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**ANTI-COMMUNIST VIGILANTES  
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

**MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE**

by

MARCELINO Q. MALAJACAN, JR., LT. COL., PHILIPPINES  
B.S. Philippine Military Academy, 1971

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1988

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## 19. ABSTRACT (Continued)

This study examined the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes, and their impact on the counterinsurgency effort and society in the Philippines. The analysis aimed at determining a suitable role for anti-communist vigilantes in a comprehensive counterinsurgency program and their future role in a post-insurgency Philippine society. Moreover, the research was also directed at defining the role of government or any of its agencies in the anti-communist vigilante movements in the Philippines. This study used the historical method to collect, analyze, and integrate evidence. This was reinforced by a survey administered to all Armed Forces of the Philippines officers and enlisted personnel attending training in the Continental U.S. service schools.

The study concluded that the spectre of CPP/NPA political violence, the resulting economic strain of "progressive taxes" exacted on the masses and businesses, and the inspiring motivation of the 1986 "People Power Revolution" are the conditions that bred courage to the people to spontaneously reject and openly confront, "vigilante style," the communist movement.

The study also found that the Philippine government, particularly President Corazon C. Aquino, should provide the lead in harnessing the ground swell against communism. President Aquino's enormous popularity is the single unifying element, which can equal if not better the charisma and success of the late President Magsaysay in fighting the HUKs in the 50's.

Finally, the study finds that the politico-psychological impacts, void of an ideology, of vigilantism to a nation menaced by a violence prone insurgent movement more than outweighs the portent of anarchy that may result from the existence of popular militias, un-regulated by government.

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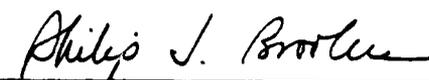
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the forgoing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

## ABSTRACT

**ANTI-COMMUNIST VIGILANTES IN THE PHILIPPINES**, Lt. Col.  
Marcelino Q. Malajacan, Jr., Philippine Army, 100 pages

This study examined the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes, and their impact on the counterinsurgency effort and society in the Philippines. The analysis aimed at determining a suitable role for anti-communist vigilantes in a comprehensive counterinsurgency program and their future role in a post-insurgency Philippine society. Moreover, the research was also directed at defining the role of government or any of its agencies in the anti-communist vigilante movements in the Philippines.) This study used the historical method to collect, analyze, and integrate evidence. This was reinforced by a survey administered to all Armed Forces of the Philippines officers and enlisted personnel attending training in the Continental U.S. service schools.

The study concluded that the spectre of CPP/NPA political violence, the resulting economic strain of "progressive taxes" exacted on the masses and businesses, and the inspiring motivation of the 1986 "People Power Revolution" are the conditions that bred courage to the people to spontaneously reject and openly confront, "vigilante style," the communist movement.

The study also found that the Philippine government, particularly President Corazon C. Aquino, should provide the lead in harnessing the ground swell against communism. President Aquino's enormous popularity is the single unifying element, which can equal if not better the charisma and success of the late President Magsaysay in fighting the HUKs in the 50's.

Finally, the study finds that the politico-psychological impacts, void of an ideology, of vigilantism to a nation menaced by a violence prone insurgent movement more than outweighs the portent of anarchy that may result from the existence of popular militias, un-regulated by government.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Moreover, there exists today a well-led, disciplined communist insurgency with a sophisticated political infrastructure and growing military capability. The Communist Party of the Philippines / New People's Army (CPP/NPA) bears little resemblance to the Hukbalahap insurgency of the 1950's except in its ultimate objective of overthrowing the government by force - by all accounts it is far more efficient and dangerous.

Committee on Foreign Relations.  
Situation in the Philippines, A  
Staff Report (1984)

#### Introduction

The communist movement in the Philippines traces its beginning to the early 1920's - a period in world history when communist ideology was attracting the interest and imagination of people awed by the Russian revolution that toppled the Tsarist regime. It developed from an outlawed political organization in 1932 to a political party that participated in the election of 1948 largely because of its role as a resistance movement which fought the Japanese during World War II. Angered by the parliamentary failure of 1948 and encouraged by the weapons the Party did not surrender after the war, the communist movement developed into an insurgency that challenged the "showcase

of United States democracy in Asia"<sup>1</sup> during the east-west cold war of the early 1950's. Its decline as the pro-Soviet *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas / Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayang* (PKP/HMB) and subsequent rise as the Maoist oriented Communist Party of the Philippines / New People's Army (CPP/NPA) is a reflection of the movement's flexible strategy. The revitalized CPP, as the party called itself to differentiate it from the PKP, was founded on December 26, 1968 by 11 former young PKP members including the founding chairman Jose Maria Sison and communist guerrilla leader Bernabe Buscayno, a.k.a. Kumander Dante.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the CPP/NPA continues to be the greatest threat to the security of the government and the return of democracy in the Philippines. The communist insurgency affects at least 80% of the country's 74 provinces<sup>3</sup> and its political and military presence is felt in 18% of the approximately 45,000 villages. This was aptly described by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asian and Pacific Affairs on December 1, 1986:

The Communists have undertaken their revolutionary activities with increasing boldness since President Aquino came to power in February. The NPA, the military arm of the CPP, has approximately 23,000 troops, not all of them armed. The number of violent incidents is down, but the level of political agitation in both urban and rural areas is up. No one can quantify how effective these increasingly open activities have been, but the combination of economic contraction and increasing radical agitation endangers President Aquino's fragile democracy.

The government of President Corazon C. Aquino, either by omission or by design, failed to take advantage of the situation following its ascension to power to confront a bewildered communist movement. The government did not capitalize upon the high level of legitimacy it enjoyed domestically and internationally and the confusion within the rank and file of the CPP/NPA<sup>5</sup> generated by the People Power Revolution of February 1986. Instead, the Aquino government adopted a rigid strategy of reconciliation by complying with an election promise to release political detainees including communists jailed by former President Marcos, offering amnesty to those who surrender, and seeking negotiations with the CPP/NPA. Government hopes that the communists would lay down their arms and come down from the hills did not materialize. Instead, there was a resurgence of violence after the respite conveniently provided by the long negotiations and a 60-day ceasefire.<sup>6</sup>

#### Background of the Problem

The mobilization, social and quasi-military, of the people to combat revolutions and insurgencies has been used throughout world history. This tactic has been applied in the Philippines dating back to the Spanish colonial period. For three centuries of Spanish rule, natives were

integrated or enlisted into the colonial force to quell pocket rebellions and to restore law and order.<sup>7</sup>

In the years immediately following the Spanish-American war, the United States successfully used native Filipinos to track down the guerrillas of General Emilio Aguinaldo. This led to the eventual collapse of armed resistance to the United States occupation of the islands after the natives, known as the "Macabebe Scouts", under Colonel Funston posed as insurgents and captured General Aguinaldo.<sup>8</sup>

World War II saw the ruthless use of collaborators, known as "Makapilis", by the Japanese occupation forces as spies and quasi-military/police forces.<sup>9</sup> The period is replete with stories of brutalities and excesses committed by the Makapilis to extract information from suspected resistance fighters and sympathizers.

A new challenge confronted the Nation after World War II and its subsequent independence from the United States. This was a Moscow oriented communist insurgency known as Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas/ Hukbong Mapaglaya ng Bayan (PKP/HMB). This period ushered in the use of civilian forces from another perspective - the protection of the Republic against communist insurgency. Civilian forces, while not a decisive component of the counterinsurgency strategy in the early 1950's, were used

locally by military commanders in support of the national counterinsurgency effort.

The rectification campaign that followed the defeat of the PKP resulted in the creation of a more militant communist party which set out to correct errors, avoid past mistakes and rebuild the party. Adopting a mixture of Marxist-Leninist and Mao-Tse-Tung thought as its ideology, the reestablished communist party (CPP/NPA) pursued, in the 1960's, a policy of subversion aimed at the elite and youth in the urban areas. The declaration of Martial Law in September 1972 triggered the start of the rural or mass mobilization phase of their campaign.<sup>10</sup> This continued until the arrest in 1976 of Jose Maria Sison, the CPP chairman. The new leadership modified the communist armed struggle by giving new impetus to urban guerilla warfare or "sparrow unit operations." As a supplement to the CPP strategy of armed struggle, it followed Sun Tsu's maxim "take the enemy's fortress from within".<sup>11</sup>

The Armed City Partisans (ACP's), the forerunner of what is now notoriously known as "sparrows," were the CPP/NPA urban guerrillas of the early 1970's. The ACP's of the late sixties and the early seventies were more political, agitation, and propaganda teams with the corollary function of providing security to the party organizations and officials in the urban centers; whereas

the sparrow units practiced the extreme use of political violence and terror.<sup>12</sup>

Davao, a city in Mindanao Island, became the laboratory for CPP/NPA urban terrorism. Motivated by the military, political, and psychological impacts of the experiments, the communist party by the mid-1980's started to export these terror tactics to other urban centers in the country.<sup>13</sup>

The period also witnessed the formation and organization of religious fanatics and tribal minorities into anti-communist movements in remote areas of Mindanao similar to the Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam experiences.<sup>14</sup>

Today, the Philippines experiences the formation and growth of anti-communist movements in towns and cities to combat the terror campaigns waged by the communist insurgents. Significantly, the original anti-communist movement that spontaneously organized in Davao City is widely perceived as a people's uprising against the violent excesses of the CPP/NPA urban guerrillas. This original movement, which was dubbed *Alsa Masa*, and the other armed and unarmed anti-communist groups trace their origin to the February 1986 People Power Revolution that toppled the regime of ex-President Marcos.<sup>15</sup> These anti-communist groups were dubbed "vigilantes" to discredit their success by leftist groups and media. This spontaneous and open rejection of the communist movement is not only seen as a unique phenomena but also perceived by some as

unprecedented in counterinsurgency history. The unique nature of the Filipino "vigilante" spirit was aptly described by Brian Johnson in his historical account of the February 1986 Revolution:

Word of attack flashed over the Catholic radio station Veritas, and the citizen defenders prepared to make their stand at Ortigas Avenue. Traffic had been nearly normal there, just minutes before, as an advance group of vigilantes started to fill sandbags and build knee-high barricades. Now the intersection received an adrenalin rush of pure panic. Thousands made a dash from nearby Camp Crame (pronounced crah-may) rebel base and frantically began to reinforce the pathetic barrier. People surged into the path of oncoming traffic. Cars skidded to a halt as astonished drivers found a crowd dragging trees, buses, and burning tires across the road. Someone who had brought a PA system from Crame, set it atop a red station wagon, and began to direct cars and taxicabs into open spots in the barricades. "Hi", said the vigilantes. "We need your car. The tanks are coming. Please flatten the tires." Amazingly, almost everybody leapt out and started tearing off valve caps.<sup>16</sup>

The "Alsa Masa" movement of Davao City appears to be a model of this phenomena. The movement restored law and order to the city and brought peace to the lives of hundreds of military, police and civilians. It also dislocated the political infrastructure of the CPP in the city. Inspired by the success of the "Alsa Masa", the government of President Corazon Aquino launched a nation wide program to organize unarmed vigilantes or "Nakasaka", in areas affected or threatened by the communist insurgents.<sup>17</sup>

### Significance of the Study

This study examines the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes, and their impact on the counterinsurgency effort and society in the Philippines. The analysis aims at determining a suitable role for anti-communist vigilantes in a comprehensive counterinsurgency program and their future role in a post-insurgency Philippine society. Moreover, the research is also directed at defining the role of government or any of its agencies in the anti-communist vigilante movement in the Philippines. As such, it will contribute to the body of knowledge on low intensity conflict (LIC) and military operations short of war.

### Scope of the Study

### Research Questions

The focus of the study is to explore the following questions and sub-questions:

What are the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes?

What is the role of anti-communist vigilantes in the counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines?

Should the Philippine Government organize, control and direct the anti-communist vigilantes as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency program?

What impact do the anti-communist vigilantes have on other government counterinsurgency programs?

