader, he implemented economic reforms that provided more employment opportunities and changed the traditional dependence on agriculture. Another surprising security reform was the repeal of Anti-Subversion Act that paved way

for a peace negotiations with the communist rebels. However, Ramos failed to close a final peace deal.

Chapter 6 presents the researcher's analysis and findings about the Philippine insurgency and counterinsurgency. Government programs and military responses will be compared and assessed to determine their effectiveness in the fight against communist insurgency using the model created by the author.

CHAPTER 3

MAGSAYSAY ADMINISTRATION

This chapter examines Ramon Magsaysay's successful leadership in defeating the Huk rebellion. He was appointed Secretary of Defense in 1950 after convincing President Elpidio Quirino to accept his strategy to fight the communist insurgency. In 1953, Magsaysay was elected president of the Philippines. During his leadership, Magsaysay personally led the government's counterinsurgency efforts using unorthodox styles to fight the communists. As president, he provided hope to poor Filipinos through his rural reconstruction and community development programs by awarding them farming land and access to funds.

Background

Ramon Magsaysay was a guerrilla leader in Zambales during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. In December 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and U.S. declaration of war with Japan, Magsaysay volunteered to serve as captain in the U.S. Army. He was the manager of Try Tran Company when American forces commandeered the bus company. With his knowledge of volunteers and terrain of Zambales, they assigned him to the Thirty-First Division motor pool.¹⁵ In April 1942, Captain Magsaysay together with Colonel Gyles Merrill, formed the famed Zambales guerrillas when the Japanese forces took over Manila.

¹⁵ Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin M. Gray, *The Magsaysay Story* (New York: The John Day Company, 1956), 43.

The Zambales guerrillas organized a strong resistance against the Japanese using Magsaysay's knowledge of the terrain.¹⁶ As a guerrilla leader, his fair treatment of his soldiers, ensuring that they had the same food as the officers, earned their admiration and loyalty.¹⁷ In December 1942, he was listed as Japan's "Number One Enemy" in Zambales, with a reward of one hundred pesos equivalent to fifty dollars¹⁸ for his capture, dead or alive. With the help of farmers in Zambales, his family evaded Japanese capture.¹⁹

After the Second World War, on February 4, 1945, with the recommendation of Colonel Merrill, Magsaysay was inaugurated as Governor General in Zambales, where he served for two months, marking the start of his political career.²⁰ He was convinced to run for Congress when a majority of his colleagues in the guerrilla movement petitioned him and some of his close friends begged him to run. On April 23, 1946, he won the majority vote in Zambales, as an independent candidate. In Congress, Magsaysay saw the political corruption, scandals, and unfair treatment of the poor by the government.²¹

Agriculture was the main source of government revenue with rice, coconut and sugar as the primary crops. The Philippines was among the top producers of coconut in

¹⁶ Ibid., 44-45.

¹⁷ Ibid., 47.

¹⁸ About \$1,220.00 today, see Samuel H. Williamson, "Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1774 to present," *Measuring Worth*, April 2016.

¹⁹ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 52.

²⁰ Ibid., 69.

²¹ Ibid., 78-84.

the world. Its importance to the economy was considerable, with about eight million people, or one-third of the entire population, dependent for their livelihood on the coconut industry. Almost all provinces grew coconuts, with about one million hectares devoted to coconut production. Major products from coconut tree are copra, coconut oil, desiccated coconut and copra meal.²²

Sugar was a major export commodity even before American rule and Negros island had the largest production area. Under Japanese occupation, production halted, causing a major setback for the industry. Factories were destroyed and farms abandoned. About three million people depended on the farming industry, which also fed other endeavors such as banking, insurance, shipping and other commercial institutions. After the war, the government poured millions of pesos into rebuilding the industry, but this favored the rich and politicians with vast sugar plantations. Twenty of the original forty-six factories were restored by the government.²³ This consolidation meant fewer people benefited from this reconstruction, most of who were connected with the government.

The pineapple industry in Mindanao was composed of a cannery and plantation. It was the second largest producer of canned pineapple and canned juice next to Hawaii. During the war, production also ceased and canning production did not restart until 1948. The industry employed a large number of people in Northern Mindanao.²⁴ The pineapple

²² Urbano A. Zafra, *Philippine Economic Handbook 1960* (Laurel, MD: Westland Printing Company, 1960), 153.

²³ *Ibid.*, 118-122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

industry and other fruit plantations flourished in the succeeding decades with more government and international financial intervention and support.

On the other hand, the mining industry was only explored during American rule. Gold and silver mining sites were located in Mountain Province, Masbate, Camarines Norte, Bulacan and Surigao provinces. About 64 percent of gross sales were predominantly US-controlled, followed by Great Britain with 15 percent, the Philippines with 12 percent, and United States-Philippines at 10 percent.²⁵ In the next four decades, this industry continued to develop and the communists exploited its effects on the indigenous people and the environment particularly in Mindanao. Communities that depended on this industry become a communist strongholds.

Fraud during the 1949 elections fed the threat of communist insurgency. The ruling Liberal Party, under President Elpidio Quirino, rigged the elections that year. They used armed goons to harass Nacionalista party voters to prevent them from casting their votes, while the Liberal Party votes were counted twice. It became known as the “dirty election,” and came to represent corruption in the Philippines in postwar years. This situation pushed the poor and peasants to support or join the communist insurgency.²⁶ Magsaysay, serving as the Chairman of the National Defense Committee for two terms in Congress, witnessed the growing control of communism in the country.²⁷ The PKP and the HMB was a formidable force ready to take control of the government in 1950.

²⁵ Ibid., 171-172.

²⁶ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 97.

²⁷ Ibid., 102.

*Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas and
Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan*

The *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* or “Huks” was the original name of the HMB. Originally, they organized as a peasant guerrilla group that fought against the Japanese during the Second World War, apart from Magsaysay’s movement. Table 1 shows the dramatic rise of their membership to twelve thousand Huks from April 1942 to September 1944.

After the Second World War, a growing threat of communist takeover loomed throughout the country as the Huks became more successful in attacking military and police patrols. In Central Luzon, Huks could freely move across the region, harassing Philippine Army and Police Constabulary outposts. The first battle between Huks and 10th Military Police Company Patrol occurred in Sta. Monica, Nueva Ecija that resulted in the death of ten military personnel and the beheading of their patrol leader. The Huks did not suffer any casualties.²⁸

²⁸ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 56-57.

Table 1. Growth of Hukbalahap Guerrillas

Date	Number of persons	Number of squadrons
April 1942	less than 300	5
September 1942	3,000	30-35
December 1942	5,000	42
February 1943	7,000 to 10,000	
June 1943	7,000	
December 1943	10,500	
September 1944	10,000 to 12,000	76

Source: Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1977), 87.

Recruitment was simple; their modus operandi was the political and socio-economic agitation of peasants by organizers, supported by a military formation known as squadrons. After a short period, communist and Huk influence reached as far as the North Luzon provinces of Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija and Isabela; South Luzon provinces of Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas;²⁹ and Panay Island.³⁰

In 1948, PKP, under Jose Lava, used the Marxist model of class struggle. This model concentrated their activities in urban centers to disrupt government operation and seize political power. But Luis Taruc, the Huk's top leader, disagreed with Lava and believed their focus should continue to expand their mass base in rural areas using guerrilla tactics, hit and run and night attacks to avoid direct engagement with the

²⁹ Today, named as Quezon.

³⁰ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 58.

military.³¹ After a year, the PKP central command was established in Manila threatening unrest and rebellion against the government.

In April 1949, the Huks suffered their first public setback in their military operations. The convoy of Aurora Quezon, widow of President Quezon, was ambushed by Huk rebels along a rugged road in the Sierra Madre mountains, killing her, Quezon's daughter, the Mayor of Quezon City, and several government troops. The Huk leadership, under Luis Taruc, attempted to distance himself from the ambush, but people would not accept his explanation that the Huks carried out the attack without his approval. President Quezon was considered a national hero that fought against the Japanese; as a result, the Huks lost significant popular support with this incident.³²

Between 1949 and 1950, the Huks were estimated to encompass about 20,000 armed men and more than 100,000 peasant supporters.³³ Security conditions throughout the country continued to deteriorate with thousands of loose firearms left over from the war. Crime was endemic, including rampant murder and robbery. People distrusted the government, military, and police. Military morale was low and many people were waiting for the opportune time to side with the Huks.³⁴

³¹ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 61.

³² *Ibid.*, 62–63.

³³ R.H.F., "Presidential Policy in the Philippines: Magsaysay's Record," *The World Today* 12, no. 12 (December 1956): 515, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40392875>.

³⁴ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 109.

Secretary of National Defense

By 1950, the situation in Manila was spiraling out of control. Ruperto Kangleon, Secretary of Defense and AFP generals had advised President Quirino not to leave the palace because the Huks would assassinate him. Malacañang guards conducted evacuation drills twice a week in case of danger to the president's life and his family. None of his advisers could offer a solution on how the government might fight the communist threat.³⁵

Congressman Magsaysay convinced the president to appoint him Secretary of Defense and promised to defeat the Huks. President Quirino was impressed when he presented his plan. The anti-Huk program Magsaysay envisioned was based on the lessons he learned against the Japanese as a guerrilla fighter. The programs he developed were a reward system for the identification of the Huks; K-9 dog corps to track Huk rebels and rehabilitation program for Huks that would cooperate with the government.³⁶

Confident about his appointment, Magsaysay paid a courtesy visit to US Ambassador, Myron Cowen. After the meeting, the Ambassador gave his full support and offered cooperation in all his endeavors.³⁷

On September 1, 1950, Magsaysay was sworn in as Secretary of Defense. He was given full authority by the president to fight the Huks. While still in Malacañang, President Quirino told Magsaysay that a Huk courier wanted to talk to him. The courier was Graciano Rizal, grandson of Dr. Jose Rizal, a Philippine national hero. He mentioned

³⁵ Ibid., 103-104.

³⁶ Ibid., 113.

³⁷ Ibid., 106.

that a member of the communist top leadership wanted to talk to him. In order for the meeting to happen, he had to go alone, without bodyguards, to Tondo, Manila.³⁸

Magsaysay went to Tondo and met “Commander Arthur.” The first meeting was followed by another meeting the following night. The second meeting had a better outcome than the first meeting. On both occasions, he convinced the Huk leader to surrender and to start a new life. In those meetings, Magsaysay found out in detail their complaints about the government and what Arthur thought would help correct it.³⁹

During Magsaysay’s first meeting with his staff and military officials, he told them about the clandestine meeting he had with Commander Arthur, but they ridiculed his actions. In the same meeting, he stressed to them his vision and approach to defeat the Huks, saying, “I want you to forget everything you were taught at Fort Leavenworth, Fort Benning, and the Academy. The Huks are fighting an unorthodox war. We are going to combat them in unorthodox war. Whatever it was that hurt me the most as a guerrilla is what we are going to do now to the Huks.”⁴⁰

After a week, Commander Arthur called Magsaysay and asked for six thousand pesos to purchase a car. Instead of giving him the money, Magsaysay bought it without informing his staff. About two weeks later, Commander Arthur called and told Magsaysay about a trusted staff member of the Communist Party that brought food to

³⁸ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 109-10.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

him and other top communist party leaders based in Manila. Acting on this information, Magsaysay called a meeting with his AFP generals to plan their actions.⁴¹

Three weeks later, on 1950, General Castaneda informed Magsaysay that the military had identified several locations, by shadowing the staff member, and was ready to raid all twenty-two communist safe houses where the leaders were staying. All but one were arrested. Jose Lava, head of the Politburo was the highest communist leader caught. Five truckloads of documents were captured, unmasking the whole organization, including party sympathizers and Huk supporters. Based on captured documents, Luis Taruc and Castro Alejandrino were the top two leaders in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog, respectively. Later it was found out that the night of Magsaysay's first meeting with Commander Arthur was a trap to assassinate him, but the Huk team assigned to kill him had a car trouble.⁴² Captured documents provided the communist organization structure, as shown in figure 1.

The arrest of twenty one PKP leaders tested Magsaysay's ability to exploit the government's first major success against the communists. There was not a single criminal case filed against those arrested. While the existing law on the writ of habeas corpus provided only six hours detention law, Magsaysay would need to get the attention of the president. In order to detain the Huk leaders legally, he demanded the president suspend habeas corpus. This action prompted idealists and human rights organizations to criticize

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 116-17.

Magsaysay.⁴³ This was his first controversial move as Defense Secretary. In just over a month, Magsaysay’s name was in the international arena.

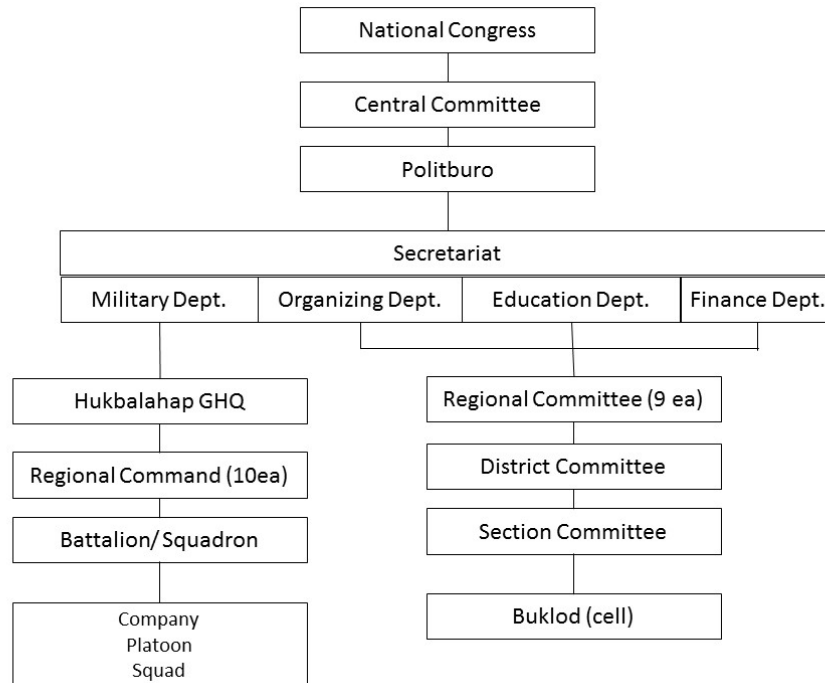


Figure 2. CPP—HMB Organizational Structure (1950)

Source: Lawrence M. Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 49.