What should be the future role of anti-communist vigilantes in Philippine society?

#### Assumptions

The assumptions of the study are:

That communist insurgency threatens the stability and order of Philippine society and is fundamentally detrimental to it.

That the people or a group of citizens have the moral and legal right to organize and combat a perceived common threat to their community.

#### Limitations

The study is limited to unclassified sources. Moreover, a survey of officers and men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines was conducted only among the limited population of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) personnel in service schools and military academies across the Continental United States of America (CONUS), and did not include personnel currently on active duty in the Philippines.

### Delimitations

The study focuses on the period 1984 to October 1987. However, an outline of the origin and growth of the communist insurgency and the development of government countermeasures will be presented in Appendix A and B to provide a cogent background.

The study will not address, in detail, all four elements of the United States Army counterinsurgency doctrine. Its focus will be on one of the four interdependent functions of Internal Defence and Development strategy (IDAD), social mobilization.

### Methods and Procedures

This study uses the historical method to collect, analyze, and integrate evidence to arrive at a new interpretation of the evidence. This will be reinforced by a survey administered to all Armed Forces of the Philippines officers and enlisted personnel attending training in the CONUS service schools.

### Definition of Terms

#### Vigilantism

Vigilantism, as used in this study is more inclusive than the Webster dictionary definition of the

term "vigilance committee" as "taking the law into one's own hands." The meaning goes beyond the connotation we see in movies or television wherein summary justice is handed down by an angered crowd against criminal elements; a group of rowdy cowboys lynching a horse thief; or, a frustrated policeman's summary execution of the criminal elements of a community.<sup>18</sup>

Vigilantism in this study refers to the violent or non-violent responses of a group of people to the political terrorism or violence perpetrated by another group for political objectives. In this study, it is akin to the type of political violence which some social scientists refer to as "establishment violence." It is a form of political violence or terrorism wherein the objective is to reinforce a political and social structure.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, the word vigilantism or vigilante, in the context of its usage in this study, refers to a spontaneous anti-communist movement that first sprang up in Davao City, Philippines.

#### Insurgency

The Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1 (JCS Pub.1), Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, defines insurgency as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."<sup>20</sup>

As used in this study, it will also mean the "evolutionary protracted warfare theory" of Mao Tse Tung which added the political, economic, social and psychological dimensions to guerrilla war. The term will further refer to a communist inspired insurgency or what some political scientists call "subversive insurgency."<sup>21</sup>

#### Counterinsurgency

JCS Pub. 1 defines counterinsurgency as " those military, para-military, political, economic, psychological and civic actions taken to defeat an insurgency." Another definition in the same publication adds the word "subversive" before insurgency in order to describe a strategy that is directed against a communist inspired insurgency or subversive insurgency.<sup>22</sup>

The counterinsurgency strategy and doctrine that will be referred to in this study will be that which is described by Field Circular 100-20 (FC 100-20) as internal defense and development (IDAD).<sup>23</sup>

#### Political Terrorism

Terrorism refers to the deliberate use of terror or "political violence", as a tactic by insurgent forces against the government, the military and the people.

### Alsa Masa

Alsa Masa, a Tagalog term, means "people's uprising". It is the name adopted by the armed anti-communist vigilante movement which was organized by the people of the district of Agdao, Davao City in spontaneous and violent response to the political terrorism of the CPP/NPA urban guerrillas known as "sparrows".<sup>24</sup>

The Alsa Masa movement that crippled the sparrow unit operations and the political infrastructure of the CPP/NPA in Davao City caught the interest of other urban centers in the Philippines and similar groups slowly sprouted. The damage that the movement exacted on the CPP/NPA in Davao City and the potential threat it poses to the communist movement in the country alarmed the leadership of the CPP/NPA. Thereafter, a campaign to discredit the Alsa Masa using leftist elements of the media, human-rights groups and other organizations ensued by focusing on the violent nature of the movement. According to General Renato de Villa,<sup>25</sup> the movement was dubbed "vigilantes" in order to project a negative and derogatory character on the anti-communist Alsa Masa.

### Nakasaka

Nakasaka, an acronym for the Visayan phrase *Nagkahiusang Katawhan Alang sa Kalinaw* or "United People for Peace," is the name adopted by President Aquino to identify a government sponsored anti-communist vigilante

movement. It is organized under the national supervision of the Department of Local Government in communities threatened by the insurgents. The direction and control is exercised by the local executives while the local military commander provides training and supervision of operational activities.

However, the government insists that unlike the *Alsa Masa*, *Nakasaka* is the "unarmed version" of the anti-communist vigilante movement.<sup>26</sup> This position of the Government is aimed at parrying criticism from the progressive elements of Philippines, notably, the cause-oriented groups which attacks any government program that hurts the communist insurgent movement.

#### National Democratic Front

The National Democratic Front (NDF) is similar to the National Liberation Front that carried the banner of the protracted war in South Vietnam. The NDF was organized by the CPP on April 24, 1973, to coordinate the efforts of CPP/NPA cadres to "isolate enemy diehards",<sup>27</sup> combat "imperialists, feudalists, and bureaucratic capitalists," and organize all anti-government/anti-Marcos forces in Philippine society.

The NDF is the CPP's united front strategy, the third weapon of communist insurgency in the Philippines. The other two are the Party, which provides the direction, and the Army which conducts the armed struggle.<sup>28</sup>

### Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) is the umbrella organization which controls the largest faction of the Muslim secessionist movement in Mindanao, the largest island in the Southern Philippines. The MNLF chairman Nur Misuari assisted CPP founder Jose Maria Sison in organizing the radical youth movement of the 1960's called *Kabataang Makabayan*, which means "Nationalist Youth". Nur and Joma, as they are popularly called, were both young professors at the University of the Philippines.

### Summary

This study focuses on the anti-communist vigilante movement in the Philippines. The specific questions addressed in the study are:

What are the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippines?

What is the role of anti-communist vigilantes in the counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines?

Should the Philippine Government organize, control and direct the anti-communist vigilantes as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency program?

What impacts do the anti-communist vigilantes have on other government counterinsurgency programs?

What should be the future role of anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippine society?

The researcher also found it important to ensure a better understanding of the problem by providing a

chronological outline of the growth of the communist movement and the resulting government responses in the form of appendices. This is further aimed at reinforcing the background presented in this chapter. Lastly, the research is directed at contributing to the body of knowledge on insurgency, counterinsurgency and military operations short of war.

## Notes

1. Col. Julius L. Javier, "A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of the Present Counterinsurgency Strategy of the Philippines" (Masteral Thesis, Command and General Staff College, 1985), 1-7.

2. David A. Rosenberg, "Communism in the Philippines", Problems of Communism, Sept.-Oct. 1984, 34.

3. James C. Clad, "Betting on Violence", Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 December 1987, 35.

4. Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, "Implications of Recent Developments in the Philippines", (Hearing, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress, December 1, 1986), 17.

5. Virgilio David, "President Aquino and the Military", Philippine News, 17-23 Feb. 1988, 11.

6. Leif R. Rosenberger, "Philippine Communism: The Continuing Threat and the Aquino Challenge", East Asian Conflict Zones, Lawrence E. Grinter and Young Whan Kihl, Eds. (New York, 1987), 191.

7. Lt. Col. Antonio S. Nale, "Employment of Natives in Counterinsurgency Operations in the Philippines" (Masteral Thesis, Command and General Staff College, 1983), 2.

8. *Ibid.*, 2.

9. Makapili, an acronym for 'maka pilipino,' means patriot. The Japanese occupation forces organized this para-military force to gather informations on the resistance. These collaborators of WW II, in many instances, took advantage of their new found power and influence not only to gather intelligence and perform semi-police functions but also coerce and intimidate the people for their own personal advantage. Stories of gory abuses committed by the collaborators, which resulted in the death of guerrillas and innocent civilians, became propaganda material of the resistance movement. During the liberation of the Philippines by the Allied Forces under MacArthur, documentary accounts of violent reprisals against these collaborators were seen. Until today, the abuses of the "Makapilis" continue to be a favorite theme of war movies.

10. Rosenberg, Communism in the Philippines, 35.
11. The use of urban guerrilla strategy has been an experiment of the CPP/NPA as a complimentary form of armed struggle. The idea appears to have been borrowed from the Latin American experience with modification to suit the Philippine environment. There are reports that the CPP decided in 1987 to give emphasis to urban terrorism after the more radical leaders prevailed in the power struggle that confronted the Party after the 1986 Revolution.
12. Gareth Porter, "Philippine Communism After Marcos", Problems of Communism, Sept.-Oct. 1987, 34.
13. "Insurgency in the Philippines: No.1-Deterioration marked, widespread, and demonstrable", Pacific Defence Reporter, Sept. 1985, 12.
14. "Insurgency in the Philippines: No.2-The militia: help or hindrance?", PDR, 15.
15. James Clad, "Vigilante Power: Aquino goes along with anti-communist irregulars," Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 April 1987, 32.
16. Bryan Johnson, Four Days of Courage (New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1987), 14.
17. Clad, Vigilante Power, 32.
18. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg, Vigilante Politics (New York: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 4.
19. Ibid., 5.
20. Dept. of Defense JCS Pub.1, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office 1986), 185.
21. The use of 'subversive' before insurgency is to describe the insurgent movement as communist inspired in the Philippines. The term, to the author's knowledge, has been used also by political scientists, notably Sir Robert Thompson, to define communist inspired revolutionary war.
22. JCS Pub. 1, 93.
23. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, EC 100-20 Low Intensity Conflict (Fort Leavenworth, Ks.: CGSC, 1986), chap.3.

24. Clad, Vigilante Power, 33.

25. -----, "Can vigilantes stop the communist rebels?", Manila Standard, 23 November 1987, 1.

26. Nakasaka was organized, by Governor Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur, as the unarmed version of the Alsa Masa of Davao City. Having a more palatable character, the Nakasaka caught the attention of the Aquino government, notably, the fervent anti-communist Secretary of Local Government Jaime Ferrer. The Government, on Ferrer's initiative expressed support for the movement and undertook a program to organize Nakasaka vigilantes in areas affected by CPP/NPA terrorism.

27. Rosenberg, Communism in the Philippines, 41.

28. Javier, A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of Counterinsurgency in the Philippines, 3-9 to 3-21.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Violence takes much deeper root in irregular warfare than it does in regular warfare. In the latter it is counteracted by obedience to constituted authority, whereas the former makes a virtue of defying authority and violating rules. It becomes very difficult to rebuild a country, and a stable state, on a foundation undermined by such experience.

#### Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present a review of existing literature related to vigilantism, political terrorism and counterinsurgency. This survey of literature will establish the foundation from which the study will step forward. Within the survey conducted, the literature is divided into the following broad categories:

The theory and typology of vigilantism.

Theory and tactics of political terrorism.

Strategies and tactics of counterinsurgency to combat political terrorism.

#### Theory and Typology of Vigilantism

Limited literature exists on the subject of vigilantism. Rosenbaun and Sederberg's Vigilante Politics

is a collection of essays dissecting the nature, typology and psychology of vigilantism or what they refer to as "establishment violence."<sup>2</sup> The editors described "establishment" as the people, not necessarily the community's elite or government, who favor the status quo and look with suspicion on any proposal for change.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the aim is to preserve the social values to which they are accustomed.

Rosenbaun and Sederberg provide a view towards understanding the meaning of vigilantism in their essay Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence. The authors discuss the conditions that may result in vigilante action, the types of vigilantism, and its relationship with socio-political order. The authors further describe political violence as acts of sociopolitical coercion affected by motivation or intent to create (revolutionary), maintain (vigilantism), or restore (reactionary) social values.<sup>4</sup> In this continuum of political violence, the authors define vigilantism as the form of political violence directed at deterring the revolutionary or reactionary change of social values.