In line with the communist problem, collecting thousands of loose firearms left by the war became Magsaysay’s next objective. He offered 75 pesos for each unlicensed serviceable firearm surrendered. This initiative resulted in the purchase by the government of more than 60,000 firearms.⁴⁴ Focused on his vision of defeating the Huk

⁴³ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 118.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 122-23.

rebellion, Magsaysay needed to reform and improve the credibility of the armed forces. Soldiers and officers had been involved in corruption and human rights abuses. According to civilians, military personnel were far worse than the Huks. Police and military personnel carried injustice to the citizens.

Reforming the AFP was a critical requirement to implement Magsaysay's strategy against the Huks. He started by removing high ranking officials, including the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Constabulary. Magsaysay saw them as incompetent and incapable of performing their duties. Before he became Secretary, the Philippine Constabulary was under the Minister of the Interior. He pursued the transfer of the PC under the Defense Department control. In his drive to reform the AFP, Magsaysay went to visit the different units of the AFP outside Manila and talked to civilians. He told civilians that the military and police forces were their protectors and any complaint against them should be brought to his attention. He found out that the AFP was suffering from poor leadership, corruption, and low morale.⁴⁵

Magsaysay worked hard to improve the discipline and effectiveness of soldiers. He conducted spot inspections on different installations and punished soldiers and officers caught sleeping on duty. After twenty days as Secretary, he increased soldiers' pay from thirty centavos to one peso using the money he acquired from U.S. military assistance funds. He also purchased cameras to equip patrol leaders to allow them to document enemy casualties accurately.⁴⁶ Magsaysay had also learned from the successful arrest of Huks leaders that he needed the police. He fast-tracked the transfer of Philippine

⁴⁵ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 82-84.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

Constabulary (PC) control from Interior Ministry to the Defense Department. Then, he reorganized the Philippine Army and Philippine Constabulary into a fighting force (see figure 3).

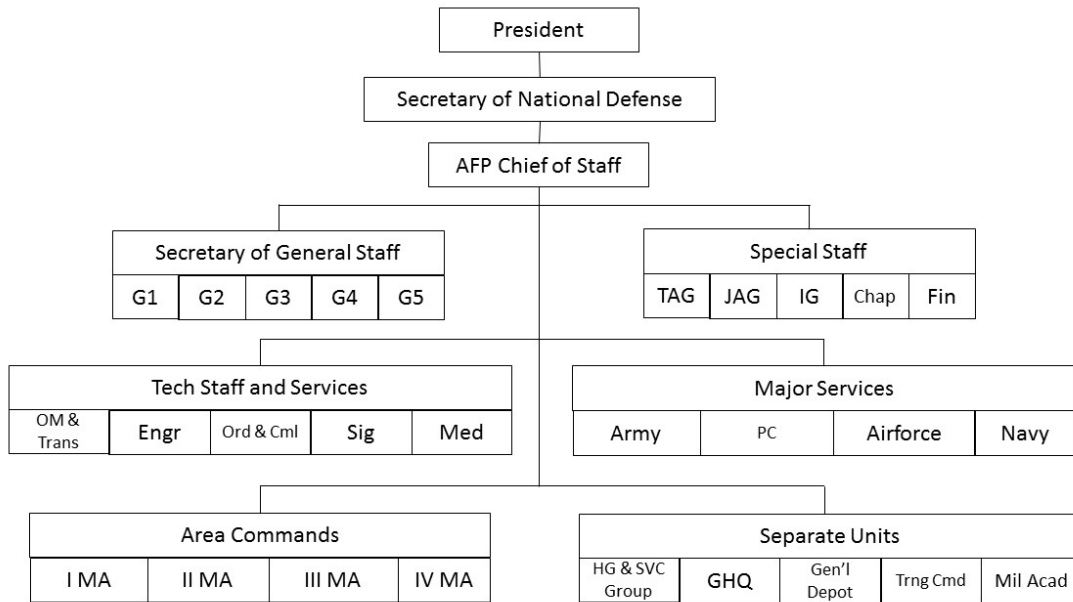


Figure 3. Organizational Structure of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

Source: Lawrence M. Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 113.

In the Philippine Army, Battalion Combat Teams were formed to fight the Huks in the countryside. Magsaysay introduced psychological warfare, combined with military actions, to maintain pressure and demoralize the Huks, while influencing the people to support the government. Routine patrols were lengthened and sent deeper into the forests and isolated *barrios*, or communities. Patrols began gathering information on Huk encampments and strongholds. *Negritos* or black pygmies, Filipino tribal natives, were

used as guides to assist the patrols or collect information of Huk whereabouts. Scout ranger units were employed to conduct reconnaissance in the jungles, ambush against Huk patrols, and plant altered ammunitions on the Huks' arms cache. Propaganda leaflets were covertly distributed in communities supportive of the Huks using "The Eye" with powerful effect against them.⁴⁷ This propaganda material created distrust between the Huks and their supporters preventing the latter from further expanding their influence and control over the communities.

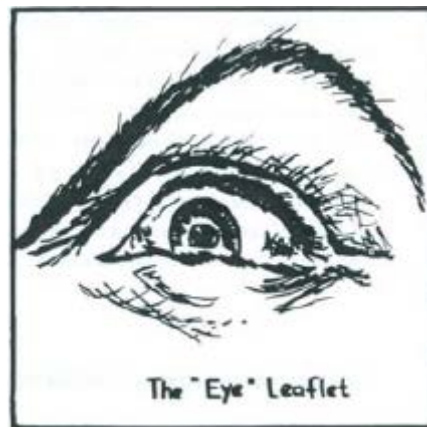


Figure 4. The Eye Leaflet

Source: Lawrence Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection, A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operations in the Philippine, 1946-1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1995), 118.

In January 1951, President Sukarno of Indonesia visited the Philippines, Magsaysay took this opportunity to get the president's approval on the resettlement program. While they were on a cruise tour to Corregidor and Bataan, Sukarno agreed

⁴⁷ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 116-119.

with Magsaysay's proposal that they were carrying out the same program in Indonesia in resettling farmers. At that moment, the president instructed Magsaysay to proceed with implementation of the program.⁴⁸ He pursued the resettlement program for Huks that surrendered as a peaceful means to fight them.

To implement the program, Magsaysay formed the Economic Development Corps in the armed forces under the direct supervision of the Chief of Staff. He believed that the highest military official could ensure military cooperation. He envisioned that the success of the program would persuade the Huks to surrender.⁴⁹

Army Intelligence screened the beneficiaries of the program, who underwent a re-education program about the benefits of living in a peaceful society. In February 1951, with U.S. Government support through the Joint United States Military Advisory Group, Army engineers went to Mindanao to open the first resettlement site. After three months, Magsaysay brought in the first batch of former Huks. The Army provided all the supplies they needed to start, while the Department of Agriculture gave them what they needed to the farm. Free transportation, schools, medical care, electricity and clean water were also provided to them, while farm animals, seed, and food were sold to them on credit by the administrators. The program's success was overwhelming and surpassed the government's expectations. After nine months, a second resettlement site opened in Mindanao.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 144-45.

⁴⁹ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 89.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

Another important milestone Magsaysay focused on as Secretary was ensuring that the 1951 elections would be credible and the people could exercise their rights to vote. Magsaysay's two main goals were to improve public trust in the government and improve the credibility of the AFP as a protector of democracy. The Liberal Party tried to repeat the "Dirty Election of 1949," but failed. Military presence in polling stations prevented hired goons from harassing the voters.⁵¹

Another significant incident happened during the 1951 Elections in Negros. Negros island was ruled by a cruel and authoritarian governor, Rafael Lacson. The governor was the strongest political ally of President Quirino's Liberal Party and was in power for decades. His solid electoral contribution to the Liberal Party made him untouchable to the law. No one dared to run against him or his party because all of his opponents were killed. Magsaysay's interest in the province was to end the governor's tyranny, but President Quirino and the Liberal Party tolerated him because they were too indebted to him for his support during the 1949 election.⁵²

Moises Padilla, an editor-politician, ran for mayor in a small town in Negros against the governor's party. Immediately after the election, armed goons of the governor went to Padilla's house, tortured him, took him to the street and shot him. According to Padilla's dying request, his mother sent a telegram to Magsaysay. When Magsaysay was informed about the incident, he flew to Negros the same day. Padilla's mother and those around the house were surprised by Magsaysay's presence. They believed that the

⁵¹ Ibid., 150-52.

⁵² Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 154-55.

national government had no interest in their welfare. Magsaysay knew that justice would never be served in Negros, so he brought the body with him back to Manila.⁵³

The next morning, the incident was covered in all of Manila's newspapers. Magsaysay convinced Quirino to suspend and file criminal charges against the governor. It took six days before the president agreed with him, due to public outcry and international media attention on the case.⁵⁴ This incident highlighted in Manila that Magsaysay's popularity and influence grew even higher than Quirino's. A major outcome of the election was the worsening Magsaysay's relationship with the president's political party, but his public image as an honest and credible official grew persistently. In subsequent events, the president's political advisers began to convince him about Magsaysay's future higher political plans.

On February 28, 1953, Magsaysay sent his resignation to President Quirino. In his letter, he stated "under your concept of my duties as Secretary of National Defense, my job is just to go on killing Huks. But you must realize that we cannot solve the problem of dissidence simply by military measures. It would be futile to go on killing Huks, while the administration continues to breed dissidence by neglecting the problem of our masses."⁵⁵ Since Magsaysay was more reliable than the president, Quirino criticized Magsaysay in public, but was unsuccessful. Instead, Magsaysay gained public support and decided to run against Quirino.

⁵³ Ibid., 156-58.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 157-59.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 193.

President of the Republic

Magsaysay's decision to run for president was not easy. Close friends, allies and politicians from the Nacionalista Party wooed Magsaysay several times. They organized civic clubs, and convinced people in the provinces to post banners that stated "I Want Magsaysay for President." Magsaysay did not easily accept their proposal to run for president. He treated President Quirino as a close friend and a father; he considered running against him to be unacceptable.⁵⁶

The president's public announcement, days before Magsaysay's resignation, that he only needed Magsaysay to kill Huks made him to decide to quit his post and run against Quirino for president. A deeper reason for Magsaysay was his fear that his temporary victory against the communists would easily be overtaken if the Liberal Party won the elections. He knew that Quirino was incapable of controlling the Liberal Party, particularly their corruption and neglect of the poor. He did not want the Huks to regain their influence and control among the masses.⁵⁷

As soon as Magsaysay's decision came out in the news, a national movement was rallied for his campaign. Filipinos were renewed with vigor that Magsaysay would bring a new spirit of democracy and hope for their future well-being. The Magsaysay for President Movement was established in 97 percent of all towns and 79 percent of the eighteen thousand *barrios* throughout the country.⁵⁸ Prior to the elections, there were twenty casualties caused by hired thugs terrorizing Magsaysay for President Movement

⁵⁶ Ibid., 192-95.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 230.

leaders. On November 10, 1953, Magsaysay was elected president, with the greatest majority in Philippine political history.

Before Magsaysay's inauguration, he secretly met Castro Alejandrino, a Huk leader in Southern Tagalog, at Nichols Army Airfield near Manila. Magsaysay's goal was to exploit the rumored disagreement between Alejandrino and Taruc. He planned to end the communist insurgency upon his inauguration in Malacañang, but failed to convince Alejandrino to surrender. While the meeting was unsuccessful, Magsaysay earned Alejandrino's trust. Magsaysay may have learned something from the meeting that he used in succeeding years.⁵⁹

In his inaugural address, Magsaysay spoke of the victory of the people and of democracy. He opened the doors of the presidential palace to all people, especially the poor.⁶⁰ Days after his inauguration, Magsaysay talked to fifty-one farmers who were imprisoned for cutting trees on private lands in Masbate. He told authorities in Masbate that if the farmers were kept in jail, they would be encouraged to join the Huks. He also learned the farmers were ignorant of the law at the time. Magsaysay pardoned them and gave each farmer six hectares of farming land, and one *carabao* (water buffalo) through his social welfare administration head.⁶¹ To prevent similar incidents from happening, he established a complaint desk to provide immediate action to assist complaints with the underprivileged against poor government services.

⁵⁹ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 236.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 243-44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 270-71.

In the first year of his presidency, Magsaysay asked Congress to support his ten point agenda: “attainment of self-sufficiency in primary foodstuffs, acceleration of land reform, establishment of effective administrative machinery for community development, fuller utilization of natural resources in economic development, adoption of educational reforms to meet the needs of economic and scientific progress, redefinition of the incentives for private enterprise, stabilization of financial position of the country, and increased efficiency in public administration.” However, Congress did not support all of his programs, which affected the lawmakers’ interests such as the land reform.⁶²

Magsaysay’s pro-people policy centered on agrarian reform. In 1955, his administration conducted major projects to provide better opportunities to the people. The National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration established twenty-two settlement projects, and awarded farmhouses to 8,800 families. Agricultural lots were distributed to 23,578 landless applicants; 33,075 patents were approved; and 401,425 hectares of land were surveyed for distribution. Eighty-three bridges and 565 kilometers of new roads were constructed to improve transportation infrastructure and access to rural areas as well as markets.⁶³

The Agricultural Credit and Co-operative Financing Administration provided loans to members of Farmers’ Cooperative and Marketing Associations, amounting to 38.4 million pesos, which enabled them to buy farm implements, equipment, and water buffalos. There were 319 Farmers’ Cooperative and Marketing Associations with a membership of 188,000 farmers in over 7,759 villages, with capital of three million

⁶² R.H.F., “Presidential Policy in the Philippines,” 512-15.

⁶³ Ibid.

pesos. The government addressed issues of health and disease, such as malaria, with over a thousand mobile health units established over the country. Between 1954 and 1955, a total of 2,826 artesian wells were built, providing a potable source of drinking water; and about 4,676 school buildings were constructed, providing more opportunities for education.⁶⁴

On March 29, 1954, Robert Martin, Far East correspondent for *U.S. News and World Report* interviewed Magsaysay on how he broke the backbone of the Huk movement. Magsaysay's response is worth quoting at length:

I first set-up a laboratory in Camp Murphy,⁶⁵ a laboratory very much like a physician, to determine what germs made a man a Communist, or what made him a Huk, willing to leave his family and go to the mountains. I interrogated many of the Huks who had been captured or who had surrendered. Then for several months I studied the germs which attacked the minds, the brains of these people. These were the germs I found: Lack of food, bad government and exploitation by the landlords. So we approached the problem with a two-pronged attack—all-out force and all-out friendship. All-out force was the military phrase, that is, the die-hards must be killed or captured. In the all-out friendship phase, we gave lands to all the Huks who surrendered. We resettled them, gave them housing and water and lighting systems on small farms of about 25 acres each. We made their settlements very attractive with community life, schools and athletic facilities. We wanted the Huks in the mountains to find out that those who surrendered or were captured are now living in contentment. That is why about 9,500 former Huks surrendered to me, personally. They refused to surrender to anyone else. . . . Two years ago, travelers couldn't come up to Baguio after sundown. The area around Baguio then was Communist-controlled. Whereas three or four years ago there were about 40,000 fully armed and well-trained Huks, and with about two and a half million reserves, now there are only about 4,000 of them, maybe less.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Today, called Camp Emilio Aguinaldo, headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

⁶⁶ Zafra, *Philippine Economic Handbook 1960*, 10-11.

He mobilized the whole government to provide development programs in remaining Huk strongholds. He focused special attention in San Luis, Pampanga, birthplace of Luis Taruc, the center of gravity of the Hukbalahap movement. He spoke personally with all respected community leaders in San Luis and showed them the successes of the Huk rehabilitation programs. He told them about eight thousand hectares north of Mount Arayat were being cleared to be divided and distributed to the peasants. The program became known as “The President’s San Luis Project.” Assistance by Rural Reconstruction Movement, an Non-Government Organization, and the American Chamber of Commerce, led by Paul Parrette, provided mass education and self-help programs to the peasants. This program was duplicated in other parts of Pampanga. When William O. Douglas, U.S. Supreme Court Justice, saw the San Luis project, he commented that communism would be defeated in two years if Asian nations would follow Magsaysay’s example.⁶⁷ The San Luis project showed what President Magsaysay’s rural reconstruction and community development could do with proper legislative and financial support.⁶⁸

After a few months, Luis Taruc surrendered to Magsaysay. Before his surrender, he was interviewed by Benigno Aquino, then a newspaper reporter for the leading *Manila Times*, with government approval. Taruc admitted, “the people have overwhelmingly elected President Magsaysay. It is for us to accept their verdict. . . . The civil-war conditions in our country must now cease and justice must reign supreme.”⁶⁹ Two

⁶⁷ Romulo and Gray, *The Magsaysay Story*, 272-75.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 277.

months after the interview, on May 17, 1954, Taruc finally surrendered. Within the first six months of President Magsaysay’s administration, the communists lost their most respected leader.

In 1954, Economic Development Corps opened two more resettlement sites in Luzon. The success of the program proved to be an effective propaganda weapon for Magsaysay against the Huks. Despite the Huks attempt to discredit the program, their rank and file left. By 1955, approximately 1500 hundred Huks surrendered or left their group to participate in the program.⁷⁰ At the end of 1955, a thousand Huks were left in the mountains, compared to 15,000 five years earlier, as shown in figure 5.

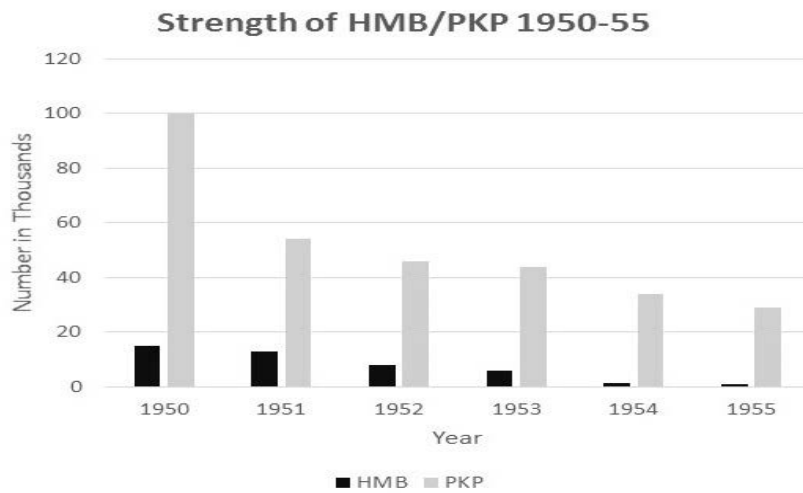


Figure 5. Strength of HMB and CPP Members from 1950 to 1955 (in thousands)

Source: Lawrence M. Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection: Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines, 1946-1955* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 142.

⁷⁰ Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection*, 91-92.

In 1957, the agriculture sector continued to grow and became the main source of national income, rising from 38 to 46 percent, as shown in table 2. However, issues of land ownership and tenancy were still prevalent throughout the country.⁷¹

Magsaysay's advocacy to preserve democracy and fight the communist insurgency gave him a clear vision of how to approach the problem. He worked hard to establish a fair and honest government with a focus on the poor, the peasants and their families. Within a short period, his strong leadership transformed the Philippine armed forces into a disciplined organization and reliable partner of the government in nation building.

Table 2. National Income by Industrial Origin from 1946 to 1957

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Agriculture	2,006	2,440	2,376	2,298	2,492	2,759	2,800	3,088	3,118	3,161	3,307	3,322
Mining	3	11	21	32	46	82	102	100	105	121	141	164
Manufacturing	492	636	656	656	748	938	952	995	1,850	1,001	1,195	1233
Construction	132	243	307	276	239	237	221	237	205	230	276	307
Trade	551	702	716	709	752	838	809	780	781	861	953	1,048
Transportation and Communication	150	191	195	193	205	228	242	242	235	250	286	309
Government	185	252	321	377	386	431	487	529	574	648	679	671
Personal Services	180	233	240	240	274	343	310	313	317	358	449	552
Recreational Services	17	22	22	22	23	26	26	27	27	28	29	30
Educational Services	b	b	115	b	b	103	106	98	91	85	77	74
Professional Services	b	b	156	b	b	161	178	182	186	209	233	259
Others	644c	833c	588	859c	981c	624	632	643	656	672	697	830
National Income at Factor Cost	4,360	5,563	5,713	5,662	6,146	6,770	6,865	7,234	7,145	7,624	8,322	8,799

Source: Urbano A. Zafra, *Philippine Economic Handbook 1960* (Laurel, MD: Westland Printing Company, 1960).

⁷¹ Zafra, *Philippine Economic Handbook 1960*, 10-11.

Magsaysay's legacy in the Philippines had been hailed throughout Asia and the world where communism was a growing threat to the democratic states. His exemplary leadership and commitment to the cause of the people were unequaled by any previous presidents. Unfortunately, with Magsaysay's sudden death in a plane crash on March 17, 1957, the future of the Philippines would soon suffer with the reemergence of the communist insurgency. The Philippines after a decade, endured renewed government corruption, military abuses, the rise of new oligarchs, and malgovernance.

The next chapter will discuss the resurgence of communist insurgency under President Marcos.

CHAPTER 4

MARCOS ADMINISTRATION

This chapter discusses the events that led to the resurgence of the communist insurgency and the government's response during Ferdinand Marcos' presidency from 1961 to 1986. In 1968, a faction of the PKP, mostly privileged student activists in Manila, adopted Mao Zedong's model of people's revolution. They reenergized the old Huk rebellion in central Luzon and further expanded it throughout the archipelago. In response, Marcos declared martial law in 1972. Under Marcos' leadership, the democratic system was replaced by a new political order, a one-man rule and a more active military run government. As a consequence, instead of eliminating the communist insurgency, government corruption and human rights abuses surged dramatically. In 1986, Marcos' grip for power was crushed by a peaceful "People Power Revolution;" Although the communists did not join in the revolution.

Background

Marcos was son of lawyer and politician from Ilocos Region. He came to prominence when he topped the national bar examination in 1939 and later secured the benefits for Filipino veterans in Northern Luzon after the Second World War. He was a three-term congressman from 1949 to 1959, became a senator in 1959, and served as Senate President from 1963 to 1965. Marcos ran for president against the Liberal Party after securing the nomination from the Nacionalista Party.⁷²

⁷² John Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era and Beyond* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 73-74.

Part of the groundwork for Marcos' seizure of power was laid in 1957 by President Carlos Garcia, when he signed the Anti-Subversion Act, which again outlawed the Communist Party. Despite Magsaysay's success in defeating the communist insurgency, his successor, Garcia, claimed that the threat of communism continued to pose danger to the country's national security. He argued that the law would prevent citizens from committing acts of subversion and conspiracy to overthrow the government.⁷³

Diosdado Macapagal replaced Garcia after winning the 1961 election on a platform of fighting political corruption. He successfully enacted the 1963 Land Reform Code, however, the program was implemented only in Central Luzon.⁷⁴ During this period, corruption and American influence in the government prevailed over national interests. When President Macapagal enforced a policy to protect the Philippine tobacco industry against U.S. importation, Congressman Harold Cooley of North Carolina threatened to cut U.S. sugar quota. The agrarian reform law was thus poorly implemented, and as a result, the Philippine economy suffered and inflation rose. Rising demand on basic commodities due to growing population caused more harm to the economy and government efficiency. The solution was to increase importation of goods, instead of stabilizing the prices, goods such as rice, fish, pork, and poultry, soared from 1961 to 1965.⁷⁵

⁷³ Robert Smith, *Philippine Freedom 1946-58* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 244-45.

⁷⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, s. v. "*Diosdado Macapagal*," accessed January 31, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Diosdado-Macapagal>.

⁷⁵ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 72-73.

In 1965, President Marcos was elected promising hope and a new beginning for Filipinos. He seemed to begin well by forming a team of technocrats that drafted a “realistic four-year development plan.” He appointed honest customs commissioners to improve tax collection and forced Constabulary and Navy officers to stop smuggling. Marcos improved relations with countries such as Japan, Malaysia, and other neighbors, which set the stage for the establishment of Asian Development Bank⁷⁶ in Manila. He implemented the 1963 Land Reform Act in Pampanga where a resurgence of Huks was prevalent. In August 1970, Commander Sumulong was arrested in Angeles, Pampanga by military authorities and in the following month, on September 16, 1970, Pedro Taruc, PKP leader, was killed while being arrested in a safe house near Clark Air Force Base.⁷⁷

In August 1966, Congress approved Marcos’ proposal to send troops in Vietnam. The US government pledged to subsidize the Philippine contingent and support development projects in the Philippines, such as road construction and community development projects through the Philippine Army engineering battalions.⁷⁸ U.S. financial aid became the main source of Marcos infrastructure projects in these communities. The Philippine army contingent, with a total of 1,350 soldiers, served in Vietnam from September 1966 to December 1969.⁷⁹ On the other hand, Marcos failed to

⁷⁶ Similar to World Bank, but focused on the promotion of social and economic development in Asia.

⁷⁷ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 73-74.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

⁷⁹ History, “Philippine Soldiers Depart South Vietnam,” December 1969, accessed March 5, 2016, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/philippine-soldiers-depart-south-vietnam>.

push his major programs when Congress disapproved thirty-seven of the forty tax measures he proposed.⁸⁰ It was in his succeeding term, that Marcos would abolished Congress in order to push his personal and reform agenda.

In 1969, Marcos was re-elected, attracting the nationalist vote for his independent foreign policy (less U.S. influence), building closer ties with Asian countries and opening relationships with communist countries. Marcos implemented more development projects such highways, farm-to-market roads, schools, airports and electrification in rural areas. During his first term, he personally distributed funds to barrio captains. Vice President Fernando Lopez and most of the Nacionalista candidates won the Senate and Congress; except one in Senate and 90 of 110 in Congress.⁸¹

Marcos presidency before martial law was considered his best. Economic reforms and effective governance were implemented. Marcos created the National and Economic and Development Authority to focus on improving the government's economic policies and programs. He reorganized government bureaucracy by dividing government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources into separate agencies; Department of Agriculture and Department of Natural Resources. Marcos also created new agencies for agrarian reform, tourism, and energy.⁸²

On January 26, 1970, after his State of the Nation Address in Congress, a crowd of twenty thousand radical students, workers, and peasants mobbed the presidential

⁸⁰ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 76-77.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸² Gerardo P. Sicat, "The Economic Legacy of Marcos," UP School of Economics, November 2011, accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.econ.upd.edu.ph/dp/index.php/dp/article/view/679/144>.

convoy throwing with rocks and bottles. They were protesting against government's oppression and Marcos' pro-U.S. policy. The police violently dispersed the protesters after four hours. This event marked the beginning of what became known as "the First Quarter Storm." After four days, two groups of protesters marched towards Malacañang Palace. Using a commandeered fire truck, they rammed the main gate and entered the palace. They burned automobiles and cheered, but police and military shot six and wounded several demonstrators while they were trying to keep them out of the palace. The next day, the same demonstrators attacked the U.S. Embassy, throwing Molotov cocktails causing minor damage. In the succeeding days, a series of violent protests took place against visible symbols of the US presence in Manila such as the Hilton Hotel and other establishments.⁸³ These events were later attributed to the communist resurgence with their growing influence among radical students and youth in Manila.

Establishment of PKP Youth Department

Jose Maria Sison, a son of a rich family in Ilocos Sur, was a teaching assistant in English Literature at the University of the Philippines when he founded the Student Cultural Association in the Philippines in 1959. Student Cultural Association in the Philippines became known among nationalists after it successfully protested against a Congressional investigation conducted by the Committee on Anti-Filipino Activities of communist infiltration in the University of the Philippines in 1961. Then, Sison formed a

⁸³ Gregg Jones, *Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerrilla Movement* (London: West View Press, 1989), 39.

secret Marxist study group within Student Cultural Association in the Philippines among his loyalists.⁸⁴

In 1963, the PKP invited Sison to join, and appointed him as head of their youth department. With PKP leaders' mandate, Sison started to build alliances with other radical student leaders at different universities, peasants groups and militant trade unions in Manila. On November 30, 1964, Sison formally launched a clandestine organization called *Kabataan Makabayan*⁸⁵ (KM) for the purpose of strengthening alliances through nationalism with an anti-imperialism vision. This organization merged the urban protest movement with agrarian issues with the *Malayang Samahan ng Magsasaka*,⁸⁶ PKP's Luzon based farmers association. KM members were sent on field trips in nearby provinces of Manila to expose them to the peasants' living conditions and their struggles living in poverty.⁸⁷

Aside from the existing socio-political and economic conditions in the country, Sison exploited two anti-American sentiments with his propaganda efforts. First, two shooting incidents occurred, which involved American servicemen in Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Base. On November 25, 1964, a boy collecting scrap items at Clark was shot and killed by an off-duty U.S. Soldier. Two weeks later, a Filipino fisherman riding on his small boat was also shot and killed by U.S. Navy sentries inside

⁸⁴ William Chapman, *Inside the Philippine Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987), 71.