The emergence of anti-communist vigilantes in Davao City fits, in a large sense, the definition given by Rosenbaun and Sederberg. Purists will indeed claim that the spontaneous response of the people of Davao City to the political violence of the CPP/NPA is a form of political violence which the authors classify as vigilantism.

In the discussion of the typology of vigilantism, attention is drawn to the authors' views on "social-group-control vigilantism" and "regime-control vigilantism." Rosenbaun and Sederberg maintain that social-group-control vigilantism stems from the establishment violence "directed against groups competing for, or advocating a redistribution of values within the system."<sup>5</sup> This form is further distinguished by the communal, economic, or political character or objective of the origin. Thus, when a low-ranked group attempts to rise above its socially prescribed position; when racial groups such as the Ku Klux Klan engage in anti-black violence; when religious groups act to check the rise of secularism, heresy, or competition with another faith; when the anti-feudal acts of peasant groups spark violent reaction; and when groups espousing dissident political views generate violent responses, a social-group-control vigilantism exists.<sup>6</sup>

The type of vigilantism that also bears upon the study and is discussed by the authors is regime-control vigilantism. The essay defines it as "establishment violence intended to alter the regime, in order to make the superstructure into a more effective guardian of the base."<sup>7</sup> Here, the authors elucidate the relationship of establishment violence with coups, private armies, and the coercive acts of groups within an establishment.

The anti-communist vigilante movements developing in the Philippines fall in both types of vigilantism.

*Alsa Masa*, the armed and spontaneous reaction of the people of Davao City fits more to the category of social-group-control vigilantism. On the other hand, the participation of the Philippine Government in the formation of the unarmed *Nakasaka* suggests the flavor of regime-control vigilantism.

William P. Kreml's essay, The Vigilante Personality, provides us with a discussion of the psychological aspects of vigilantism. The author provides his readers with a description of the essence of the vigilante's behavior, his personality and character.<sup>8</sup> Kreml describe a true vigilante as one who "lives in a state of some permanent psychological tension."<sup>9</sup> In the Philippine context, the researcher views the spectre of urban violence as to mean or equate to what Kreml described as "permanent psychological tension."

The compilation also discusses vigilantism in a comparative sense. Of particular interest is the essay by Fred R. von der Mehden entitled "Pariah" Communities and Violence. Mehden's essay explains the violence against ethnic minorities in Asia and Africa. The author also discusses the possible role that governments play in vigilante violence directed at "pariah" communities as, government instigated; government approved but not directed; or spontaneously popular.<sup>10</sup> Although the present phenomena does not relate to "pariah" communities in the Philippines, the fact that the root of the present anti-

communist vigilante movement traces its history from ethnic minorities, mobilized by the Marcos government and the military to fight the Muslim secessionist movement in the 70's, makes the essay relevant to the study.

The role of government in political violence to protect its existence is also discussed in the study conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Antonio S. Nale entitled, Employment of Natives in Counter-insurgency Operations in the Philippines. In this study, the then Lt. Col. Nale gives a comparative account of the utilization of ethnic minorities in the counterinsurgency experiences in Malaya, Philippines, and Laos. His positive endorsement of the use of natives in counterinsurgency is concluded with this statement:

Regardless of their national identity, aborigines, hill tribes, natives, or whatever they may be called, have several things in common. They are the neglected and the most often exploited sector of society. They are simple and trustworthy people. They are clannish and good warriors. Because of these qualities, natives everywhere particularly in Asia are very good potentials for insurgency or counterinsurgency warfare, if properly employed.<sup>11</sup>

#### Theory and Tactics of Political Terrorism

The book, Political Terrorism by Alex P. Schmid, presents an in-depth discussion of political violence. The volume brings together main concepts, theories, data-bases and literature to provide an excellent research guide to the subject of political terrorism.<sup>12</sup> The typology of

terrorism as presented by Schmid clearly discerns the various forms of terrorism. Of importance are the definitions provided which helps one to gradually grasp the distinctions between political terrorism, more particularly "insurgent terrorism," from the spectrum of political violence.

Relatedly, the writer presents the significance of identification strategy, described as "a key mechanism in the process of terrorism"<sup>13</sup> to generate support. The author expounded the significance of selective terror by quoting R.M. Mombolisse's Blueprint for Revolution:

Thus if the victim is a peace officer or an occupying soldier, others belonging to that class will identify themselves as members of a marked group. This group will probably be both terrorized and subjected to disorientation effect.<sup>14</sup>

In the context of the CPP/NPA political terrorism, the highly selective and discriminate use of political terror in organizational work and enforcement of inter-party discipline during the chairmanship of Jose Maria Sison slowly - deteriorated into an adventurist weapon adopted by the Party leadership in their effort to sustain the burgeoning Party and army.

Guerrillas and Terrorists, a book written by Richard Clutterbuck, discusses terrorism from the historical point of view. The book provides a simpler or lay man's approach to the understanding of political terrorism and the terrorist intentions and activities. Moreover, the author provides relevant observations of

factors in an environment; media, people and police, and their interrelationships, which generate awareness and develops cooperation in addressing terrorism.<sup>15</sup>

The volume Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare, edited by Sam Sarkesian, is a collection of works by political historians on the tactics and theory of revolutionary conflicts. The volume is a good research guide in the study of revolutionary warfare including terrorism.

Strategies and Tactics of Counterinsurgency  
to Combat Political Terrorism

Grant Wardlaw's Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics and Counter-Measures gives a basic understanding of the theory and tactics of political terrorism. The author also discusses the aspects of counter-measures and potential responses that a government can adopt. The book addresses topics such as the role of intelligence agencies in counter-terrorist operations, the relationships of police to defense forces, the development of anti-terrorist legislation and international treaties, and the way in which media reporting of terrorist acts might be regulated.<sup>16</sup>

The author, in explaining the nature of countermeasures against political terrorism took note of E. V. Walter's conclusion that "it is impossible for states, particularly in the post colonial era, to pursue policies

that will, except in rare instances, remove many of the conditions and grievances, real or imagined, that motivate terrorists."<sup>17</sup> Wardlaw concluded that the response to Walter's conclusion is the introduction of repressive counter-measures such as surveillance, increased police powers, greater involvement of armed forces in internal security, media restrictions, and others. However, he cautioned of the danger of overreaction which results in the destruction of the society being defended.<sup>18</sup>

A comprehensive overview of strategies and tactics of counterinsurgency is discussed in Ian F. W. Beckett's Armed Forces and Modern Counterinsurgency. Comparative techniques and experiences are discussed and examined which will be of great import in the analysis of data. The lessons from strategies and tactics of the recent and contemporary counter-insurgencies in Rhodesia and Latin America give examples of the multi-dimensional character of counterinsurgency. Noteworthy is the author's finding that the failure of the urban guerrillas in Latin America is largely due to the misreading of the very fine distinction between "public sympathy and public opposition."<sup>19</sup>

Field Circular (FC) 100-20, Low-Intensity Conflict, provides the US Army's doctrine for operations at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict referred to as a Low-Intensity Conflict. Of interest is the renewed importance and emphasis the field circular gives to the population and its mobilization in a counterinsurgency environment. The

FC, in the discussion on security stated that "The security effort should be directed toward establishing conditions whereby the local population can, with limited support, provide for its own security."<sup>20</sup>

Three other books are of relevance to the subject at hand. These are On Terrorism and Combating Terrorism by Ariel Merari; Defeating Communist Insurgency by Sir Robert Thompson, and Counter-Guerilla Operations; The Philippine Experience by Colonel Napoleon D. Valeriano and Charles Bohannon. These works provide historical experiences of strategies and tactics developed or used in insurgency and terrorist environments. Of importance are the insights that can be derived from the experiences of Colonel Valeriano during the Huk Campaign such as the role that civic action played, the relocation of population and Huk returnees, and the role of the local populace in the gathering of intelligence.<sup>21</sup> His experiences are relevant to this study in that lessons from the techniques used to gather intelligence may find application in an environment of emerging anti-communism such as what is transpiring in the Philippines. FC 100-20 stresses the importance of a "unified, centralized all-source intelligence system"<sup>22</sup> to an effective counterinsurgency operations. The role of a sympathetic population is essential in COIN.

### Summary

This chapter has reviewed the available materials pertinent to the study. It discussed the relevant aspects of vigilantism, political terrorism, and counterinsurgency as these theories, concepts, and lessons learned relate positively or negatively to the research.

Having scrutinized the available literature, the stage is thus set to establish the methodology by which the data collected will be processed, analyzed, and interpreted. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

## NOTES

1. B.H. Liddell-Hart, Strategy (Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974) 369.
2. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg, "Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence." Vigilante Politics, ed. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg (University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 1976) 4.
3. Ibid., 266.
4. Ibid., 5.
5. Ibid., 12.
6. Ibid., 12-17.
7. Ibid., 17.
8. William P. Kreml, "The Vigilante Personality", Vigilante Politics, ed. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg (University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 1976) Chapter 3.
9. Ibid., 43.
10. Fred R. von der Mehden, "Pariah Communities and Violence", Vigilante Politics, eds. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg (University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 1976) 221.
11. Lt. Col. Antonio S. Nale, "Employment of Natives in Counterinsurgency Operations in the Philippines" (Masteral Thesis, Command and General Staff College, 1983), 91.
12. Alex P. Schmid, Political Terrorism; A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature. (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing, Inc., 1975) 1.
13. Ibid., 201.
14. Ibid., 200.
15. Richard L. Clutterbuck, Guerrillas and Terrorists (Chicago University Press, 1980) 11.
16. Grant Wardlaw, Political Terrorism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) xi.

17. Ibid., 184.

18. Ibid., 184.

19. Ian F.W. Beckett, Armed Forces and Modern Counter-insurgency (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 123.

20. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, EC 100-20, Low-Intensity Conflict (Fort Leavenworth, Ks: U.S. Army CGSC, 1986), 3-3.

21. Napoleon D. Valeriano and Charles T.R. Bohannon, Counter-Guerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1962), 241.

22. U.S. Army CGSC, EC 100-20, 4-3.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the investigative framework in the collection, processing, analysis, and interpretation of the data. To achieve this, the data collected for the study will be discussed, followed by a description of the techniques and methods used in data collection. To be explained later, the research will generally combine the impacts of a retrospective survey approach with a historical method in an attempt to establish an understanding of the developments in the Philippines.

The last step will be to formulate procedures and set the criteria in the analysis and interpretation of data. The procedures will be so established that the conclusions drawn are simple and relevant to the thesis. Moreover, this chapter will also explain the intended utility of the completed research in the COIN effort in the Philippines and their possible application elsewhere.

### The Data

The data of this research project are generally classified as primary and secondary. Primary data consists of data collected (1) from a survey of Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel in U.S. Army Service Schools during the 1987-1988 school year, (2) from the interviews of persons who had personal experiences pertaining to the thesis topic and (3) from data extracted from original transcripts or minutes of events and activities such as records and governmental reports and scientific findings of social scientists.

Secondary data consists of published studies including unpublished dissertations and theses on political violence, vigilantism, insurgency, and counterinsurgency as well as news accounts, commentaries, and analysis of anti-communist vigilante movements, political violence, and government countermeasures.

### The Procedures of Collecting Data

This study is intended to describe the contemporary situation as it is unfolding in the Philippines and relate its significance to the observable conditions that brought about its development. As stated above, the study relies on primary and secondary data.

Data for a "retrospective survey"<sup>1</sup> of a population

having past experiences and/or involvement in the evolution of anti-communist vigilante movements in the Philippines supplements a review of historical materials. By "illuminating aspects of the past"<sup>2</sup>, the researcher aims to discover the conditions of the recent past which brought about the present situation. The understanding of the past and the present will hopefully provide a utile and effective approach to counterinsurgency.

#### The survey

The feeling of security by the survey population is deemed significant considering the factionalism existing in their armed forces and the insurgency situation confronting their nation today. Given a concern that responses of the survey population may be based on their knowledge of the identity of the researcher (widely perceived as being rightist), several procedures to assure anonymity were instituted. First, respondents were requested not to identify themselves on the questionnaire. Second, the office of the military attache in the Philippine embassy in Washington was used as the intermediary source of the survey documents. And third, the thesis committee chairman was made to appear as the researcher. This procedure was designed to encourage uninhibited responses to survey questions.