⁸⁵ English translation, "Nationalist Youth."

⁸⁶ English translation, "Democratic Union of Peasants."

⁸⁷ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 20-23.

the territorial waters of the base. Second, the Philippines participated in the Vietnam War after U.S. President Johnson called for participation by Asian allies. At least two thousand Filipino troops were sent for civic action duty in South Vietnam. In October 24, 1966, the Manila Summit, a meeting between Johnson and other Asian leaders about the Vietnam War, was stormed by more than ten thousand student and labor protesters. Police dispersed them, which resulted in injuries and arrests of some of the protesters, including Sison.⁸⁸

Another important international event that helped to shape the resurgence of the communist insurgency was the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966 to 1976). Other Asian countries, such as Thailand and Indonesia, were also facing student activism brought about by the success of Mao's peasant revolution. As early as 1965, student activists visited China to learn about the "socialist experiment." At the University of the Philippines, *The Philippine Collegian*, the student paper, retyped and mimeographed limited copies of the *Peking Review* on Mao's teachings. This became a widely read among students and other intellectuals. Meanwhile, the KM started to distribute copies of *Mao's Little Red Book* in rural areas reached by the group. This continuous interaction between radical students and peasants proved a catalyst for the resurgence of PKP.⁸⁹

In 1967, Sison's senior cadres translated four volumes of Mao's collections into Tagalog.⁹⁰ Monico Atienza, one of the senior cadres, was convinced that "there is a possibility of victory for a weak group against a more powerful group." They also learned

⁸⁸ Ibid., 20-23.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 23-24.

⁹⁰ Philippine national language.

the Maoist doctrine of protraction—that a revolution would achieve victory through patience, discipline and sacrifice. Senior leaders of PKP, however became cautious of Sison’s growing influence among student activists, workers, and peasants. They were unhappy about Sison’s use of Marxist and Maoist ideas in his dialogue with them.⁹¹

In the early part of 1967, PKP leaders agreed with Sison’s proposal about the communist party’s rectification of the Huk rebellion. However, Sison seriously criticized the leadership’s failure under Jesus Lava, PKP Chairman, in the rectification document. In April 1967, in a special session of PKP executive committee expelled Sison and his followers from the party for their adventurism and establishing a Maoist cult in KM.⁹²

Establishment of a PKP Faction under Jose Maria Sison

Sison fought against his dismissal from the PKP. The rivalry between Sison and Lava group became the headline in UP news. Other youth organizations associated with the PKP, such as the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN), and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation were informed about Sison’s dismissal from PKP. In retaliation, Sison formed a group from KM, called *Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan*.⁹³ Sison’s PKP faction intensified recruitment and increased political education of its new members. By 1968, Sison had gained support for a party rectification among his followers. They wanted the Lava faction to face the consequences of their action and repay the damages to the organization. Meanwhile, Rodolfo Salas, Sison’s

⁹¹ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 24-25.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ English translation, “Democratic Youth Association.”

leader in Central Luzon, started to contact Huk leaders to form an alliance with them.⁹⁴

Sison needed an army that would achieve his goals and ambitions, one to protect his followers from PKP retaliation.

In September 1968, Sison wrote a draft constitution for the new communist party and a concept of how to launch the armed revolution. In addition, Sison revised the document on their rectification required to consolidate his control of the youth organizations they established. By the end of 1968, Rodolfo Salas suggested to Sison that Bernabe Buscayno, known under his nom de guerre Commander Dante, a Huk leader in Tarlac, was a potential partner for their armed revolution.⁹⁵

Sison planned to launch a new PKP on the seventy-fifth birthday of Mao, but it was postponed for a week due to a leak about the plan. On January 2, 1969, Sison, together with thirteen of his most trusted cadre members met at Pantranco Bus Terminal in Quezon City. They left Manila in three groups travelling to Mangatarem, Pangasinan, at an isolated farm of Arthur Garcia's brother-in-law. Garcia was one of Sison's trusted cadre. Sison purposely selected the place because it was the boundary between Central Luzon, the focal point of agrarian problems and Cordillera Mountains, the future base of the Maoist army.⁹⁶

In their first meeting, Sison read to them the documents he prepared, "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," and the new communist party constitution.⁹⁷ The next day,

⁹⁴ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 25-26.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

they elected new officers, all of whom became CPP Central Committee members with Jose Luneta *in absentia* since he was in China, as shown in table 3.⁹⁸ Sison adjourned the congress after the election and they all headed back to Manila. The Sison faction became the CPP-Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought, with their official foundation on Mao's birthday, December 26, 1968.

Table 3. CPP Founding Central Committee Members

Name	Remarks
1) Jose Maria Sison	elected Chairman during the founding congress, captured in 1977
2) Nilo Tayag	elected Secretary General during the founding congress and captured in 1970
3) Leoncio Co	captured in 1970
4) Arthur Garcia	killed by one of his men in a dispute in 1970
5) Ibarra Tubianosa	broke with the movement after the Plaza Miranda Bombing in 1971 while heading a secret CPP delegation to China
6) Manuel Collantes	captured in 1972, became a military intelligence officer, and was assassinated by the NPA at University of Santo Tomas in 1974
7) Art Pangilinan	surrendered around 1973 after a dispute with another ranking Party official
8) Ray Casipe	surrendered after a 1975 Central Committee plenum
9) Herminigildo Garcia	captured in 1974
10) Monico Atienza	captured in 1974
11) Fernando Tayag	captured in 1974
12) Reuben Guevarra	captured in 1981

Source: Created by author.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 315.

Formation of the New People's Army or
Bagong Hukbong Bayan

After the establishment of the PKP faction, the members of the Central Committee continued working above ground as they consolidated and expanded the *Kabataang Makabayan*. In January 1969, Jose Yap, congressman of Tarlac and a protégé of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., talked to Sison about a meeting with Bernabe Buscayno, known by his nom de guerre Commander Dante. Commander Dante, a son of Hukbalahap guerrilla, grew up and lived in Hacienda Luisita owned by Cojuangco Family in 1957. The hacienda was a 15,000 acre sugar plantation which employed thousands of peasants in Central Tarlac.⁹⁹ Corazon Aquino, wife of Benigno Aquino, was the daughter of a prominent Cojuangco businessman and politician in Tarlac and became the successor of President Marcos.

Commander Dante was a popular leader under Commander Sumulong in southern Tarlac. Huk remnants under his command survived by collecting food and money from rice farmers and sugar plantation owners. In the early 1960s, Dante's popularity and strong leadership among peasants, caused him to develop a friendship with Benigno Aquino Jr., who at the time was the governor of Tarlac. By the late 1960s, twenty five murders were attributed to Dante by authorities. Unknown to many, Dante had studied Joseph Stalin's books and he got a copy of Mao's *Little Red Book* from a Tarlac politician who had visited China. After reading from Mao's book, Dante felt animosity to Commander Sumulong's growing wealth from protecting illegal rackets and selling

⁹⁹ Ibid., 26-27.

smuggled goods in Angeles. On the other hand, Dante began to admire the works of KM activists and dreamed of a new agrarian revolution in Central Luzon.¹⁰⁰

Before the end of January 1969, Sison and Dante met in *barrio*¹⁰¹ Santa Rita, Capas, Tarlac. Dante chose the venue because it was safe; first it was his birthplace and the birthplace of one of his subordinate commanders, Juanito Rivera. In the meeting, Dante heard about Sison's discontent with Lava and Sumulong's leadership of PKP and Huk remnants. The next day, they agreed to build their new army using Mao's teachings.¹⁰²

In March 1969, Sison and other members of the Central Committee joined Commander Dante to supervise the expansion in Tarlac. On March 29, 1969, Sison administered the oath of allegiance of Dante and eight of his lieutenants to the new communist party and the NPA in Santa Rita, Capas. The new army Sison envisioned was based on a Chinese conventional army model composed of regular mobile forces such as corps and divisions, supplemented by guerrilla units, militia and self-defense units, and armed city partisans.¹⁰³

The NPA's strategy was to build a main army on Luzon while establishing guerrilla units on outlying islands to disperse security forces throughout the archipelago. The NPA would carry out an agrarian revolution together with local party organizing committees. A comprehensive land reform program would redistribute land to all

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁰¹ Today, called *barangay*.

¹⁰² Jones, *Red Revolution*, 29-30.

¹⁰³ Commonly called as Special Partisan Unit (SPARU).

peasants for free and establish a cooperative association.¹⁰⁴ Their tactics were based on Mao's dictum, "Retreat when the enemy advances, harass the enemy when it is at rest, and advance when the enemy retreats."¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the NPA's discipline was strictly in line with Mao's three main rules of discipline and the eight points of attention.¹⁰⁶ In carrying out strict discipline in the NPA, Commander Melody, one of the nine NPA core leaders, deserted when the NPA sentenced him to death for violating the code by pocketing contributions from local politicians and having illicit affairs with two women.¹⁰⁷

Immediately after the NPA's inauguration, Dante and a few CPP members translated the founding documents from English to Tagalog. In May 1969, Sison included Dante and eight of his leaders inducted earlier as part of the Central Committee, while Dante became part of the five-member Executive Committee that ran day-to-day activities of the CPP and NPA. For two days, Sison discussed opening new fronts in the mountainous provinces of Zambales and Bataan, and along the east coast of the Sierra Madre Mountains of Isabela province.¹⁰⁸

On June 9, 1969, a military patrol in Santa Rita discovered hidden stacks of CPP documents which unmasked the new armed revolution waged by Sison and the NPA. In

¹⁰⁴ National Democratic Front, *People's War in the Philippines* (Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino (KDP) or Union of Democratic Filipinos, 1974), 38-44.

¹⁰⁵ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 31-34.

¹⁰⁶ National Democratic Front, *People's War in the Philippines*, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 32-34.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

response, the government sent more troops to look for the rebels. In the following weeks, the NPA moved from place to place evading military operations that were supported by helicopters and armored vehicles. The first engagement between the government and NPA occurred in late September 1969 at *Barrio* Baluarte, Mabalacat, Pampanga. This encounter resulted to the death of four of their men: a KM activist from U.S. Tobacco Company union, an NPA leader and two peasant fighters.¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, organizing efforts in Isabela led by Layug became successful. He contacted former Huk families who benefited the government resettlement program under President Magsaysay. After a few months, NPA support expanded into the towns of Jones and Cauayan.¹¹⁰ Arthur Garcia decided to join Dante in order to help expand the revolution in Tarlac despite military operations, while Sison and other party members moved out. Garcia was a KM recruit in Lyceum of the Philippine University and later dropped out of school to organize the U.S. Tobacco Company union. He was killed, in the late of 1969, by a mentally unstable recruit that opened fire on the group while they were taking a bath.

In February 1970, Dante decided to transfer their unit in Tarlac to Isabela front after suffering two successive losses: Dante's younger brother was killed while leading an ambush of two jeeploads of paramilitary forces in a *barrio* near Santa Rita and Leoncio Co, CPP Central Committee member was arrested after a meeting with Dante. In Isabela, Dante and his group focused on educating and organizing the peasants relying entirely on Mao's step-by-step guidance in "guerrilla warfare and political organizing."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Sison dreamed of establishing a base similar to the one Mao used in Shensi province to build his army in the Sierra Madre mountains.¹¹¹

On December 29, 1970, Lieutenant Victor Corpus, a Philippine Military Academy instructor, defected to the NPA and led them on a raid of the Philippine Military Academy Armory. He joined the NPA main group in Isabela province (part of Sierra Madre) where he helped them build and train a force, and fought with them against what he saw as an unjust government. Corpus became a CPP leader, but surrendered to his Philippine Military Academy classmate in 1976, just before he was about to assume leadership of an NPA group in Mindanao.¹¹²

Martial Law: Strategy to Fight the Communist Resurgence

Marcos undeniably wanted to stay in power, he argued with his close advisers that the country needed drastic solutions to institute reforms. In the succeeding months, in-line with Marcos' intent, Blas Ople, Adrian Cristobal, Juan Ponce Enrile and others studied successful Asian authoritarian regimes. Enrile, Secretary of National Defense, designed in detail the implementation of martial law.¹¹³ On August 21, 1971, a Liberal Party proclamation of candidates at Manila's Plaza Miranda was sabotage by three trusted NPA members. This was secretly planned by Jose Maria Sison in order to create conditions that would intensify the differences between the Liberal Party and

¹¹¹ Ibid., 38.

¹¹² Victor Corpus, *Silent War* (Quezon City: VNC Enterprises, 1989), 11.

¹¹³ William Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 11 (November 1986): 1139, accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2644313>.

Nacionalista Party. Sison blamed the incident on Marcos for the incident, while Marcos blame the CPP. In effect, recruitment went up for the communist.¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, the CPP secret mission in China was on track since they arrived in July 1971. In late 1971 or early 1972, China approved the CPP arms request with the condition that CPP transport the arms. The shipment contained 1,200 U.S. designed M14 rifles, bazookas, mortars, communication equipment and medical kits. By end of June 1972, a crew of six activists led by Edwin Alcid, left the coast of China in an old 91-ton fishing trawler bought in Japan. On July 4, with the crews' limited knowledge, the boat was stuck at the beach of Digoyo Point. The rebels unloaded some of the rifles and ammunition, but the majority of the shipment was recovered by government forces.¹¹⁵ In the following days, Marcos announced the discovery of a boat containing firearms and ammunitions from a foreign country.

Opposition Liberal Party members led by Senator Benigno Aquino challenged Marcos announcement and disclosed that Marcos was planning to declare a martial law in the days to come. On the eve of September 20, 1972, Defense Secretary Enrile's car was ambushed, but he was unhurt. Later, after the Marcos era, he admitted that it was staged. The following day, President Marcos declared martial law.¹¹⁶

Marcos' first targets were political and social elites conspiring with the Maoist and Muslim terrorists. After three days, 400 known subversives were detained and after another thirty-six days, 3,738 persons were under military arrest; before the end of

¹¹⁴ Corpus, *Silent War*, 16.

¹¹⁵ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 72-76.

¹¹⁶ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 83-84.

October, 210 were left in military detention accused of serious crimes against the State. Senator Aquino was the most prominent political figure with charges of disclosing the administration's defense plans and close association with communist rebels.¹¹⁷ As a result, even moderate student activists soon went to join the CPP and NPA.

Aside from the increasing crime and lawlessness such as kidnapping, robbery, smuggling and drugs, politicians were maintaining private armies to terrorize their constituents. Marcos promised to use all his power to solve the problems of insurgency, lawlessness and corruption.¹¹⁸ Marcos launched economic and social reforms to improve the conditions of the poor. He improved laws on taxation and investment to attract foreign investments and improve importation. He obtained a high rating from the World Bank to facilitate the government's capacity get more loans. Marcos' world-class technocrats; Alejandro Melchor, Vicente Paterno, and Cesar Pirata implemented these changes. The Chinese minority was given greater access to formal citizenship and allowed to engage in business, which had been limited to them.¹¹⁹

Before the end of 1972, Marcos formally named the "Citizen Assemblies" into which all barrio residents fifteen or older were included as the voting district for a national referendum. In January 15, 1973, a national referendum occurred in favor of continuation of martial law under Marcos, along with the adoption of a new Constitution. On July 27, 1973, another referendum took place with the same overwhelming approval

¹¹⁷ Hartzell Spence, *Marcos of the Philippines: A Biography* (Wenatchee, WA: The World Publishing Co., 1979), 340-42.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," 1140-41.

at 96 percent. The opposition challenged Marcos' rule and the application of the "New Society" to the Supreme Court. On March 31, 1973, the Supreme Court voted eight to two, upholding the constitutionality of these ten constitutional questions specifically the legality of the declaration of martial law and Marcos authority to issue decrees and proclamations.¹²⁰

On September 19, 1973, Marcos increased the role of barangay captains and zone chairmen in government as "persons in authority and agents of persons in authority" as mentioned in existing laws. Marcos continued to empower them, in June 1977, he issued Decree 1160, giving barangay captains authority to enforce and arrest pollution and environmental law violators.¹²¹

NDF and CPP United Front Building

In April 1973, the CPP formed the National United Front (NDF) to organize urban areas to support the armed rebellion in the countryside. Horacio Morales, a Marcos cabinet official and an awardee of the country's "Ten Outstanding Young Men," joined the NDF in 1977. After three years, Morales led the NDF in establishing strong alliances with the academe, business sector, middle class and, potentially, members of the upper class.¹²²

In December 1975, when factory workers of a wine distillery went on strike against management's low salary and unfair practices, a group of students, nuns and

¹²⁰ Spence, *Marcos of the Philippines*, 347-48.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 350.

¹²² Jones, *Red Revolution*, 145-147.

priests joined them. This became the first strike under martial law. In the following months, church-based human rights organizations sponsored indoor rallies in school and publication against martial law.¹²³

In the summer of 1977, Marcos approved the proposal for an increase in college tuition fees. In response, more than 200,000 students in Metropolitan Manila boycotted their classes. Marcos and the CPP were surprised by the situation. The CPP organized the *Alyansa Laban sa Pagtaas ng Tuition Fee* (Alliance against Tuition Fee Increases or ALYANSA) to exploit growing student unrest against tuition fee increases. Urban resistance became more intense with the growing participation of workers, urban poor and students during rallies. Marcos was forced to reverse his directive, which became the first victory of student activism under martial law. On the fifth anniversary of martial law, more than twenty thousand people protested, but they were dispersed by security forces.¹²⁴

After the Alliance against Tuition Fee Increases, the National League of Filipino Students (later the N was dropped) was formed on September 11, 1977. It became the CPP legal entry point for cadres to penetrate campus newspapers and form student parties to run for student council elections. The College Editor's Guild of the Philippines, for example was penetrated by the League of Filipino Students.

Centralized leadership and decentralized operations gave regional CPP organizations the ability to strategize based on appropriate local conditions. But when the

¹²³ Meredith Weiss and Edward Aspinall, *Student Activism in Asia: Between Protest and Powerlessness* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 266-67.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 267-68.

Manila Regional (MR) Committee, CPP regional committee in the seat of government, formed an electoral coalition with social democrats, liberal democrats, bourgeois reformists and anti-Marcos reactionaries, the Central Committee accused them of deviating from the party's priority. MR's main objective should be the creation of a guerrilla army and an urban underground network. The urban network was to support the NPA with personnel and materiel, and to use protests and mobilizations to help relieve military pressures against the NPA. As a consequence, they replaced them with their own loyalists.¹²⁵ Later, MR Committee members resentful with the Central Committee's decision caused them to split from Sison and form their own rejectionist faction.

Prior to this, the CPP relied heavily on student activists as a source of cadres in the countryside and the urban underground. Capable peasant and workers started to assume senior and middle-level positions in the organizations. In the early 1980s, the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* or May First Movement and the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* or Peasant Movement of the Philippines were formed. *Kabataan para sa Demokrasya at Nasyonalismo* (or KADENA—Youth for Democracy and Nationalism) became more active when it was supervised by the CPP National Youth and Students Department.¹²⁶ The intense protests of radical students and workers had a direct impact on the increasing amount of support to the CPP and NPA.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 271-72.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 273-74.

CHDF and Disintegration of the AFP

During President Marcos' first term, he was also the Secretary of Defense for thirteen months. He secured funding for organizing ten engineering battalions when he made his first state visit in the United States in 1966. In return, Marcos agreed to send a military civic contingent group to Vietnam. According to a U.S. Government investigation, the funds allocated to each engineering battalion amounted to at least seven million dollars from 1967 to 1968 and about thirty-nine million dollars for the Philippine contingent tour in Vietnam were never fully accounted for because the funds were appropriated "to conceal the receipt of these payments from the Philippine public in its national defense budget."¹²⁷

Before martial law, the armed forces tried to be apolitical and maintained a level of professionalism. Alone among the senior officers, General Rafael Ileta opposed martial law. As a result, he was given a diplomatic post abroad.¹²⁸

From a strength of 51,500 in 1965, the armed forces increased to about 165,000 active personnel and 65,000 paramilitary forces in 1986, shown in table 4.¹²⁹ Marcos gave more incentives to the military such as promotion, pay increases, outside and post-retirement benefits and civilian positions in government corporations. Military commanders had more authority than mayors and governors in the provinces with the creation of military tribunals as stated in General Order (GO) No. 8, and GO No. 12. This judicial authority empowered the military to try and decide cases of military personnel

¹²⁷ Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 123.

¹²⁸ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 136-37.

¹²⁹ Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 108-09.

including civilians involved in crimes against national security and other crimes against public order.¹³⁰

Table 4. Armed Forces of the Philippines Active and CHDF Personnel 1965 to 1987

UNITS	1965	1972	1975	1978	1980	1987
Philippine Army	25,000	16,000	39,000	63,000	70,000	62,000
Philippine Navy	4,000	6,000	14,000	20,000	26,000	26,000
*Marines			(3,500)	(7,000)	(7,000)	(9,500)
Coast Guard						2,000
Philippine Air Force	7,000	9,000	14,000	16,000	16,800	17,000
Philippine Constabulary (PC)	15,500	23,000	34,900	40,000	43,500	50,000
*Local Home Defense (LHD)			(25,500)	(25,000)	35,000	65,000

Source: Richard Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines* (Durnham, NC: Yale University Press, 1989), 108-09.

In the late of 1960s, Marcos formed the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) as a local counterinsurgency forces. When martial law was declared, CHDF was expanded to the formation of citizen's army and became Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces. The armed forces began issuing arms to Christians local defense units in Mindanao where Muslim insurgency started to grow. In 1976, the CHDF were receiving a monthly salary of 200 pesos, an annual clothing allowance of 200 pesos, and a 9000 peso insurance policy. These forces were under the command and control of the PC, but in practice they were under army units or local politicians. Other members of the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces were former rebels, bodyguards of politicians, local security agencies and volunteers, which were organized as *barrio* or *barangay* defense. For the NPA, they become easy targets, which they attacked to capture military

¹³⁰ Ibid., 124-25.

supplies. Plantation owners and politicians used Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces to terrorize the people whereas the NPA exploited the Integrated Civilian Home Defense Forces as an effective recruitment propaganda.¹³¹ These paramilitary groups became a source of corruption and abuses used by military officers.¹³²

More so, the armed forces were primarily focused on the security of Marcos family and the regime. Marcos assigned his loyalists at the Metropolitan Command (METROCOM) of the Philippine Constabulary, the 2nd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, and the Presidential Security Command (PSC). These units were directly assigned to protect Marcos.¹³³

Professionalism in the military deteriorated giving more favor to *Ilocano*¹³⁴ officers and enlisted personnel. Another rivalry rose between ROTC and Philippine Military Academy officers where Marcos was a former ROTC officer. Favoritism, personal loyalty and family connections became the basis for promotion and assignments.¹³⁵ General Victor Natividad, METROCOM Commander and General Roland Pattugalan, 2nd Infantry Division Commander and a distant relative of Marcos, were former members of the PSC.¹³⁶ In 1981, Marcos appointed General Favian Ver, his

¹³¹ Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 120-21.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 126.

¹³³ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 136-37.

¹³⁴ Native from Ilocos Region, home region of President Marcos.

¹³⁵ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 136-37.

¹³⁶ Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 119.

most trusted general, as Chief of Staff and at the same Director of the National Intelligence and Security Authority.¹³⁷

In August 8, 1975, the Integrated National Police was established as the nucleus of the Philippine Constabulary. The main goal was to improve the control and management of police stations in different regions where police lacked the training and were poorly equipped to perform combat operations against communist rebels.¹³⁸ Mayors were unsupportive of the program since they lost control of the local police. While the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act of 1974, which prohibited assistance to police forces, the PC, as a branch of the AFP, could still receive U.S. Military Aid.¹³⁹

When martial law was lifted, the armed forces began implementing security and development programs in line with new executive orders to counter the growing communist insurgency. On September 10, 1981, the peace and order council (POC) was created pursuant to Executive Order No. 727.¹⁴⁰ The POC became the focal point for the effective coordination of the activities and functions of the criminal justice system. On December 3, 1982, Marcos issued EO No. 852 to empower the National Security Council in order to provide more effective coordination between national development agencies and the AFP. Despite these programs implemented, Marcos and the AFP had faced a

¹³⁷ Civilian intelligence agency equivalent to CIA.

¹³⁸ Venancio Duque, "The Integrated National Police in Counterinsurgency Operations: The Great Difference" (Master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1984), 83-85.

¹³⁹ Kessler, *Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines*, 121-22.

¹⁴⁰ Artemio Arugay, "Security and Development: An Integrated Approach to Counterinsurgency in Region 02" (Master's thesis, Saint Paul University, 1986), 256.

difficulty in regaining public support and trust. Civil and military relations were still suffering brought about by martial law.

Decline of Marcos

In January 1981, Marcos, facing enormous challenges, lifted martial law. The country was facing a financial crisis, an economic crisis, a new election, military unrest, and his deteriorating health. Philippine exports on coconut, sugar and copper fell to 42 percent. Manufacturing firms closely associated with Marcos suffered, and the government provided an emergency five billion peso bailout.¹⁴¹

In June 1981, Marcos scheduled a presidential election, but gave the opposition only twenty eight days to prepare. This election was exploited by the communists to obtain the support of major opposition groups to boycott it. The National Democratic Front (NDF), a CPP front group organized after martial law, continued to consolidate support from students, human rights groups. Meanwhile, the NPA continued to expand its organization throughout the country, which was previously limited to four provinces in Luzon.¹⁴²

Between 1981 and 1982, the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, mainly junior officers of the AFP, was organized to get the attention of the president to restore professionalism and public respect for soldiers. In the succeeding years, Reform the Armed Forces Movement played a crucial role in the Edsa Revolution.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," 1151.

¹⁴² Ibid., 1152.

¹⁴³ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 138-39.

On August 21, 1983, Benigno Aquino Jr., the main presidential candidate, was assassinated at the Manila International Airport. This event changed the political climate in the following days until Marcos was removed from office. Filipinos, from different social standing, were united in the streets to call for justice and democracy. The Catholic Church gave its unofficial opposition to Marcos' rule. Meanwhile, the American government started to pressure Marcos to uphold democratic process and to make the National Assembly elections "free, fair, and honest." The result of the 1984 election gave the opposition fifty-nine seats while 122 went to Marcos' KBL Party. These results were decried by foreign observers and the opposition.¹⁴⁴

Conditions in the country continued to deteriorate, with the decline of Philippine economy, rapid growth of the communist insurgency, and an increased pressure from the American government, finally forced Marcos to call a "snap" elections for February 7, 1986. Cory Aquino, wife of murdered Benigno Aquino, united the opposition and ran against Marcos.¹⁴⁵ Meanwhile, CPP Executive Committee and *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan*¹⁴⁶ (BAYAN) National Council, an NDF allied organizations, voted to boycott the elections.¹⁴⁷ Their decision to boycott the elections haunted them following the success of the Cory Aquino.

Marcos was declared winner by the Commission on Elections, but the National Citizen's Movement for Free Elections, an election watchdog composed of 400,000

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 139-40.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 142-43.

¹⁴⁶ In English, New Democratic Alliance.

¹⁴⁷ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 157-58.

volunteers, claimed Aquino won the election. For three days, February 23 to 25, the street of EDSA were flooded about a million Filipinos. Marcos attempted to use military forces to disrupt the crowd, but the military joined the protest. Secretary of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos abandoned Marcos and joined the people in EDSA.¹⁴⁸

Marcos' authoritarian leadership had not prevented the communist from expanding. Instead, the communists grew and established a strong influence in different sectors. The AFP troop strength was doubled and paramilitary forces were organized to fight the growing insurgency throughout the country. However, there was no clear strategy to defeat the insurgents. Police and military forces became corrupt and abused their power after Marcos gave more authority to them even in running the government. Discipline and professionalism was a misnomer to the AFP.

Marcos' political and economic reforms became successful only in the first five years of martial law. A new group of elite and cronies to Marcos became powerful and corrupt. When Marcos lifted martial law, the Philippine economy was at its worst. Human rights violations committed by security forces continued to increase. At the end of Marcos' term, the CPP—NPA had about 25,000 fighters with a strong influence and popular support throughout the country.

The next chapter will discuss Ramos' peace initiatives and economic reforms. The success of the AFP's internal security operations (ISO) against the communist insurgency was short-lived after the Philippine National Police (PNP) took over the operations from the AFP.

¹⁴⁸ Bresnan, *Crisis in the Philippines*, 142-44.