### The Treatment of Data

The treatment of data pertaining to the thesis question and sub-questions will basically follow a three step processes. First, questionnaires from the survey population will be screened to classify the respondents in accordance with their rank, branch of service, command or staff duties in the field, and years of active military service. This screening will also include classification of survey questions into groups of related items to the thesis question and sub-questions.

Second, an analysis of quantitative, incomplete, and qualitative data<sup>3</sup> will be conducted using the concepts presented by David J. Fox. The quantitative approach finds application to the first eleven questions of the survey. Questions 12 to 16 require the application of quantitative analysis described in chapter 22 of Fox's The Research Process in Education. This step will also include the analysis of data from "respondents who refuse to answer."<sup>4</sup> Fox classifies these data as incomplete which require attention.

And third, the results will be interpreted by applying the rules described by Lawrence Clark in part seven of his manual.<sup>5</sup> The determination of the frequency distribution, proportions, mean, median, and mode of the survey will come from Clark's manual.

## Summary

The chapter is an attempt to create the investigative framework that will be used in the research proper. This framework, as explained by Nan Lin, will guide the research in addressing five of the eight phases of social research: namely; measurement of information items, data collection, data analysis, interpretation and reporting, and integration of findings in theory or pragmatic use.<sup>6</sup>

The research basically uses the historical approach in its investigative design. This methodology is, however, reinforced by the use of retrospective survey of perceptions and interpretations of actual experiences by the limited population of Filipino officers, cadets, and enlisted personnel undergoing training in the United States of America.

Lastly, this chapter also explains the specifics of the method used in the phases of social research. These details will steer the study in the following chapters.

Notes

1. David J. Fox, The Research Process in Education (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), 429.
2. Ibid., 430.
3. Fox, The Research Process in Education, chaps. 21-22.
4. Ibid., 634.
5. Lawrence P. Clark, Introduction to Surveys and Interviews (New York: Policy Studies Associates, 1981), 8.
6. Nan Lin, Foundations of Social Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 5.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The communist guerrillas arrived shortly before midnight at an isolated village near here, and gathered residents for a meeting on the basketball court. Sternly, the rebels warned the farmers that they should not join the self-styled Citizens' Anti-Communist Army, a vigilante organization spreading through neighboring mountain villages. They were still lecturing when just after daybreak, 14 Army regulars and 100 vigilante farmers armed with homemade pistols and rifles suddenly appeared. The surprised guerrillas fired a few shots then fled down a jungle trail.

#### Introduction

This incident, described by Gregg Jones in his special report to the Washington Post, is becoming a familiar and growing response of the people towards the terrorism, agitation, and propaganda of the CPP/NPA. The anti-communist vigilante movement is spreading in the Philippines. Moreover, anti-communist vigilantism is fast developing into a major determinant factor in the political development of the country.

This chapter presents the data gathered with the corresponding interpretations that will lead the study to

the findings. The framework established in the methodology will be used in the analysis and interpretation of data.

This chapter will, firstly, present a historical account of the CPP's political terrorism. This section will describe the evolution of political violence from a very discriminate and selective practice of enforcing Party discipline under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison to an effective organizational tool and psychological weapon which the Party adopted during the tenure of Rodolfo Salas, a.k.a. Commander Bilog. Moreover, the author will discuss the contemporary role of political violence in the Philippine insurgency, as perceived by the present leadership of the CPP/NPA, following the capture of Commander Bilog. This presentation is deemed very relevant by the researcher in determining the conditions that brought about the evolution of anti-communist vigilantism.

This chapter will thereafter present the historical account of the anti-communist vigilante movement in the Philippines. This will set the stage for the presentation and analysis of the survey data.

Finally, this chapter will present the results of the survey conducted. This will be done through individual presentation of the thesis question or sub-questions, the accompanying related survey questions, the responses to these survey questions, and the analysis and interpretations of these findings.

### CPP/NPA Political Terrorism

Political terrorism is not a new tactic as far as the communist insurgency is concerned. The use of political violence during the chairmanship of the ideologue founder, Jose Ma. Sison, was confined to the highly selective execution of Party disciplinary punishment of erring members and to providing security to Party leaders in the urban centers. Terrorism, to a great extent, was practiced under the pretense of meting "revolutionary justice" to entice or coerce the villagers in the countryside. The employment of urban terrorism did not play a major role in the revolutionary strategy until Rodolfo Salas established firm control of the Party following the capture of the Party's founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison in 1977. Having been a one time leader of a five-man NPA hit squad himself, Salas oversaw the growth of political terrorism as a supplementary weapon of armed struggle.<sup>2</sup>

Ross Munro, a Time correspondent in Southeast Asia, described Salas as a "ruthless and brilliant leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines,"<sup>3</sup> who led the ambush slaying of three US Navy officers on a civic action mission in 1974. The ruthless and communist style of Salas, combined with the fanaticism of the Party's cadres who spread the revolutionary zeal in the countryside during the later half of the 70's, account significantly for the

success of the CPP/NPA in establishing a new united front infrastructure and network.<sup>4</sup> Munro added that comparing Salas with Sison, the former:

...seems from the beginning to have been more concerned with ends than with means. Whatever is required to win the struggle for power is justified. It was Salas for instance, who wrote or at least authorized those party's carte-blanche policy toward the killing of civilians in NPA guerrilla base areas."<sup>5</sup>

The central committee decided in 1980 to translate the organizational success into Party and guerrilla memberships. The move was timed with the economic problem then confronting the Marcos regime. By combining the coercive effect of political terror with the social and economic lure of communist agitation and propaganda, the process of growth proceeded almost unnoticed or, at best, was ignored by the Marcos regime. Thus, from a nuisance guerrilla strength of about 2,000 in 1981, it grew to about 8,000 in 1984<sup>6</sup> and 10,000 to 12,000 by 1985.<sup>7</sup> Leif Rosenberger's article in 1985 states that:

...CPP membership between 1980 and December 1983 grew threefold, from 10,000 to about 30,000. CPP regional organizations increased from 12 to 17 during the period. Guerrilla fronts jumped from 28 to 45. And the total of full- and part-time NPA fighters (excluding local village militia) increased from 8,000 to 20,000 during the period.<sup>8</sup>

The resulting dramatic increase in party and guerrilla membership, regardless of CPP exaggerated statistics, created a great demand within the communist

insurgent movement for arms and logistical sustainment. The growing guerrilla army, thinly spread around the archipelago, was becoming a sustainment nightmare to the sophisticated support network of the communist movement. Even the external support generated by the Party's international organ, headed by ex-priest Luis Jalandoni, from "solidarity groups" in Western democracies could not sustain the requirement of the Party much less its guerrilla army. This external support, in the late 70's and early 80's, was sufficiently funding not only social programs in the countryside and the organizational activities in the urban centers of the movement<sup>9</sup> but also in part sustaining the arms and logistics requirement of the much smaller insurgent army. Moreover, the rate of local arms procurement from military actions ranging from ambushes to raids of isolated military detachments and towns could not cope with the increasing demand.

These realities were aptly described by Munro as:

...Under Salas the CPP and the NPA had been paying less attention to ideology, and more to achieving victory; to collecting more money and guns to make that victory possible; and to cutting down anyone who might stand in the way.<sup>10</sup>

Ross Munro continued by stating that these realities created a new kind of guerrilla leader unmindful of the means to solve the weapons and financial requirement of the movement. It was Romulo Kintanar, sent by the Party to Mindanao in the mid-70's to conduct training and

organizational consolidation of CPP/NPA remnants, who improvised, tested, and applied the most practical solution to the economic (not ideological) nature of the problem.<sup>11</sup> Kintanar organized and trained small hit teams which assassinated policemen and military personnel often in crowded areas, to take their guns. The added psychological windfall by selectively targeting corrupt police or military personnel diffused any initial negative reactions from the older generation of Party leaders and encouraged the application of this type of error nationwide to augment the needs of the guerilla movement. This urban terrorism was dubbed **agaw armas** (grab the weapons) operations.

A more violent experiment was conducted by Kintanar in the city of Davao to widen the CPP/NPA traditional "tax base" consisting of mine operators, logging camps, plantations, and ranches. The hit squads, more commonly known by the mid-80's as "sparrow units", enforced tax collection from businessmen. Kidnapping, bombing, and vandalizing of businesses exacerbated the already crippling violence of the **agaw armas** operations.

In late 1985, Romulo Kintanar was promoted to head the NPA's central military staff and its national operational command. His promotion saw not only the endorsement of urban guerrilla warfare in CPP publications but also the widespread application of this tactic in other parts of the country.<sup>12</sup> Although the level of CPP/NPA political terrorism intensified, it nonetheless attracted

marginal attention of the media, religious sector, and cause-oriented groups because of the following reasons:

1. The Manila press including the foreign-press contingent were influenced by the more progressive elements of Philippine society and were preoccupied with the thriving anti-Marcos reporting of the period.

2. The human rights organizations in the Philippines, particularly the pro-communist Task Force Detainees (TFD), were only reporting the violations committed by the military. As quoted by Munro from his interview of TFD spokesman Fidel Agcaoile in the summer of 1985, "Definitely our main line of inquiry [is] human rights abuses committed by the government." TFD not only refused to investigate abuses of the NPA but instead rationalized their inaction in respect to the right of the people to revolt. This is not surprising because TFD was organized and staffed by ex-political detainees connected with the communist movement.<sup>13</sup>

A power struggle within the Party ensued following the CPP boycott of the February 1986 presidential election that isolated the CPP/NPA from the "People Power" Revolution which toppled Marcos. It appears that the advocates of political struggle eventually lost to the more militant leaders of the Party in spite of the arrest of Salas in late 1986. James Clad outlined these developments and described it as the triumph of the "Mindanao faction"

of the Party (referring to the growing influence of Kintanar in the politburo and executive committee). Among others these shifts included:<sup>14</sup>

Decisions were made to strengthen "urban partisan" units throughout the country since March [1987].

At the same time, there was a stepping-up of the NPA's urban offensive, moving slowly from "revolutionary punishment" of specific offenders to an "open season" stance towards topline counter-revolutionary enemies. Also there were unprecedented decisions to deliberately target US and other foreign personnel.

New initiatives were made - first published in July - to establish or renew fraternal relations with communist parties in power, especially the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

The evidence of this shift to intensify the use of political violence is best described by the following:

1. The assassination on 2 August 1987 of local government secretary Jaime Ferrer who sponsored the government's organization of unarmed anti-communist vigilantes.

2. The assassination of three American servicemen near Clark Air Force Base in Pampanga on 28 October 1987.

3. Trebling the size of the Alex Boncayao Brigade (ABB) from 60-70 urban guerrillas to about 300 and the organization of a similar partisan unit named Lorena Barros Brigade (LBB) in Lucena City, some 250 kilometers south of Manila.<sup>15</sup>

4. The increase in the number of assassinations of policemen and military personnel in Metro Manila immediately after the 2-month ceasefire which ended on 10 February 1987. By the end of October 1987, Time Magazine's estimate of sparrow victims numbered more than 50 policemen and military personnel including four Lieutenant Colonels.<sup>16</sup>

The observations of Ross Munro in 1985 were echoed on September 1987 by Richard D. Fisher, Jr., policy analyst of the Heritage Foundation specializing in Pacific and Southeast Asian affairs, when he wrote:

A minimal program for the Philippines is outlined in the January 1985 program of its National Democratic Front (NDF). After establishing a "Peoples Democratic Republic," according to this document, the NDF will terminate all treaties with the U.S., cancel all foreign loans, and create "people's tribunals" that will "try and punish the enemies of the revolution." A preview of this, reminiscent of the rampage of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge a decade ago, began in late 1985, when an internal CPP purge in Northern Mindanao went out of control. Witnesses report brutal summary executions of villagers suspected of being spies; 690 bodies are estimated to reside in one "killing field" alone.<sup>17</sup>

It was this environment of political violence, perpetrated by the communist movement in Davao City and other urban centers, that drew response from the people and the birth of anti-communist vigilantes. The reaction was direct and spontaneous. It was also violent.