CHAPTER 5

RAMOS ADMINISTRATION

This chapter examines the leadership of Fidel Ramos in promoting reconciliation with the different rebel groups. He introduced major economic reforms that helped the country in alleviating poverty and providing more opportunities to the people. Before he became president, Ramos helped the Aquino government to restore professionalism and discipline in the AFP. As president, Ramos granted amnesty to the rebels and re-opened negotiations with the communist insurgents. Unlike his predecessors, he achieved substantial agreements, such as the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Background

Fidel Ramos was a son of a politician from the province of Pangasinan. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He joined the Philippine Army and served in Korea and Vietnam. Ramos became the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary and Deputy Chief of Staff of the AFP during the Marcos regime. He joined the “People Power Revolution” that toppled Marcos, which gave Ramos key positions in the Aquino administration. He served as the Chief of Staff of the AFP from 1986 to 1988 and Secretary of National Defense from 1988 to 1991.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, “Fidel Ramos,” accessed April 29, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Fidel-Ramos>.

Ramos and other members of the cabinet were key players under Aquino's reforms due to her relative political inexperience. Aquino restored democracy and weakened different insurgent groups in the country. Among them were the passage of the 1987 Constitution, the separation of an independent PNP from the AFP, and the passage of the 1991 Local Government Code of the Philippines. Aquino also attempted to carry out peace talks with the communists, but failed to do so during her first year in office.

The 1987 Constitution paved a way for the restoration of a non-martial law constitutional system by restoring the executive branch with a president and vice-president, a bicameral legislature with the Senate and Congress, and an independent judiciary led by the Supreme Court. In Congress, additional representatives were given seats through a party-list system. The party-list system was later used by the communist insurgents in 2001 elections to infiltrate government bureaucracy by representing a group of laborers, peasants, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and so on. In addition, the Constitution established more restrictions on the president's ability to declare martial law by establishing greater checks and balances.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, the restoration of the Senate and Congress led to the revival of traditional politicians, even those connected with Marcos. In the 1987 elections, only thirty-one of 200 seats in Congress were not filled by traditional political families; while a few elected Senators came from the old political families.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 233-34.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 235-36.

During Aquino's presidency, the 1991 Local Government Code expanded the role of local and provincial governments in governance, which were previously exercised by the national government. Local governments were allotted a greater share from national revenue allotments and role in governance.¹⁵² This law was fully implemented during Ramos' presidency.

Aquino's security reform was to separate the police power from the military, which was gravely abused during the martial law. On December 13, 1990, the PNP was created by law as stated in the Department of Interior and Local Government Act of 1990. The PNP was also now under the supervision of the Department of Interior and Local Government. A significant section of the law was the turn-over of ISO¹⁵³ responsibility from the AFP to the PNP, which would take effect after two years. However, the president can only extend this for a maximum of only twenty-four months.¹⁵⁴

Aquino pursued reconciliation with the communist insurgents. To demonstrate sincerity, the government released all political prisoners including Jose Maria Sison and Bernabe Buscayno, the top two CPP jailed leaders. While the military did not back Aquino's peace effort solidly, U.S. defense and CIA officials encouraged the AFP opposition to conduct a cease-fire with the communist rebels. On September 29, 1986, Rodolfo Salas, CPP Chairman, was arrested at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila.

¹⁵² Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 237-40.

¹⁵³ ISO are security operations against the Communist and Muslim rebels.

¹⁵⁴ The LawPhil Project, "RA 6975," accessed March 14, 2016, http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1990/ra_6975_1990.html.

In response, the National democratic Front panel announced that it would back out from negotiations unless Salas was released. The arrest challenged President Aquino to determine whether to favor the demand of the NDF panel's demand or defuse the military's perception of communist influence on her leadership.¹⁵⁵

On January 22, 1987, the government and NDF panels suspended negotiations indefinitely, blaming each other for death threats. On the same day, eighteen leftist farmers, students, and workers were killed and several wounded when they breached the picket line in Mendiola while demanding land reform.¹⁵⁶ Aquino shifted from peace efforts to military operations while reforming the AFP.

The Special Operations Team Concept

As early as 1983, three junior officers, Captain Alex Cogmon, Captain Edgardo Gurrea, and Major Nestor Radaza, assigned to the 4th Infantry Division in Mindanao, developed the Special Operations Team (SOT) concept. This concept was not extensively used until Brigadier General Mariano Adalem assumed command of the 4th Infantry Division in 1986. Under General Adalem, the division implemented the program throughout northeastern Mindanao. Each Infantry Battalion organized a platoon of SOT from each company. In December 1987, Adalem presented the SOT concept to President Aquino. In response, she directed an Army wide implementation. In April 1988, Adalem

¹⁵⁵ Jones, *Red Revolution*, 167-68.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

was promoted to Commanding General of the Philippine Army, where the SOT program became the Army's priority.¹⁵⁷

The SOT was designed to counter the CPP—NPA—NDF propaganda and recruitment activities in the barangay. According to SOT developers, counter-organizing TTPs were based on Mao's "four together," which included to sleep, work, study, and eat with the residents. Their objective was to identify and neutralize CPP political structure in the barangay through dialogue and *pulong-pulong* or forums. During *pulong-pulong*, the SOT's propagandists explained the evils of communism and injustices committed by NPA against the people and their comrades through a story of outrages from former rebels.¹⁵⁸

Once the barangay was cleared of CPP—NPA influence, an unarmed *Bantay Bayan*¹⁵⁹ group was organized as an intelligence net to report CPP re-infiltration. In addition, the team organized a Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit¹⁶⁰ to protect the residents against NPA retaliation or recovery efforts.¹⁶¹ The purpose of the Civilian

¹⁵⁷ Eric Guyot, "Our Answer to the NPA: The Philippine Army's Special Operations Teams," March 1989, accessed March 12, 2015, <http://www.icwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ERG-23.pdf>, 3-5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ In English, village watch.

¹⁶⁰ The authority on the creation of CAFGU was based on Executive Order No. 264 providing for the "Citizen Armed Force" signed on July 1987 in reference to Article 16, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution.

¹⁶¹ Gemma B. Bagayaua, "Fast Facts About the CAFGU and Paramilitary Forces," *ABS-CBN News*, December 28, 2008, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/12/28/08/fast-facts-about-cafgu-and-paramilitary-forces>.

Armed Force Geographical Unit was similar to the CHDF, except that volunteers underwent basic military training and each member became an Army reservist. Another feature was that a Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit was led by a cadre of one officer and eleven enlisted personnel.¹⁶² The final phase of the SOT program was providing economic development, which was provided by civilian government agencies.¹⁶³

The reinstatement of Victor Corpus in 1986, an Army Lieutenant who defected to communists in 1970, provided the government and military with a new approach to fight the communist insurgency. Victor Corpus argued that the CPP—NPA strategy of people’s protracted war could be defeated by a “war of quick decision.” He said that the AFP should strategically defeat the CPP—NPA in the shortest time in order to win the war. He further argued that a concept of one-on-one, meaning a commander of a maneuver battalion or company, must focus on one guerrilla front.¹⁶⁴ Corpus also proposed the concept of “gradual constriction,” which would encircle CPP—NPA forces by deploying SOT teams in less-affected barangays toward the main CPP—NPA’s base area or stronghold.¹⁶⁵ Corpus’ operational approaches became the AFP’s guide in the formulation of its campaign strategy against the communist insurgents.

¹⁶² Guyot, “Our Answer to the NPA,” 17.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁶⁴ A guerrilla front is a company–size NPA unit carrying consolidation and expansion work in a district (political) geographical area.

¹⁶⁵ Corpus, *Silent War*, 139-41.

Other factors that were integrated in the AFP's operational plan were soldiers' strict observance of human rights, involvement of civic and local officials, and mobilizing key stakeholders to support the counterinsurgency. The AFP's support to the government's policy on national reconciliation remained an important aspect to encourage the rebels to surrender and lived as productive citizens.¹⁶⁶

National Unification Commission:
Road to Peace

During his presidency, President Ramos priority solved the different threat groups facing the country: communist insurgents, Muslim rebels, and disgruntled soldiers. He created the National Unification Commission (NUC), composed of eight members representing the cabinet, legislature and the private sector under the leadership of Haydee Yorac, a human rights lawyer from the University of the Philippines.¹⁶⁷ For ten months, the goal of the NUC was to investigate the root causes of the armed conflicts and social unrest, and then recommend programs for a comprehensive and lasting peace. To preserve the integrity of the commission, the NUC worked in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines¹⁶⁸ and the National Council of Churches of the Philippines,¹⁶⁹ conducted public consultations in seventy-one out of the seventy-six provinces. The result of the consultations were presented in fourteen regions and among

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 140-41.

¹⁶⁷ W. Scott Thompson and Federico Macaranas, *Democracy and Discipline: Fidel V. Ramos and His Philippine Presidency* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2007), 56.

¹⁶⁸ Highest governing body of the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

¹⁶⁹ Highest governing body of the Protestant and other non-Catholic Churches in the Philippines.

specific organizations from marginalized sectors, business, military and religious groups.¹⁷⁰

In July 1993, the NUC submitted its final report to President Ramos with poverty and inequality as the most significant root causes of armed conflict and social unrest. According to their report, these were the critical areas for reform identified during the public consultations, which stated the following:

1. Massive poverty and structural economic equity, particularly in the distribution of wealth and control of the resource base for livelihood.
2. Structural inequities in the political system, including control by an elite minority, traditional politicians and political dynasties, and enforcement of such control through private armies.
3. Injustice, abuse of those in authority and power, violations of human rights, and inequity and delay in the administration of justice.
4. Poor governance, including lack of basic social services, absenteeism of local officials, corruption and inefficiency in government, and poor implementation of laws.
5. Exploitation/marginalization of indigenous cultural communities, including lack of respect and recognition of ancestral domain and indigenous legal and political systems.
6. Other identified causes and concerns: ideological differences, foreign intervention, degeneration of moral values, environmental degradation and non implementation of laws to protect natural resources, the conduct of counterinsurgency campaign, and the continuing hardships experienced by communities in the midst of armed conflict.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Nieves R. Confessor and Faculty, Asian Institute Management, “The Philippines: In Search of a Transformed Society—Building Peaceful Social Relations—by, for, and with the People” (Paper, Expert Group Meeting, United Nations HQ, New York, November 21-23, 2005), 8-9, accessed April 28, 2016, http://www.muslimmindanao.ph/peace_process/confesor_paper.pdf.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

The NUC's recommendation was to pursue a "six paths to peace" that must be undertaken simultaneously. The six paths to peace were: social, political, and economic reforms; consensus building and empowerment; peace negotiations with armed groups; reintegration of former combatants and rehabilitation of affected areas; conflict management and protection of civilians; and provide positive climate for peace. The success and strength of NUC was its multi-stakeholder approach with the participation of various sectors and the key roles played by religious and business organizations.¹⁷²

The extensive and repetitive consultation process of the NUC encouraged active participation of peace groups and the community in the move towards peace. The legacy of the NUC was the government institutionalized public consultations as an integral part of its administration. In September 1993, Ramos created the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) to take-over the functions of the NUC. This agency became the focal point of pursuing peace efforts with the different rebel groups.¹⁷³

While the NUC was conducting public consultations, Ramos sent emissaries to the NDF headquarters in Netherlands and began exploratory talks with the communist insurgents represented by the NDF. On September 1, 1992, Congressman Jose Yap, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) representative, and Luis Jalandoni, NDF representative, signed the Joint Declaration that led to formal peace negotiations

¹⁷² Miriam Coronel Ferrer, "Philippines National Unification Commission: National Consultation and the Six Paths to Peace," *Accord*, no.13 (2002): 84-85, accessed April 28, 2016, <http://www.c-r.org/accord/public-participation/philippines-national-unification-commission-national-consultations-and/>.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

between them. The goal was a just and lasting peace in accordance with mutually acceptable principles of national sovereignty, democracy, and social justice. The recommendations coming from the initial exploratory talks were to create a favorable climate for negotiations to discuss a fundamental agenda on human rights and international humanitarian law, socio-economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, end of hostilities and disposition of forces.¹⁷⁴

As part of the GRP's sincerity and setting the right climate for peace, Ramos abolished the Anti-Subversion Law on September 24, 1992. This law provided for the legalization of the CPP and allowed for continuing exploratory talks between the GRP and NDF. Both parties accepted the Dutch government, as a third party facilitator, with the talks occurring in the Netherlands.¹⁷⁵ In June 1994, the GRP and the NDF had their last exploratory talks in Breukelen, Netherlands, where specific guidelines were agreed for the formal talks.

On February 24, 1995, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees was signed to ensure the safety and protection of NDF representatives in all areas in the Philippines performing their duties in the peace negotiations. The agreement provided for immunity against punitive actions from the Philippine government. On August 1, 1995, the GRP suspended the talks and terminated Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity

¹⁷⁴ Office of the President of the Philippines, "Hague Joint Declaration of the GPH-CPP/NPA/NDF," accessed March 28, 2016, <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/resources/hague-joint-declaration-gph-cppnandf-sept-1-1992>.

¹⁷⁵ Rene Sarmiento, "Facilitating Dialogue with Armed Insurgents in the Philippines," *Accord*, no. 16 (2005): 72-75, accessed April 28, 2016, <http://www.c-r.org/accord/engaging-armed-groups/facilitating-dialogue-armed-insurgents-philippines-joint-agreement>.

Guarantees due to the demand to bring the NDF jailed political consultant Sotero Llamas to Netherlands before the first session of the formal talks could begin.¹⁷⁶

In 1998, days before Ramos stepped down from office, the GRP and NDF passed the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, which was one among the four substantive agreements stated in the Hague Joint Declaration.¹⁷⁷ Like Aquino, Ramos was unable to end communist insurgency through negotiation. Ramos was still successful in one area: he made a peace deal with the Moro National Liberation Front in 1996 and wooed the Reform the Armed Forces Movement to work with his administration.

Economic Reforms

Ramos tried to strengthen the republic through empowering the people and instituting liberal economic reforms. Ramos' foresight put the Philippines into a position to enter the global economic arena by 2000. He designed policies to encourage public participation and foreign investment for economic, political, social, cultural, and spiritual objectives. He created and strengthened a coalition of stakeholders composed of politicians, military officials, business individuals and organizations, and Non-Government Organizations. He institutionalized and implemented the 1991 Local Government Code, which allowed the national government more participation from the provincial and local government in governance. His economic reforms included privatization of state corporations and removal of monopolies in the power, shipping,

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

domestic air transport, telecommunications, banking, and oil industries.¹⁷⁸ Ramos' economic reforms produced steady Gross Domestic Product growth, as shown in figure 6.