Growth and Effectiveness of Anti-Communist Vigilantes  
in the Philippines

Every society that is holding together contains groups who value their place in the system (even if it is modest) and who prefer things as they are. If they believe that criminals are escaping punishment because of corruption or leniency, or that people who seek a change in social status and approved values are gaining power, or that the legitimate authorities are unable or unwilling to preserve the present order, they frequently take violent action to defend their position.<sup>18</sup>

The emergence of anti-communist vigilante movements in the Philippines came right after the February 1986 "People Power" Revolution. These groups evolved in response to the atrocities of the CPP/NPA in their respective areas.<sup>19</sup> Some of these groups have armed components now officially acknowledged by the national government as effective instruments of counterinsurgency. They not only enjoy the support of the military but also the local and national governments. However, these groups have been viewed with concern even if significant psychological gains are already achieved. While there appears to be general agreement on the political and psychological impact in the short term, it is viewed with concern on how successful it will be in the long term.

To date, between 250 to 600 anti-communist groups have been organized throughout the country. The government is again banking on people power to contain the communist insurgency problem which is spreading from the countryside

to the urban centers. The government has been inspired by the success of two vigilante groups, the armed *Alsa Masa* (People's Uprising) and the unarmed *Nagkahiusang Katawhan Alang sa Kalinaw* (*Nakasaka*) or United People for Peace in getting the communist to surrender, particularly in Davao City and Davao del Sur. They are believed to be the first people's organizations to have risen up against communism in the country. The *Alsa Masa* and *Nakasaka* profess to be freedom fighters but they differ in tactics. The *Alsa Masa* believes that firearms must be carried by members to defend themselves against the NPA. On the other hand, *Nakasaka* does not believe that "bullets and guns" will solve the country's insurgency problem. It conducts peaceful operations such as holding massive educational campaigns against communism, organizing vigilantes equipped with indigeneous weapons to ward off communists, setting up monitoring and alarm systems, and designating runners to tip police or military of rebel movements.

The *Alsa Masa* was founded in April 1986 by a former logistic officer of the NPA who was fed up with insurgent atrocities, such as liquidation of non-sympathizers and forced taxation imposed on the poor to support the communist movement. A year after it was founded, *Alsa Masa* has been credited by some government officials for the mass surrender of NPA rebels after the 60-day ceasefire. Its members have helped the military by pinpointing rebel

hideouts, leading them to mass graves of victims of NPA atrocities, and guarding respective villages, ready for confrontation. It proved very effective in neutralizing insurgent elements. Due to the rapid expansion of the **Alsa Masa**, there is a growing number of rebels coming back to the fold of the law. The people of Davao generally feel that the **Alsa Masa** is an important factor in the sudden decrease of CPP/NPA activities in the area.

The **Nakasaka** has been responsible for the surrender of many communist rebels. Thus, **Nakasaka** is considered a showcase of a civilian group that has stood up against communist rebels. On April 1987, President Aquino described **Nakasaka** as "embodying a brand of people power-center positive community action of the type that won her the presidency."<sup>20</sup> Significantly, the government endorsed the formation of **Nakasaka** movements in rebel-infested areas of Luzon and the Visayas. However, it was stressed that these anti-communist vigilantes will not be armed with guns.

The growth of **Alsa Masa** and **Nakasaka** could be attributed to the support of the government and the populace. The change in both the national and local leadership has given the people fresh hope for an improved life, denying many rebels of their reason to continue fighting. It is evident that there is indeed a great advantage of having civilians help in the counterinsurgency campaign and to use the insurgent's own tactics against them. The people now are informing the military of the

whereabouts and the hideouts not only of rebels but other criminal elements as well. The growth and effectiveness of the vigilante movement was described by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs before the Subcommittee on Asian Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on September 10, 1987 as:

I noted in the May hearing of this subcommittee the growth of citizen's groups organized to defend their communities against communist depredations. In certain areas, such as Davao city on Mindanao in the southern Philippines, these groups have succeeded in dramatically reducing NPA influence and violence.<sup>21</sup>

This observation supports the claim of *Alsa Masa* supporters to correspondents Bob Levin and Lin Neumann in the spring of 1987 that the anti-communist vigilante is "responsible for the surrender of nearly 10,000 NPA supporters and sympathizers since 1986."<sup>22</sup>

President Aquino's announcement that the government will adopt the *Nakasaka* initiative as state policy and programs brings to the fore the issue of vigilante action in fighting communist insurgency. This means that the government will develop, organize and fund citizen's groups throughout the country, similar to the *Nakasaka*, to flush out communist insurgent activities, assist the police and military in their counterinsurgency efforts, and fight these enemies of the state in whatever way feasible or necessary.

The proliferation of anti-communist vigilante groups show the growing awareness of the people of the threat posed by the communist insurgency. A good example is a significant development in Region 5 with the organization of vigilante groups as a result of the bombing of five bridges which paralyzed transportation in the area. If properly handled, these groups could greatly bolster the counter-insurgency campaign of the Aquino government because of the people's full support and active participation. Vigilantism is seen by many as a positive development since it allows concerted civic action to preserve peace and order in areas troubled by insurgent terrorism. However, the government should investigate the reported abuse, coercion, killing and other extra-legal tactics employed by some vigilante groups to prevent this social phenomena from degenerating into criminal elements which could benefit the rebel in the end thereby creating another problem. There is a need to examine closely the possible long term impact of this project in relation to the government's program to build the foundations of strong and responsive democratic institutions in the Philippines.

#### The Survey

This section will present a summary of data on the survey population and the general characteristics of the

response. The factors that bear on the survey conducted will also be presented.

### The Survey Population

The research, as established earlier, selected all the known Filipino military personnel undergoing training in Continental U.S. (CONUS) as the population of the survey. Ordinarily, an average of 150 AFP personnel are in CONUS undergoing training according to the Office of the Defense Attache in Washington. However, the survey was conducted at the beginning of a calendar year when trainees have either completed or are being processed to undergo training. This oversight reduced the number of population from about 150 to a low 67. This period of trainee turnover resulted in the misrouting of a number of questionnaires which in turn affected the rate of response.

### The Response

Table 4-1 Survey Population and Response

<u>Rank Level</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>% R/P</u>
Senior Officers	11	6	54.5
Field Grade Officers	18	9	50
Company Grade and Lower	38	9	23.7
Unknown		1	
Total	67	25	37.3

From Table 4-1 above, the rate of response is a low 37.3 percentage points of the population of 67 AFP personnel in Continental U.S. Service Schools. Significantly, the company grade and lower level AFP personnel had the lowest response rate of 23.7 percentage points.

The distribution by branch of service of the respondents is 13 Army, six Constabulary, four Navy, and two from the Air Force. 22 of the 25 respondents are regular officers, 16 of whom are either cadets or graduates of service academies. The remaining six are direct commission. Only two of the respondents are reserve officers coming from the ROTC program. The average length of service of the respondents is 17 years.

#### Origin and Growth of Vigilantism

Thesis Question: What are the conditions that brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippines?

The data on this thesis question are responses to survey questions 6 and 7. Survey question 6 asks the respondents to rank order the factors that gave rise to

anti-communist *Alsa Masa* (see Appendix C). Survey question 7, on the other hand, asks the respondents to rank order the factors which made *Alsa Masa* a success. Tables 4-2 and 4-3 below illustrate the response.

Factor	Rank Order					
	1	2	3	4	5	0
Ouster of ex-Pres. Marcos			2		1	16
Pres. Aquino's COIN Program	2	1	5	8		8
Creation of AFP Intelligence	5	2	7	2	1	9
Govt./ AFP failure to protect people	4	7	6	3		4
NPA violence	12	10	1	1		
Others	3	3	1	1		2

Eighty-eight percent of the respondents point to the violence perpetrated by the NPA "sparrow units" in Davao City as the factor that bears most on the rise of vigilantism. A total of 11 or 44% say that the rise of anti-communist vigilantes in Davao City reflects the weakness of the Government and the military to protect the people. Moreover, the 44% of the respondents say that the ouster of ex-President Marcos has no relevance to the rise of vigilantism in Davao City. This findings clearly relate to the discussions in the earlier section of this chapter.

Table 4-3		Success of <i>Alsa Masa</i>					
Factor	Rank Order						
	1	2	3	4	5	0	
Efficient police and military	2	11	5	1		5	
Support against CPP/NPA violence	18	5				2	
Good AFP Intel.	1	5	12	1		4	
Religious beliefs		2	2	3		16	
Others	2	2	1	1		4	

The survey found the growth of popular sentiment against CPP/NPA violence, 18 or 72% of respondents, as a determinant factor that made *Alsa Masa* a success in combating the communist movement in Davao City. This is followed by efficient military/police organization, 11 or 44% second votes, and having good AFP intelligence the third important factor.

The response to this particular survey question indicate a contrary perception, 15 or 60%, in the AFP that religious beliefs have no relevance to the success of *Alsa Masa* in Davao City.

#### Role of Philippine Government in Anti-Communist Vigilante Movements

The spontaneous character and extra-legal nature of anti-communist vigilantes bring the the study to the

question of government role in these kind of movements.  
 Table 4-4 below relates particularly to these questions.

Question	SA	A	NO	DA	SDA	Rem
(Alsa Masa) effective COIN Strategy?						
Survey Question 8	15	8	1		1	SA
(Nakasaka) next step in mobilization?						
Survey Question 9	7	5	9	1	3	NO
Alsa Masa/Nakasaka is same as CHDF?						
Survey Question 10	8	4	5	5	3	SA
Incorporate movements into COIN strategy?						
Survey Question 11	16	6			2	SA

Legend:

SA : Strongly Agree                      A : Agree  
 NO : No Opinion                         DA : Disagree  
 SDA : Strongly Disagree                Rem : Remarks

Thesis sub-question: Should the Philippine Government organize, control and direct the anti-communist vigilantes as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency programs?

The data needed for this sub-question are the responses to question 11 and 13 of the questionnaire. Question 11 asks if a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy of the Philippine Government should include the anti-communist vigilante movements. Question 13 is an open-ended question asking which agency of the Philippine Government should exercise command and control over anti-communist vigilante movements.

Of the 25 who responded to survey question 11, 16 or 64% strongly agree that the anti-communist vigilante movements should be incorporated into a comprehensive COIN strategy of the Government. Another six or 24% agree to the incorporation. The remaining three or 12% are distributed from two strongly disagreeing and one non-response.

The response to survey question 13 reflects the mood that pervades the AFP on civil and military relations. The respondents are split in their perceptions on which agency of the government should exercise command and control of the anti-communist vigilante movements. Half endorse civilian agencies including the Department of National Defense (DND) while the other half says the police and or military units should provide the command and control. However, a closer look at the response shows 12 favors military, four pointing to DND, eight to civilian agencies and one without opinion on the question. The common concern expressed in the survey against local executives exercising command and control is the history of mis-using volunteer groups for personal ends by unscrupulous politicians. The response also reflects the enduring traditional belief of the AFP on the principle of civilian supremacy. Taking into consideration the perceived mistrust between the military and the civilian government, the response rate of 32% favoring the civil exercise of command and control remains significant.

## Role of Anti-Communist Vigilante Movements

Thesis Question: What is the role of anti-communist vigilantes in the counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines?

This thesis question is discussed by presenting data from the survey questions that bear on the role of anti-communist vigilantes in counterinsurgency programs, in other government programs, and in post-insurgency Philippine society. Response to survey questions 8, 11, and 12 relate to COIN programs. The response to survey questions 10 and 14 impacts on other government programs. The response to survey question 15 specifically relates to the role in post-insurgency Philippine society.

### **In Counterinsurgency Programs**

Of the respondents 16 or 64% strongly agree that *Alsa Masa* or anti-communist vigilantes are an effective COIN strategy in areas affected by CPP/NPA political violence. Another eight or 32 agree and the remaining one disagree strongly.

As presented earlier, a total of 88% of the respondents endorse in their response to survey question 11 the inclusion of the vigilante movements in a comprehensive COIN program of the Government.

The response to survey question 12 shows that 13 or 52% sees no difference between anti-communist vigilante movements and the para-military Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF). The commonality, as seen by the respondents, is the similar objectives of both vigilantes and CHDF's to protect the community from communist depredations. The respondents find the differences as follows:

1. Anti-communist vigilante movements are spontaneously organized by the people while CHDF units are deliberately formed by the Government through the AFP. The vigilantes are borne out of necessity to survive.

2. Membership in vigilante movements is open to all members of a community as against the selective character of CHDF membership.

3. Logistical support for vigilante movements come from within the community particularly the businesses affected by CPP/NPA progressive taxation. The CHDF's draw their logistical support from the government.

4. The anti-communist vigilante movements and CHDF's differ only in name.

#### **In Other Government Programs**

The response to survey question 10 (Table 4-4 above) shows that a total of 12 or 48% agree that **Nakasaka** and **Alsa Masa** are CHDF's (home guards) with a new name. Eight or 32% disagree while 20% have no opinion. This

response, when cross referenced with the response to survey question 12, shows a perception that the objectives of both vigilante movements and CHDF's coincide. In essence, the respondents feel that the impact of vigilante movements in other government programs is complementary if not a ready substitute to the discredited CHDF's.

The response to survey question 14 can be classified into positive and negative impacts of vigilante movements to other government programs. The anti-communist vigilante movements:

1. Are a strong deterrent to urban terrorism;
2. Are great boost to the government and military intelligence and counterintelligence efforts;
3. Are a effective psychological weapon against the myth of CPP/NPA omnipresence and invincibility;
4. Are a cheap alternative to the military requirements of counterinsurgency. Vigilante movements are an inexpensive method of organizing and maintaining an army for a third world, debt ridden, and economically dependent nation like the Philippines;
5. Raise people's awareness of the communist threat and are an effective reminder that united a community can stand against the intimidation and violence of the CPP/NPA; and,
6. Provide a venue for ex-NPA's to safeguard themselves and their families and assist in the neutralization of the communist insurgent's terrorism.

On the other hand, the negative impacts of the vigilante movements as seen by the respondents include:

1. Vigilantism is reflective of the Government and the military's failure to secure the people from the terrorism and violence of the CPP/NPA and other lawless elements.

2. Vigilante movements when they go out of control may backfire on the COIN effort of the Government and its human rights standing before the western world.

3. Armed vigilante movements will result in the proliferation of firearms in the hands of civilians which may be a future problem of the Government.

#### **In Post-Insurgency Philippine Society**

On the question a future role for anti-communist vigilante movements, 20% of the respondents find no utility of these movements in a post-insurgency Philippine society. To the 80%, however, vigilante movements can take various roles that will ensure community defense, nurture anti-communist consciousness, become an integral part of the nation's defense forces, and serve as the Government's "eyes and ears" in the area.

The response, although limited, validates the views of Colonel Victor Batac, captor of Jose Ma. Sison in 1976 and formerly the Chief of Production Branch, Office of the Deputy Chief of Constabulary Staff for Intelligence, C2:

Anyway, the CVGs (Civilian Volunteer Groups) can be transformed to a number of alternative organizations once the conflict is over. They can become *barrio ronda* [village patrol]. They can also form the core of sectoral organizations. They can serve as anti-crime forces. I have a high level of confidence that very few of these groups will ever degenerate into bandit groups and if they ever do so, it would be easier to neutralize them because they will not have the ideological commitment and the organizational backing. They will not have the necessary public support.

### General Comments

A very significant observation by some of the respondents is the support vigilante movements gets from President Aquino. The hesitancy of President Aquino to support the vigilante movements is interpreted by some sectors in Philippine society, notably the military, as an indicator of leftist influence in her government. A more emphatic and unwavering endorsement from a popular chief executive is seen by the respondents as an important ingredient of it's continuing success. Moreover, supporters of vigilante movements argue that the polarization of Philippine society that can result from the unqualified endorsement of the President, have at the very least disastrous consequence to the already waning political appeal of the CPP/NPA. As succinctly stated by a proponent of anti-communist vigilantism and critic of the President Aquino's "endorse yesterday, disband today, and re-endorse tomorrow" attitude toward the anti-communist vigilante movements whom I will quote but not identify:

The President of the Republic can not go around saying --"Well you see the communists are the enemies of the people but they are victims of circumstances and so we have to give them the chance but then they violated the law so that they have to be punished yet they are our brother Filipinos so we have to be more understanding ...

The respondents find anti-communist vigilante movements as a "strong response against communism in the Philippines." One aptly accounts the efficacy to the involvement of the people and the spontaneous nature of its origin. On the whole, the response points to government support and control.

#### Summary

This chapter has presented the data from the historical and survey research conducted. These data were analyzed, interpreted, and discussed relative to the thesis questions and sub-questions stated in chapter one.

The findings presented in this chapter will form the data base from where the conclusions and recommendations of this study will be drawn.

### Notes

1. Gregg Jones, "Civilians Aiding Fight Against Rebel", Washington Post, April 1, 1987, A15.
2. Ross H. Munro, "The New Khmer Rouge", Commentary 8 no.6 (December, 1985): 19.
3. Ibid., 19.
4. Leif R. Rosenberger, "Philippine Communism and the Soviet Union", Survey: A Journal of East and West Studies 29 no.1 (Spring, 1985): 117.
5. Munro, "The New Khmer Rouge", 30.
6. Gareth Porter, "Philippine Communism After Marcos", Problems of Communism 35 (September-October 1987): 16.
7. Jose P. Magno, Jr., and A. James Gregor, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Philippines", Asian Survey 26 no.5 (5 May 1986): 502.
8. Rosenberger, "Philippine Communism After Marcos", 118.
9. Richard D. Fisher, Jr., "Confronting the Mounting Threat to Philippine Democracy", Asian Studies Center: Background 67 (September 3, 1987): 6.
10. Munro, "The New Khmer Rouge", 31.
11. Ibid., 31.
12. Ibid., 32.
13. Ibid., 22.
14. James Clad, "Betting on Violence", Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), 17 September 1987, 35.
15. James Clad, "War on the Streets", FEER, 26 November 1987, 24.
16. Ibid., 24.
17. Fisher, "Confronting the Mounting Threat to Philippine Democracy", 4.

18. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg, "Concluding Observations", Vigilante Politics, eds. H. Jon Rosenbaun and Peter C. Sederberg (University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc., 1976) 273.

19. James Clad, "Vigilante Power", FEER, 23 April 1987, 33.

20. Ibid., 32.

21. David F. Lambertson, "Democracy in the Philippines", Department of State Bulletin 87 (November 1987): 21.

22. Bob Levin and Lin Neumann, "A War of Vigilantes", Maclean 100 (March 30, 1987): 26.

23. Colonel Victor Batac is a young, respected officer in the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Constabulary in particular. Colonel Batac is credited with the capture in 1976 of the then chairman of the CPP, Jose Maria Sison. For years, subject officer worked at the Production Branch, C2. He later headed that branch until his appointment as Provincial Commander of Albay, Bicol Region. Colonel Batac is a known close associate of the renegade officer Colonel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan. Colonel Batac's insights and strategic mind is believed to be a major influence in the planning and execution of the "People Power " Revolution of 1986.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

....It is to make the civilian "sea" no longer hospitable to the guerrilla "fish." The communists call this sea the "mass base," including in that term all those not actively hostile to their guerillas. As they well appreciate, without this mass base no guerrilla movement can long survive. Neither can an indigenous government.

Colonel N.D. Valeriano, AFP (Ret.)  
and Lieutenant Colonel Charles  
T.R. Bohannon, AUS (Ret)  
Counter-Guerrilla Operations: The  
Philippine Experience (1962)

#### Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the study presented the findings of the survey and the other data obtained from the research. The findings of the study identified the conditions that brought about the organization, the role of the Philippine Government in the organization, direction, control, and the future role of anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippines.

The purpose of this chapter is to focus on these findings in answering the questions and sub-questions in chapter one. On the whole, the study pointed to the utility of anti-communist vigilante movements in the counter-

insurgency effort in the Philippines. In the same manner, the study found the future of this kind of movement a possible nuisance to Philippine society if no effective and efficient control mechanisms are established.

Finally, this chapter will make suggestions for future research on related issues identified in the course of the study.

### The Research Questions

Question 1. What are the conditions which brought about the organization and growth of anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippines?

This study points to the spectre of CPP/NPA political violence, the resulting economic strain of "progressive taxes" exacted on the masses and businesses, and the inspiring motivation of the 1986 "People Power" Revolution as the conditions that bred courage to the people to openly reject and confront, "vigilante style," the communist movement.

It appears that the CPP/NPA's experiment in urban terrorism and the bloody internal purges backfired. Cadres who got wind that they were already targets for liquidation did the most obvious thing...sought safety with the military and from then on fought their former comrades.

Invariably also, the people had to choose from parting with the little that they had or drive the insurgents out. The continuing violence in the countryside where insurgent presence is established spawn a retaliation in kind. Obviously, the insurgents have become more repressive than the politico-psychological intention of political violence, forcing civilians to fight or die.

The editors P.C. Sederberg and H. Jon Rosenberger in their essay, Concluding Observations stated that:

....as long as individuals and groups exist who maintain a strong social and psychological identification with the established order, significant challenges to that order will most likely provoke violent resistance.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the context of the recent and contemporary Philippine environment, the violent and spontaneous reaction of the people to the political terrorism of the CPP/NPA is anchored on the following:

- i. The organization of anti-communist vigilante movements is an outgrowth of CPP/NPA political terrorism going out of control. The insurgents' departure from their traditional use of political terror (enforcing Party discipline and coercing the rural population into supporting the movement) to an urban based logistical and psychological apparatus was the provocation that sparked violent resistance. The violent purge that the CPP launched in the Northern Mindanao in 1985 against what they termed as "deep penetration agents"<sup>2</sup> opened the eyes

of not only the people but also the insurgent members of the violent future of a communist victory.

The rise to Party leadership of the strong advocates of the use of terrorism as an important component of the revolutionary struggle, such as Romulo Kintanar, Jose de Vera, Roberto Tiamzon and others do not augur well for the peace and order of both urban and rural areas in the Philippines. This escalation in the use of urban terrorism is manifested in the increasing number of partisan units, the inclusion of high ranking officials and foreign nationals in the target list, and the exportation of "sparrow operations" to Metro Manila.

2. The organization of anti-communist vigilante movements is a manifestation of the new found courage of the Filipino people to stand together against dictatorship and violence. The media coverage of priests, nuns, and ordinary civilians bravely standing against Marcos' war machines during the 1986 "People Power" Revolution provided the motivation to rise against the CPP/NPA campaign of terror in Davao City. The "People Power" Revolution of 1986, the fear of CPP/NPA violence, and the frustration that grew out of the Government and the military's inability to provide protection are the interrelated factors that brought about the formation of *Alsa Masa* and its growth into local self-defense organizations called "vigilantes."<sup>3</sup>

3. A significant element that brought about the formation of anti-communist vigilante movements is the insurgent loss of political appeal arising from the non-violent transition from the Marcos dictatorship to the popular presidency of Corazon Aquino.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Party's decision to boycott the February 1986 Presidential election which led to the ouster of Marcos is seen even by Party members as a strategic failure of the CPP's national leadership. The surrender of Froiland Mureal, Front 3 secretary in Northern Mindanao, is rooted in the Party decision to boycott the February 1986 election. Mureal described it as a "big error of the national [CPP] leadership."<sup>5</sup>

Question 2. Should the Philippine Government organize, control, and direct the anti-communist vigilantes as part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency program?