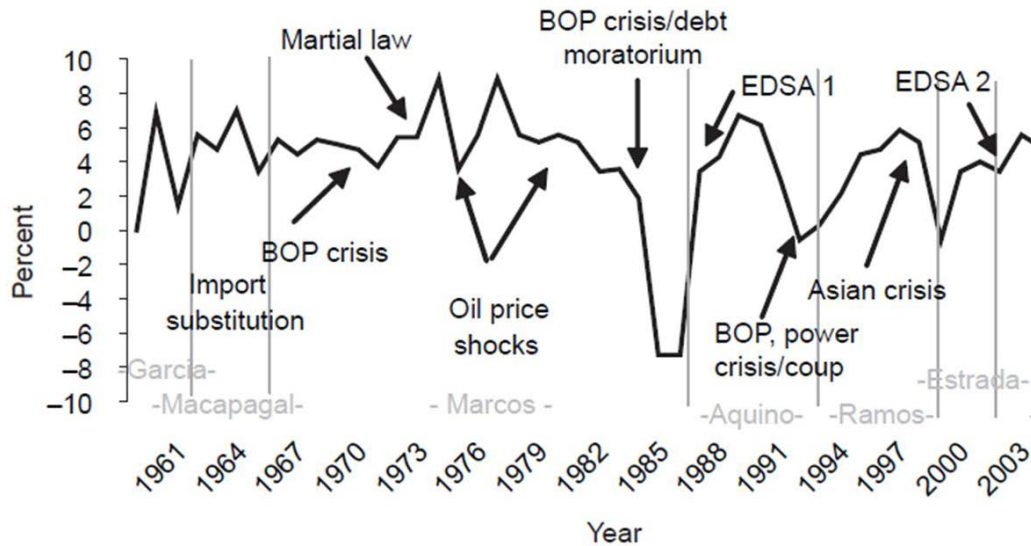


Figure 6. Philippine Gross Domestic Product Growth from 1961 to 2003

Source: Romeo Bernardo and Marie-Christine Tang, *The Political Economy of Reform during Ramos Administration (1992-98)* (Washington, DC: Commission on Growth and Development, 2008), 10.

Ramos' program for empowering the people and his participatory leadership style were shown from a number of summits he organized. For example, on March 1996, the National Livelihood Summit gathered the support of 214 congressmen to allocate their "pork barrel" funds to support 400 agrarian reform communities (ARCs).¹⁷⁹ The summits

¹⁷⁸ Abinales and Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 244.

¹⁷⁹ Manila Standard Today, "Congressmen's Pork Barrel Bulk to be earmarked for livelihood projects," March 10, 1996, accessed March 25, 2016, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1370&dat=19960310&id=kZ8VAAAAIIBAJ&sjid=1goEAAAIAIBAJ&pg=6392,1586203&hl=en>.

gathered all stakeholders to discuss specific issues that created goodwill and provided the participants a sense of ownership on the program.¹⁸⁰

One of Ramos' major economic reforms was to de-monopolized telecommunications. The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company was the only nationwide telephone network and was controlled by the Cojuangco family, relatives of former President Aquino. The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company was implicated as part of Marcos' ill-gotten wealth. As such, the Presidential Commission on Good Government, created during President Aquino's term to run after Marcos' money stolen from the government, failed to prosecute Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company in favor of the government. Instead, the Cojuangco gained greater control of the company and its operation through its connection with the government.¹⁸¹

On March 1, 1995, Ramos approved the Public Telecommunications Policy Act, providing a new policy and regulatory framework of Philippine telecommunications development. The law provided for the opening of other competitors and allowed more efficiency in the telecommunications industry. The government's telecommunications were also privatized.¹⁸² One of the major benefits of this program was the rise of business process outsourcing such as call centers. In the next two decades, the business process outsourcing industry is the major source of employment and source of the government's Gross Domestic Product.

¹⁸⁰ Bernardo and Tang, *The Political Economy of Reform during Ramos Administration (1992–98)*, 17.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Similar to the telecommunications industry, the water industry was monopolized by Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. Only two thirds of the population in Manila were connected to Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System. Most of the time consumers were asked to conserve water. In 1993, Ramos was informed about a looming water crisis. By late 1994, Ramos ordered a Water Summit to come up with viable solutions. Ramos anticipated that opposition groups would delay the process. As a measure, Ramos asked Congress to provide him emergency powers to solve the water crisis. In June 1995, the Water Crisis Act gave Ramos the needed powers to privatize the water, thereby improving the delivery of services and reducing reliance on government funds.¹⁸³

Ramos' land reform program focused on the implementation of the CARP formulated by President Aquino. The CARP was considered the most comprehensive program among previous land reform programs since it covered all private and public agricultural lands that are suitable for agriculture. The program also provided non-tenant farmers as beneficiaries, which were not included before.¹⁸⁴ Under Ramos presidency, a total of 2.6 million hectares, or 33 percent of the total CARP scope of 7.8 million hectares, were distributed to beneficiaries. Ramos' efforts included increasing the fund for the program to one hundred billion pesos. This also improved the capability and incentives of the Department of Agrarian Reform. It also established stronger partnership

¹⁸³ Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁸⁴ Celia Reyes, *Impact of Agrarian Reform on Poverty* (Makati City: Philippine Institute for Development Studies, 2002), 9-11.

at the provincial level with local government units, Non-Government Organizations, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.¹⁸⁵

The Social Reform Agenda was Ramos' main program to fight poverty, which was in turn linked to the land reform program. In this program, poverty was defined in a broader sense in order to achieve human dignity. Ramos established the Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty, which pursued empowerment of the people and tried to improve existing bureaucracies and institutions through better cooperation and coordination. The government consulted provincial and local officials, including barangay captains, to determine their minimum basic needs, including farm-to-market roads and schools.¹⁸⁶

The Department of Agrarian Reform was the primary agency tasked to fight poverty, focusing on the twenty poorest of the seventy-four provinces. The objectives were to provide the people's basic needs and improve their opportunity to actively participate in government programs. From this program, the Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA), the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA), and the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act of 1997 were enacted into law. These laws provided funding and continuous government support for the peasants, fishermen and indigenous people.¹⁸⁷

Aside from Ramos' social and economic reforms, he was instrumental in restoring public trust in the military even before he became president. As Chief of Staff and

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Thompson and Macaranas, *Democracy and Discipline*, 178-79.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 179-80.

Secretary of Defense, Ramos with the AFP, developed a new campaign to fight the communist insurgency. The campaign was based on Victor Corpus' venus fly trap approach, which later became known as Operational Plan *Lambat Bitag*.

AFP Operational Plan *Lambat Bitag* and
the Creation of the PNP

In 1988, Ramos, then AFP Chief of Staff, launched Operational Plan “*Lambat Bitag*”¹⁸⁸ following Corpus' theory of quick decision and gradual constriction. This Operational Plan was implemented after the peace talks offered by the Aquino administration were unacceptable to the communists.¹⁸⁹ In March 1988, the AFP arrested Rafael Baylosis, CPP's Secretary General and Romulo Kintanar, Head of CPP's Military Commission, together with five other rebel leaders at a safe-house in Manila. Their arrest was viewed as infiltration within the CPP—NPA ranks, especially given that a year earlier Rodolfo Salas, CPP Chairman, was also arrested. Between 1988 and 1989, CPP purged about 120 cadres it suspected of being government spies, which became known as Operation “*Kampanyang Ahos*” in Mindanao, Operation “Missing Link” in Southern Tagalog and Operation “Olympia” in Manila. The victims of these purges suffered torture before being killed.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ In English, drag net.

¹⁸⁹ Peace Studies, “Feast of Insurgents under President Corazon C. Aquino,” accessed March 28, 2016, <http://chapter0578ib.blogspot.com/2013/12/feast-of-insurgents-under-president.html>.

¹⁹⁰ International Crisis Group, “The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks,” Asia Report no. 202, 2011, 6, accessed January 6, 2016, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/202%20The%20Communist%20Insurgency%20in%20the%20Philippines%20Tactics%20and%20Talks.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/philippines/202%20The%20Communist%20Insurgency%20in%20the%20Philippines%20Tactics%20and%20Talks.pdf).

In 1992, the CPP formally split into two groups: “reaffirmists,” or RA, and “rejectionists,” or RJ. The reaffirmist group led by Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, party couple, supported Sison’s rectification program, which was adopted in July 1992 CPP Central Committee plenum. Sison criticized innovations made in the 1980s, such as the urban insurrection in Manila and Davao, and formations of NPA units to companies and battalions. He further reasserted Mao’s rural armed struggle and protracted people’s war. While Sison established his base in the Netherlands, the Tiamzons rebuilt the reaffirmist group with about six thousand armed NPAs throughout the country.¹⁹¹

The CPP—NPA units affected by the split were the CPP’s Manila-Rizal and Visayas Commission. Legal mass organizations were also divided into two groups, but the majority was controlled by the rejectionists, while other RJ leaders joined the political mainstream with the repeal of R.A. 1700 Anti-Subversion Law in September 1992.¹⁹²

Aside from the internal CPP—NPA purges and contradictions, Operational Plan *Lambat Bitag*’s success reduced CPP—NPA fighters from about 25,200 in 1987 to 14,800 in 1991 as shown in figure 7 CPP Trend from 1978 to 2006.¹⁹³ In 1995, after the prescribed period of extensions under the Department of Interior and Local Government Law of 1990, the PNP formally took the lead of fighting the insurgents.¹⁹⁴ This law was

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁹² Ibid., 7-8.

¹⁹³ Soliman Santos Jr. and Paz Verdades Santos, *Primed and Purposeful: Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines* (Geneva, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey, 2010), 21.

¹⁹⁴ The LawPhil Project, “RA 6975,” accessed March 14, 2016, http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1990/ra_6975_1990.html.

passed during Aquino’s presidency. However, the AFP retained the lead role on Muslim insurgency in Mindanao, where the PNP was not capable of facing a better armed and supported group. The AFP would focus its effort in improving its capability to defend Philippine sovereignty.

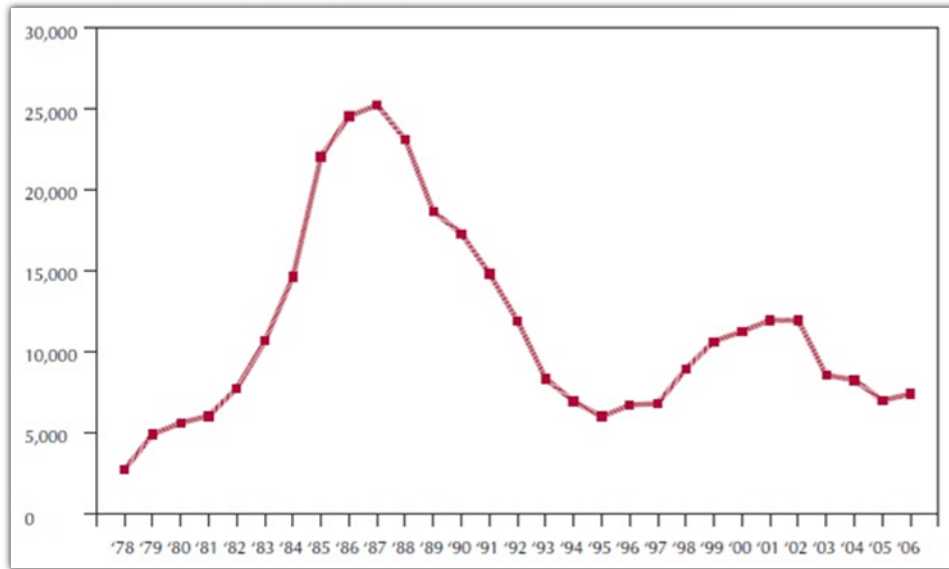


Figure 7. CPP—NPA Trend from 1978 to 2006

Source: Soliman Santos Jr. and Paz Verdades Santos, *Primed and Purposeful: Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines* (Geneva, Switzerland: Small Arms Survey, 2010), 24.

On February 25, 1998, Ramos signed Republic Act No. 8551 An Act Providing for the Reform and Reorganization of the Philippine National Police and for Other Purposes, which amended Section 12 of Department of Interior and Local Government Law. The amendment called for the AFP to take over the ISO against the communist insurgency. The PNP would provide information collection and law enforcement functions in support to the AFP, unless the President directs the PNP to assist the AFP in

combat operations.¹⁹⁵ This law was in response to the resurgence of armed hostilities caused by the communist insurgents after the PNP took over in 1995 as shown in figure 7 where there was an increase in CPP—NPA strength.

Ramos' experience and long service in the military provided him with essential leadership and managerial skills that allowed him to anticipate and forecast critical events. His multi-stakeholder approach and participatory style of leadership encouraged an active participation from different sectors on the economic and security reforms Ramos implemented. Ramos' reconciliation programs with the different rebel groups, was only unsuccessful with the communist insurgents. At the end of his presidency, with the collapse of the peace talks, Ramos saw the need for the AFP to take the lead again in fighting the CPP—NPA after the communists slowly recovering from their setbacks.

The next chapter will provide an analysis and conclusion of the presidencies of Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos. The author will recommend what future research could be undertaken.

¹⁹⁵ The LawPhil Project, 2016, "RA 8551," accessed March 14, 2016, http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1998/ra_8551_1998.html.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the Philippine government's counterinsurgency policy and military strategy during the presidencies of Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos. The author will examine the counterinsurgents' strategy and policy using three ideas highlighted in the concept of lines of efforts, as described in Field Manual 3-24 (U.S. Army Manual). The lines of efforts are security, economic development, and governance.

This section will also examine the insurgent's actions and reaction to the counterinsurgents' activities. The insurgents' reaction was either a direct approach towards the counterinsurgents or an indirect approach towards the people. Both the PKP—HMB and the CPP—NPA—NDF groups will be examined. In exploring the people, the author will compare how the Filipinos perceived the insurgents and counterinsurgents' activities and behavior in winning over their support.

A caveat of the author's analysis and conclusion is limited to the important legacy of Magsaysay, Marcos, and Ramos in relation with the facts presented on the previous chapters.

Magsaysay Administration

In the early American colonial period, the majority of the Filipinos were peasants and laborers. Both groups had two distinct organizations before they merged and become the known as the PKP. They had no army to fight for their ideology. However, they had the ability to protest in groups to raise their issues and fight for their rights against

exploitation of the landlords and the wealthy. When the Japanese occupied the Philippines, the PKP formed a loosely organized militia to fight against Japanese imperialism supporting the American and Philippine Commonwealth government. Throughout Japanese occupation, the communists grew to become a formidable resistance force in central Luzon, aside from separate the guerrilla operations launched by American and Filipino soldiers throughout the archipelago.

After the defeat of Japanese forces, the PKP leaders including Luis Taruc, ran for Congress and supported a presidential candidate. Unfortunately for them, the PKP presidential candidate lost, but six of them won seats in Congress, particularly in central Luzon. The new president, Sergio Osmeña, banned the *Hukbalahap* and tried his best to unseat all PKP winners, including Luis Taruc. As a result, the PKP began an armed rebellion against the government changed its name to *Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan*.

Chapter 3 mentioned that Magsaysay's election to the presidency was welcomed by the Filipinos, especially the poor. He restored the people's trust in the government. He continued the efforts to solve the communist insurgency following his successful program serving as defense secretary.

President Quirino gave full authority to Magsaysay, when he was defense secretary, to defeat the communist insurgents. Magsaysay integrated the police into the AFP. This integration gave him more authority to employ the police forces to fight the insurgents. Under his leadership, Magsaysay reorganized the AFP. He increased their pay and allowances, thus solving corruption. Magsaysay demoted irresponsible generals and replaced them with the most qualified officers. He provided the soldiers the tools they

needed to perform their missions. As a result, professionalism and discipline improved in the AFP.

In dealing with the insurgents, Magsaysay pursued an unorthodox approach. He provided a reward system for information leading to arrest of insurgents. Army units assisted the government by providing opportunities to the people to obtain a means of support, particularly with the implementation of resettlement program.

During his presidency, Magsaysay's administration focused on the poor and provided more opportunities to the poor and affected areas of the conflict. Through these programs, he effectively blocked insurgent recruitment efforts. Magsaysay pardoned rebels who surrendered and were integrated into the resettlement program. Magsaysay distributed public lands to the peasants, provided free transportation and electricity, and loaned them farm animals.

Aside from the resettlement program, Magsaysay introduced employment programs in affected communities, such as the San Luis Project, which was also carried out in other areas. This project helped the Magsaysay's counterinsurgency program to convince the support base of the Huks to help the government encourage the rebels to surrender. In a few months, many Huks surrendered, including Luis Taruc, the top communist leader. Magsaysay opened more public lands for distribution among the peasants and ensured landlords provided fair rents to tenant farmers.

Magsaysay's honest and fair administration earned the trust and respect of the people. He fixed government bureaucracy by establishing a grievance office at presidential palace. This office received all complaints from ordinary citizens about their needs and complaints about poor government services provided by its agencies.

Magsaysay ensured that grievances received immediate action. He also directly supervised the programs he planned. During the first two years of his presidency, Magsaysay defeated the communist insurgents, by systematically dismantling their causes.

Marcos Administration

A Maoist-inspired communist rebellion reemerged in 1969, during President Marcos' second and last term. This group was composed of expelled PKP members from the students' organizations in Manila and nearby provinces. Since communism was outlawed in 1957, the CPP cautiously developed its organization. Following Mao's doctrine, the CPP would take over the country with a peasant rebellion from the countryside, then march on the seat of government. Under this new leadership, the CPP established the NPA under the strict leadership of the party. The CPP understood that it need to educate the people before it could organize and mobilize them.

Initially, the core group became the organizers, and were mostly privileged college students. CPP cadres taught the peasants about Mao's teachings and showed them how the poor suffered because of government's oppression. Their ultimate goal was to convince them to join the NPA. In a decade, the NPA had established strong bases and influence in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. This was a remarkable accomplishment of the NPA compared to the Huks, where it was concentrated only in central Luzon.

A significant organization established by the CPP was the NDF, unique from the old PKP. The NDF became active in organizing and mobilizing different sectors of the society particularly in Manila to support the NPA. They were successful in establishing a strong influence with religious organizations for the recruitment of Catholic priests and

protestant pastors into the CPP—NPA. For example, Luis Jalandoni was a Catholic priest before he became an NDF leader.

In chapter 4, Marcos declared martial law in 1972 to preempt the growing threat of insurgency. For a decade, he maintained one-man rule and stayed in power after he disbanded Congress and the Senate. He kept tight control of the armed forces by selecting and rewarding loyal generals. As a consequence, the military's professionalism and discipline weakened. Aside from corruption, the communists exploited Marcos' strong support of U.S. policies in the Pacific, particularly his sending Philippine troops to the Vietnam War.

Under Marcos, police forces were still integrated in the AFP. To improve the management of police stations, Marcos organized the Integrated National Police in 1975. With this reorganization, mayors had no control or authority to direct and manage the local police. That same year, the CHDF was strengthened to augment the AFP. CHDF conducted patrols together with police and army units against the insurgents. As detailed in chapter 4, instead of helping the AFP, the CHDF was better known for abusing the people and corruption. On the other hand, the insurgents attacked the poorly-led CHDF, which became their stable source of military supplies.

Aside from increasing the role of the military in civil government generally, other important civilian government positions were given to active duty military officers. General Fabian Ver, Chief of Staff of the AFP, was appointed as Director of the National Intelligence and Security Authority in 1981. This agency became a government apparatus to hunt Marcos' political rivals. Towards the end of Marcos' term, the AFP presence in Manila increased. Instead of fighting the growing communism, the AFP had to secure the

seat of government. Although AFP was successful in arresting all of the founding members of the CPP in 1981, the CPP had recruited and trained more qualified and committed cadres to replace them.

Marcos' economic reforms and good governance were implemented during his first term. His organizational reforms in government and infrastructure projects earned him a second term. He was the first and only president to get re-elected after the country gained independence from the United States. During martial law, Marcos consolidated his power by eliminating his political rivals. Although additional infrastructure projects were constructed, the country suffered a huge debt after Marcos administration collapsed. Meanwhile, Marcos and his family had billions of dollars, investments and properties in domestically and abroad.

The decline of Marcos' power came after the assassination of Benigno Aquino in 1983 at the Manila International Airport. Benigno Aquino was a senator when he was exiled in the United States during martial law. In February 1986, Marcos' power collapsed when he cheated in the snap elections. Through a bloodless revolution, the people ousted Marcos and replaced him with Cory Aquino, wife of the late Benigno Aquino. While the NDF had successfully organized an alliance among different sectoral organization in Manila, they failed to seize an opportunity to lead anti-Marcos coalition. Instead, the communist boycotted the snap election and this cost them the opportunity to grab political power from Aquino.

Ramos Administration

In 1992, before Ramos won the presidency, the CPP's regional committee based in Manila opted to take an opposite strategy. As consequence, the CPP split into two

groups affecting their united front efforts in Manila. This was the second major communist split following the formation of the CPP and NPA in 1969. The cause of the split started from earlier events leading to the “People Power Revolution,” when the CPP leadership decided to boycott the snap election in 1986. Another effect of the split was the breakdown of NPA units in Visayas, where the majority of the rejectionist groups came from.

After the insurgent split, the CPP reaffirmist group’s ideology and propaganda continue to reach out the poorest communities in the country. While the rejectionist CPP group created its own identity and slowly worked with the government; the reaffirmist CPP group renewed its commitment to fight the government and U.S. interventionist policy despite the removal of American bases in 1991.

Before Ramos’ presidency, he was a key figure during the “People Power Revolution.” He was the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary and Vice Chief of Staff of the AFP when he supported the call of the people against Marcos’ resignation. Under the Aquino government, Ramos helped to restore the AFP’s professionalism and discipline. When the communists backed-out of the peace negotiations, Ramos, the new Chief of Staff of the AFP, implemented a new strategy to fight them. Through the reinstatement of Victor Corpus into the AFP, Corpus helped the AFP in crafting the new strategy with SOT as the primary tool. This operational approach was designed to neutralize strong influence of the CPP—NPA—NDF and promote a good image of the government in remote villages. The AFP’s campaign significantly reduced the CPP—NPA strength from their peak in 1987 to a continuous decline until in 1995.

The first agenda of Ramos presidency was promoting peace and reconciliation among different rebel groups including the communists. Since the AFP's success during Aquino's administration, Ramos saw no reason to stop the implementation of 1991 Department of Interior and Local Government Reform Law. The law acknowledged the PNP's full responsibility in the ISO against the communist insurgents. Unfortunately, the PNP was unable to fulfill their responsibility in containing the communist after taking over in 1995. In 1998, before he stepped down from office, Ramos signed the law, reassigning the provisions of ISO responsibility back to the AFP.

During his presidency, Ramos also implemented major economic reforms to provide better services and alleviate poverty throughout the country. He continued the implementation of the CARP started by his predecessor including increasing its funding. This program helped the government in its counterinsurgency operations. The reforms in telecommunications and water provided relief to the Filipinos while prevented communists' propaganda towards government inability to deliver better services.

Ramos' priority was peace and reconciliation with the communist insurgents and other rebel groups. He signed the repeal of Anti-Subversion Law, which was welcomed by the communist. Ramos created the NUC as a vehicle to involve different sectors of society in making peace with all rebel groups. Through the NDF, the communists agreed to formal negotiations in the Netherlands, with the Dutch government as facilitator. Throughout the entire process, the communists demanded more from the government including sending Sotero Llamas, an arrested CPP—NPA from Bicol Region to join the negotiations. After Ramos term, the result of the negotiations failed to achieve substantial result that could end the communist rebellion.

Conclusion and Recommendation

With the resurgence of communist rebellion in 1969, the farmers and workers were no longer the only targets for the insurgents' propaganda and recruitment. All members of the society were targeted: middle class, students, indigenous peoples, religious organizations, urban poor communities, and so on. This vast range of people from various levels of society posed extreme challenges for the counterinsurgents to come up with a widely accepted means of approach or strategy to prevent the communist insurgents' propaganda and recruitment.

Evidently, the government's counterinsurgency program is leader-dependent. The president has a large role to play in crafting the government's policy to solve the root causes of the communist insurgency. From the cases presented, the government both succeeded and failed to solve the threat of communist insurgency.

Magsaysay's popularity rose because of his honest public service. The people supported him, including the insurgents and their families. Luis Taruc, Huk leader, surrendered to Magsaysay with help from Taruc's parents. The PKP and Huks ideology and propaganda were no match for Magsaysay's popularity and legitimate representative of the poor.

Magsaysay succeeded by winning the support of the people and effectively employing the AFP's capability. In his first year of presidency, Magsaysay secured the surrender of Taruc and the Huks. Magsaysay's honest and pro-poor administration delegitimized the insurgents' propaganda of a corrupt and pro-rich government. His commitment and personal attention to the needs of the farmers showed them a government of their own.

While Magsaysay was triumphant in his fight against communist insurgency, the government failed during Marcos presidency. Marcos was unsuccessful in suppressing the resurgence of communists, led mostly by student activists. According to many communists, Marcos was their best tool for recruitment. Marcos' authoritarian rule legitimized the insurgents' propaganda of a corrupt and a U.S. puppet government. Though some his reforms were continued in government, such as the Peace and Order Councils, Marcos' legacy was negative, with: extreme government debt from loans and allowing the communists to expand throughout the country.

On the other hand, Ramos was not so successful after the communists slowly recovered at the end of his term. Ramos' multi-sectoral approach or participative leadership was very successful in collectively gathering the support of the different sectors of society particularly the religious organizations. The religious groups were instrumental to Marcos' fall. Through the religious groups, the peace offered to all rebels became successful, except for the communists. The peace talks had been more beneficial to the communists after gaining more legitimacy on their issues and world recognition.

While Magsaysay and Ramos planned for their military strategy in fighting the communists, Marcos had no coherent military strategy. Magsaysay provided leadership to the AFP assigning competent leaders. Under Magsaysay, the AFP supported civilian government agencies in providing basic services and developing rural areas. Sustained intelligence and combat operations were implemented in Huk stronghold areas. The AFP also led in nation building and rebel returnee program with funding support from the U.S. Government.

Marcos' security program increased troop strength and created the CHDF. He justified the increase with the deteriorating security in Manila and growing Muslim secession in Mindanao. Under Marcos, favoritism destroyed the AFP's professionalism and discipline. Loyal soldiers and officers were awarded with more lucrative positions. The CHDF, instead of helping the AFP in military operations, became targets of NPA attacks or raids providing the insurgent's with unlimited supply of ammunition and weapons.

While the 1991 Department of Interior and Local Government helped in changing the image of the police and the armed forces, Ramos miscalculated the handing over of ISO responsibility to the newly created PNP. Ramos was either deceived by the communists in the peace talks or underestimated the communists' ability to sustain their cause. Ramos could have earlier amended the law in 1995 and not before his term expired in 1998.

In terms of the agrarian issue, the government's land reform program was not so successful following the success of Magsaysay's resettlement program. While Magsaysay's government had more public land to distribute to farmers, Marcos and Ramos were dependent on Congress to support their land reform initiatives. Marcos' land reform program was a continuation of the 1963 Land Reform Law started by his immediate predecessor. Similar to Marcos, Ramos implemented the CARP passed in 1988. Ramos implementation of CARP failed to solve agrarian issue raised by the communists, since haciendas are still owned by a few politicians and well-connected businessmen in government. This concern continues to serve communists' propaganda and their legitimate claim of unequal protection of the government.

Presently, the communist insurgency continues to challenge the government's ability to fight them in a complex environment. Though they remain dogmatic on their doctrine, the CPP—NPA—NDF strategy had slightly taking a different course from a purely Maoist doctrine. The NPA remains a threat to the peace and order of the country especially in Mindanao. Sectoral organizations affiliated to the NDF had joined the legal political system in the race to Congress and the Senate. Though they have not been successful in the Senate, they continue to lead the party list race among all party list groups.

With such condition, the author recommends two programs that may help the government in fighting the communist insurgents.

First, the Philippine government should pursue peace talks with the communist insurgents at the regional or provincial level. Unless the CPP national leadership will honestly and faithfully to the negotiations, realizing peace with them will not be achieved. The government should consider offering an amnesty to armed rebels that will encourage them to surrender and live a normal life.

Second, the AFP should be able determine the best operational approach from the previous lessons. Magsaysay's San Luis Project was a classic example of a whole of government approach applied into a community supporting the Huks. To achieve better results, AFP civil-military operations should be integrated with the local or national government security and economic programs.

This study has demonstrated that the insurgents are willing to negotiate and accept good offers. Likewise, combat and police operation also prove effective. Using these

“carrot-and-stick” approaches, with sound, responsive governance, it may be possible to end the insurgency for good.

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