The Aquino Government took the correct step in taking the lead in the organization, control, and direction of the anti-communist vigilantes in the Philippines. Given a condition where the people find courage to rise against the communist movement, the opportunity to take the political and psychological initiative more than compensate for the risk of vigilantes going out of control. After all, the purpose of a Government role in the organization, control, and direction of vigilantes is to establish the

mechanism which will provide command and control of the anti-communist movements.

This is social mobilization at work. It is the best form of social mobilization for it is founded in a genuine people's rebuff of the communist movement. FC 100-20 states that "popular support is essential for a successful counterinsurgency program."<sup>6</sup> Although the popular support of the Aquino Government is not the result of preconditions stated by the Circular such as "administrative and management capabilities,"<sup>7</sup> but rather, of people's vigilante reaction to the campaign of terror of the CPP/NPA and their frustration over the inability of the Government and the military to secure the people in their communities, the situation affords the Government an opportunity to pursue "institutional development,"<sup>8</sup> and increase its credibility before the people.

Colonel Ismael Z. Villareal, Deputy J3 and Chief of Staff AFP Operation Center, in his article Negotiating with the Communists in the Philippines wrote:

....the government should borrow a page from the CPP's own book and mobilize and organize the population in a pro-government cause. Just as the CPP concentrates on maintaining a sustaining pro-revolutionary population, so the government needs its own well-organized and well-mobilized support structure. Military operations should be ordered only to strengthen, undergird, and sustain this primary effort.

A reinforcing view of unwavering government support to anti-communist vigilante movements was expressed

by Colonel Victor Batac in a note to this researcher, which says:

Very few people realize that this [insurgency] is a zero sum game between the insurgents and the Government. Once a civilian commits himself to fighting the insurgents, that is one less guy that the communist terrorists (CTs) can influence and mobilize against the government. The presence of volunteer [vigilante] groups in a barangay [village] also balances the terror poised by the CTs. It provides the other people the perfect excuse to reject or refuse to cooperate with the CTs.<sup>10</sup>

Colonel Villareal continued by concluding that a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy should give priority to improved government services at the grass-roots level wherein communist political infrastructure is the strongest.<sup>11</sup>

A related and relevant question on government's role in anti-communist vigilantism is which agency or agencies should exercise command and control of the anti-communist vigilante movements. The respondents in the survey endorse the Government's strategy of the giving the lead to the Department of Local Governments in the organization and control of the vigilante movements. A greater percentage of the same respondents feel that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is the governmental agency that has the capability to exercise command and control over the anti-communist vigilante movements. The researcher feels that this equally divergent opinion of the survey population is a manifestation of the following:

1. The responses are reflective of the experiences of the AFP officers who witnessed the formation of vigilante movements by either the active participation or encouragement of a local military commander as in the **Alsa Masa** of Davao City or the initiative of the local political leader as in the **Nakasaka** of Davao del Norte.

2. The responses reflect the enduring belief within the military on the primacy of civilian authority. On the other hand, a history of mis-using citizen's groups by politicians for their personal ends explains the other half of the responses.

Again, the researcher finds the views of Colonel Batac not only pragmatic but also viable. Colonel Batac argues that although the military connection is necessary to complete the "anti-communist triad" of armed civilian volunteers, un-armed organized masses, and a committed military, such relationships have to be exercised covertly to maintain the spontaneous character of vigilante organizing and sustain the "felt need" for such organizations. He added that the military connection, if at all needed, should be established to facilitate basic command functions such as doctrine, organization, training, equipping, and communication. Colonel Batac points to a civilian, preferably a former communist cadre, who should act as the vigilante's political officer. He cited the organizational experience, knowledge of the enemy, level of commitment, and the cadre's own experiences to rebut CTs

propaganda as some of the advantages of a former CT cadre providing the leadership.

Ultimately, the Government, particularly the President, should provide the lead in harnessing the ground swell against communism. President Aquino offers the single unifying element, which can equal if not better the charisma and success of the late President Ramon Magsaysay while waging a campaign against the CPP/NPA predecessor in the 50's. By placing a personal touch to her government's endorsement of the anti-communist movements instead of simple lip service as depicted by the ambivalence of the initial Government stand, the counterinsurgency effort particularly in the countryside might find new vigor to parry the political and psychological inroads of the insurgents. The President's continuing popularity is described by Time Magazine's interview of a rural vendor in November 1987:

Crossing herself, the fruit vendor offers a prayer for President Aquino. "Cory is our guiding light," she says, "our savior. She has not sinned against her fellowmen. It's the people around her who have wronged us."<sup>12</sup>

Question 3. What is the role of anti-communist vigilantes in the counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines?

Carolina G. Hernandez, a respected professor in the Philippines, observed in her 1987 review of the "redemocratization" process in the Philippines that the

failure of the government's peace initiatives prompted President Aquino to adopt a hard line approach towards the communist insurgency and has reluctantly tolerated the use of civilian volunteers in the conduct of counter-insurgency.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Hernandez added that:

The use of volunteers [anti-communist vigilantes] would be controversial for as long as they remained inadequately - if at all-trained and supervised and for as long as the government response to insurgency<sup>14</sup> remained tilted in favor of the military approach.

Alarming and damaging accusations by human rights groups on the activities of the anti-communist vigilantes are increasing. The latest report of the London based Amnesty International, the New York based Lawyers Committee on Human Rights (LCHR), and the Asian Commission on Human Rights are one in criticizing the Aquino government in endorsing the organization of "Civilian Volunteer Self Defense Organizations" (CVSOs), the official term for anti-communist vigilantes.<sup>15</sup> Amnesty International added that:

...these "vigilantes", which the government hopes to legitimize as disciplined "Civilian Volunteer Self-Defense organizations" (CVSOs), "have gone beyond purely defensive activity." In retaliation for NPA killings, the London group claims the CSVOs have killed people who are not NPA fighters themselves...but unarmed members of legal, leftwing organizations operating openly.<sup>16</sup>

The survey echoes the apprehension expressed by the various sectors on the future threat posed by armed anti-communist movements. Maris Diokno, head of the National Movement to Disband Vigilantes (NMDV), commented in opposition to the Aquino government's endorsement of the vigilante movements that:

....tapping the vigilantes against the communists would throw the country into anarchy. The people did not overthrow the dictatorship only to find anarchy today. Only the rightists in the military and the US Interventionists would benefit from such a situation.<sup>17</sup>

This same concern was echoed earlier in the report of a fact finding mission led by former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, to wit:

These violation of human rights perpetrated by military and paramilitary units, including the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF) and armed vigilante groups, suggest a serious situation which the Aquino government has failed seriously and actively to address.<sup>18</sup>

However, behind these voices of moral concern and the increasing campaign to discredit the anti-communist vigilante movements reveal the efficacious role of vigilantism in counterinsurgency. General Renato de Villa, the AFP Chief of Staff, described the vigilante movements as the "best weapon ever invented to counter the insurgency."<sup>19</sup> This observation is validated by the AFP statistical findings that "infiltrated barangays-where at least 10 percent of the population, without comprising

the majority, supports the insurgents- declined from last's year [1986] 5,430 to the current [1987] 4,993."<sup>20</sup> This decline is higher in areas where vigilante movements originated and developed as in Mindanao. Here, the decline in the number of communist-affected barangays is estimated at 34% or from 3,219 in 1986 to 2,065 in 1987.<sup>21</sup>

### Recommendation

Although the mention of integrating anti-communist vigilante movements into the defense forces of the Philippines was discussed, the suggestion of a respondent to pattern the civilian volunteers into the mold of the United States of America's National Guard invites serious consideration. The study of the history, organization, and functions of the National Guard is therefore recommended vis-a-vis their application to the future role of the anti-communist vigilante movements in the post-insurgency Philippine society.

### Conclusion

Clearly, the role of anti-communist vigilante movements in the counterinsurgency effort does not rest on its military significance but on the politico-psychological impact of its spontaneous origin, rapid growth, and

spreading success. Since the battle for popular support is a zero sum game, it is understandably expected that the communist movement will again enlist the help of progressive groups in the Philippines and abroad to mount the same propaganda campaign that so effectively discredited the Civilian Home Defense Forces (CHDF).

The organization of anti-communist vigilantes is a cheap way to raise an army, for a nation ridden with foreign debts, to address a communist insurgency. It is a form of social mobilization that allows a graduated response appropriate to the situation in a specific area. It illustrates the essence of the US Army counterinsurgency doctrine of internal defense and development.

Rightly or wrongly, the Aquino government has taken the path towards confronting the communist threat. The government has permitted the vigilante program to prosper to what is today. It should be sustained, for the alternative is to lose the momentum of the mobilization of a segment of the population, roll back gains that have been achieved, and put those Filipinos who have resisted the depredations of the communists at risk.

## Notes

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5. Gregg Jones, "Start the Revolution Without Me", The Washington Post National Weekly Edition, May 18, 1987, 18.
6. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, FC 100-20, Low intensity Conflict (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army CGSC, 1986), 3-4.
7. Ibid., 3-4.
8. Ibid.,3-2.
9. Colonel Ismael Z. Villareal, "Negotiating with the Communists in the Philippines", Conflict, 1987, 361.
10. A note containing his views on anti-communist vigilante movements was sent by Colonel Victor Batac to the reseacher. The experiences and insights of Colonel Batac as presented by the reseacher are used as an articulation of the survey and reseach conducted.
11. Villareal, "Negotiating with the Communists in the Philippines", 362.
12. "Praying for Time", Time Magazine, 23 November 1987, 36.
13. Carolina Hernandez, "The Philippines in 1987: Challenges of Democratization", Asian Survey, Febuary 1988, 236.
14. Ibid., 237.

15. James Clad, "Verdict on Violence", Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER), 17 March 1988, 12.

16. Ibid., 12.

17. Eric D. Torres, "Maris Diokno: Vigilantes Violate Human Rights", Manila Standard, 24 November 1987.

18. -----, "The US, Vigilantes and Human Rights: A Report of the US-Philippines Fact-Finding Mission led by Ramsey Clark, May 20-30, 1987", Midweek, October 21, 1987, 22.

19. -----, "Can Vigilantes Stop the Communist Rebels?", Manila Standard, 23 November 1987.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

## APPENDIX A

### Chronological History of the Communist Movement in the Philippines, (1922-1987)

- February 1922 An American communist, purportedly representing the Philippines attended the Congress of Toilers of the Far East in Moscow.
- 06 October 1923 The communist organ International Press Correspondence (Inprecon) reported that the Profintern (Red Labor International) passed a resolution recognizing the importance of the Philippines as a "strategic point in the Pacific Ocean."
- 20 July 1925 Indonesian Communist Leader Tan Malaka, alias Elias Fuentes, arrived in Manila on board the SS Empress of Russia along with 5 or 6 Indonesian refugees from Dutch authorities. He figured in the organization of the communist movement in the Philippines.
- 1928 Crisanto Evangelista and Cirilo Bugnot attended Profintern Conference held in Moscow.
- 26 August 1930 Sixty (60) labor delegates met at the Templo del Trabajo to set up the Communist of the Philippines.
- 07 November 1930 At a large rally at Plaza Moriones, Tondo, the CPP was proclaimed. Evangelista headed the 7-man Politburo and the 35-man Central Committee.
- 26 October 1932 The Supreme Court formally outlawed the CPP. In the same period, the Socialist Party headed by Pedro Abad was organized in Central Luzon.

- 07 November 1938 A merger was made between the CPP the Socialist Party after the Crisanto Evangelista was given conditional pardon by the commonwealth government. The merger came about with the assistance of James Allen, representative of the communist party of the United States of America.
- 06 February 1942 The Central Luzon Bureau conference decided to organize a guerilla army. Vicente Lava became general secretary, in absentia.
- 29 March 1942 The Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) or People's Army Against the Japanese was established in Barrio San Lorenzo, Cabaio, Nueva Ecija.
- March 1943 Japanese forces launched a raid in the Arayat Mountain of Pampanga, about 20 miles east of Clark Air Base, which resulted in the capture of many leading Party cadets and members.
- September 1944 Bagumbali conference declared the "retreat for defense" policy as incorrect. Hukbalahap squadrons were regrouped to take the offensive.
- January 1950 Politburo conference drew up the "Politburo Resolutions" which maintained a line of rapid military victory. The Jose Lava leadership adopted a two-year timetable for seizure of political power in the cities. The Secretariat or Politburo ordered the Hukbalahap to conduct simultaneous attacks on government units in Central Luzon Southern Luzon as part of the plan.
- 18 October 1950 The members of the Politburo-In were arrested. 105 communist suspects operating in Manila together with five truckloads of communist documents were taken by government operatives.

- February-March 1951 The Politburo-Out organized a Central Committee conference and decided to continue with the old party orientation based on the existence of a revolutionary situation and calling for the armed overthrow of the Quirino regime.
- 1951-1954 Many of the principal leaders of the CPP fell under massive government operations. On 16 May 1954, Luis Taruc, bitterly disillusioned, surrendered to the government.
- November 1964 Old party members and new ones tried to work together but could not agree. Jose Ma. Sison, who was indoctrinated in the People's Republic of China, organized the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) or Nationalist Youth.
- 26 December 1968 Maoist leaning Communist Party of the Philippines was formally established by Jose Ma. Sison, with ten other party members, in a barrio somewhere in Pangasinan. The organizers called their group the Reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines.
- 29 March 1969 Bernabe Buscayno, aka/alias Commander Dante and his group of peasant guerillas in search of a party fused with Jose Ma. Sison's party of students and young professionals in search of an army. The fusion resulted in the emergence of the New Peoples Party (NPA) with 60 men and 35 assorted firearms.
- January 1970 The communist-controlled Kabataang Makabayan had gathered strength and in a show of force organized the violent demonstration which rocked downtown Manila. The CPP refers to these mass actions as the "First Quarter Storm." The Party membership, inspite of massive participation of multi sectoral organizations, remained at few hundred due to the high standards imposed.

- 17 February 1972 Some 200 radical Christians established the Christians for National Liberation (CNL) under a communist leaning Catholic priests, Father Edicio dela Torre of the Society of the Divine Word. Through the CNL, priests and nuns embrace Marxisms and Leninism using "liberation theology" as the source of the rationalization.
- July- August 1972 The CPP attempted to establish aguerilla zone in the remote parts of Isabela and Quezon, a shift from the traditionally NPA base in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. Government forces were alerted to an attempt to smuggle 3,000 firearms from Communist China aboard the MV Karagatan.
- 21 September 1972 President Marcos placed the entire country under martial law. The CPP claimed to have been caught by surprise by the sense that anticipated the proclamation of martial law to be in the late part of 1972. Many party members were apprehended but in general, the CPP was able to preserve its forces. Many escaped to the countryside; thus the "armed struggle" on a nationwide scale in the countryside was initiated.
- 24 April 1973 The CPP established the National Democratic Front (NDF). It announced a 10-point program which in essence was the formal declaration of war of the CPP against the Philippine government. Among its constituent organizations was the Christians for National Liberation (CNL).
- May 1973 An anti-government but anti-Communist Christian group organized the Nagkakaisang Partido Demokratiko-Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (The United Democratic Socialist Party of the Philippines or "SOCDEM").

- 1974 Jose Ma. Sison, writing under the pen name Amado Guerero, published the pamphlet entitled "Specific Characteristics of our People War." Adopted as party policy was the creation of guerilla fronts nation wide starting in "a few major islands first, then the other islands later". The party also adopted the policy of a Central committee limited in its role to the formulation of general policies while granting regional and front committees a measure of autonomy.
- 1976-1977 Jose Ma. Sison, Bernabe Buscayno, and Victor Corpuz were captured in a series of government operations. Despite these setbacks the CPP showed its resiliency and remained a cohesive structure.
- 1978 The CPP claimed to have expanded and consolidated the party significantly partly through launching of Basic Party Courses.
- July-August 1980 In a CPP Central Committee plenary session attended by ranking members, the party claimed it was about to enter the advanced substage of the strategic defensive. It justified the claims by pointing out the presence of a strong CPP party apparatus in every region and nation-wide of guerilla warfare. The CPP claimed to have organized 26 guerilla fronts with 8,000 armed elements.
- 21 August 1983 Ex-Senator Aquino's assassination provided for an upsurge of violent rallies and demonstration. The economic dislocation in its aftermath added propaganda ammunition to the CPP's growing Machinery.
- 1983 CPP claimed to have 45 guerilla fronts, 18 of which are in Mindanao.

## APPENDIX B

### GOVERNMENT COUNTERMEASURES

26 October	1932	The Philippine Supreme Court declared the Communist Party of the Philippines illegal. The Party founder Crisanto Evangelista and several of his chief lieutenants were imprisoned for plotting to overthrow the government and instigating large scale, bloody riots.
	1938	Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon released the communist leaders notably Evangelista, Taruc, and Delos Reyes. The Government and the United States were forging national unity against the threat of Japanese expansion.
	1941	President Quezon refused the offer of support against the Japanese threat from the communist movement. The anti-government activities of Evangelista and the communist movement, after the release two years before, explains Quezon and the American action.
May	1942	USAFFE guerrilla units under Lt. Col. Charles Thorpe refused the communist offer of united front against the Japanese in exchange for American support. The refusal is behind the Hukbalahap's insistence for independent control of their political program.
Liberation	1945	General MacArthur ordered the disarming and dispersion of the Hukbalahaps. This decision was based on the common fear of communist post-war intentions.

February	1945	Huk leaders Alejandrino, Taruc and other members of the Huk GHQ were arrested. The two leaders were released 22 days later when demonstrations threatened peace in Central Luzon.
April	1945	Huk leaders Alejandrino and Taruc were rearrested and imprisoned in Iwahig colony in the island province of Palawan. They were released in September 1946 after bloody riots demanded their release.
Jan.-Apr.	1947	The newly elected Philippine President Manuel Roxas used his influence in the Philippine Congress to deny the elected Huk leaders their seats in congress.
April	1948	The Huks and the Philippine Government under the more moderate Elpidio Quirino, who succeeded after Roxas's untimely death, negotiated unsuccessfully, under a temporary truce, for four months.
September	1950	Ramon Magsaysay was appointed Secretary of National Defense by President Quirino. Immediately, Magsaysay adopted the "All out Friendship and all out Force" strategy in addressing the communist insurgency. This turned out to be a successful approach against the insurgents.
18 October	1950	AFP intelligence, in a series of raids in Metro Manila, captured 105 PKP politburo members including Jose Lava, the Secretary General of the Party.
23 December	1950	The Philippine Constabulary, a paramilitary force was placed under Army control for the duration of the Huk campaign.
February	1951	Magsaysay's Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) was launched. EDCOR was a resettlement project for

Huks who rejoined the mainstream of society. This was the "left hand" aspect of the Magsaysay strategy.

- February 1954 The AFP launched Operation Thunder-Lighting, which lasted for 211 days. The operation resulted in the surrender of Luis Taruc, his chief of staff, and 54 others. Huk casualties were 43 killed and 89 captured. Also, 99 production bases were destroyed and 99 assorted weapons were captured. This was considered to be the last major operation against the Huks.
- 1957 - 1969 This is considered to be a period of relative calm. The communist movement was in the process of reestablishing its organization from the remnants of the defeated Huks. Government countermeasures were generally confined to sporadic tactical engagements with the Huk remnants.
- 1971 The writ of habeas corpus was suspended as a countermeasure against the escalating and violent demonstration in Manila.
- 21 September 1972 Martial Law was declared by President Marcos. This period lasted until January of 1981. This was the golden period of the revitalized communist movement under the leadership of Maoist oriented chairman, Jose Maria Sison.
- 1981 The Marcos government and the AFP, with General Ver as Chief of Staff, launched "Oplan Katatagan", which means stability. This strategy was formulated using the the US COIN doctrine of internal defense and development as the pillars of countermeasures.
- 1986 The AFP adopted "Oplan Mamamayan" as the new national COIN strategy. This concept differs

only from Katatagan in that another component, national reconciliation, was added in the approach to address the communist insurgency.

10 December 1986

The Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines entered into a 60-day ceasefire. A negotiation to find a political solution ensued but ended in January 1987 after the Government refused the demand for a coalition government by the communist movement.

## APPENDIX C

Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas  
3 December 1987

SUBJECT: Opinion Survey

Dear Sir,

As an instructor at the US Army's Command and General Staff College, I am assisting a student in this year's class in a Master of Military Arts and Science thesis on anti-communist vigilante groups in the Philippines. The program is part of our continuing effort to study issues of concern to military professionals, and specifically, counterinsurgency strategies and tactics.

Your presence and tens of other AFP officers and enlisted personnel here in the United States offers the researcher the chance to solicit your observations and experience in the topic. Your insights will surely be of utility in our mutual concern to formulate sound and efficient methods of combatting communist insurgencies.

The assistance of your Army attache, Colonel Regino Calub Jr, has been enlisted to expeditiously reach you and others spread across the nation. Please rest assured, however, that your views and opinions will be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

Request you complete the attached questionnaire and return to this office not later than 15 January 1988, using the return envelope. Thank you for your assistance.

signed  
R. C. LEICHT, SR.  
Major, US Army  
Author/Instructor

APPENDIX D

\_\_\_\_\_  
(date completed)

This questionnaire is designed to assist a MMAS student in his research on the topic, "Anti-Communist Vigilantes in the Philippines." Please answer the question based on your observations, actual experiences, or opinions by circling a letter, filling in the blank, rank-ordering, or providing textual answers. Upon completion, mail the document using the enclosed return envelopes. Thank you.

1. Service:

a. PA    b. PC    c. PN    d. PAF    e. other

2. Years of active service: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Source of commission: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Duties, last three assignment:

	type unit	position held
first previous	_____	_____
second	_____	_____
third	_____	_____

6. Rank order the following factors (1 being most important) which you think gave rise to the anti-communist movement called "Alsa Masa". If the factor is irrelevant, assign it a "0":

- \_\_\_\_\_ ouster of ex-President Marcos
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aquino Government counterinsurhency program
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Alsa Masa" is a creation of AFP intelligence
- \_\_\_\_\_ government/AFP failure to protect people from the NPA

\_\_\_\_\_ the people of Davao had enough of NPA violence  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Rank order the factors you think made the "Alsa Masa" a success in combating the CPP/NPA in Davao City. Again, assign an irrelevant factor a "0":

\_\_\_\_\_ efficient military/police organization and leadership  
 \_\_\_\_\_ popular support against CPP/NPA violence  
 \_\_\_\_\_ good AFP intelligence  
 \_\_\_\_\_ religious beliefs  
 \_\_\_\_\_ other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Your answer for this section should range from strongly agree (5), agree (4), no opinion (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1).

	agr	_____	disagr		
8. The "Alsa Masa" is an effective counterinsurgency strategy in communities affected by CPP/NPA political violence.	5	4	3	2	1
9. The Aquino Government sponsored anti-Communist vigilante movement called "Nakasaka" is the next step after the "Alsa Masa" model of Davao City.	5	4	3	2	1
10. "Alsa Masa" and "Nakasaka" are CHDF (home guard) units with new name.	5	4	3	2	1
11. The anti-Communist vigilante movements should be incorporated into a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy of the Philippine Government.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Are the anti-Communist vigilante movements different from the CHDF in objectives and/or methods?					

13. Which agency of the Philippine Government should exercise command and control of these movements? Why?

14. What impact(s) does the activities of the vigilante movements have on other government counterinsurgency programs, such as national reconciliation?

15. What is/should be the future role of anti-Communist vigilantes in a community?

General comments about the movements:

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