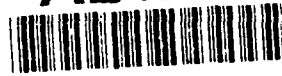


AD-A242 312



V. m. (2)

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



DTIC
ELECTE
OCT 31 1991
S C D

THESIS

THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL PROTEST IN THE PHILIPPINES
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON U.S.-R.P. RELATIONS

by

William Dale Stephens

December 1990

Thesis Advisor:

Doctor Claude A. Buss

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

91-14526



REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				
1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		1b RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3 DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.		
2b DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE				
4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5 MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School	6b OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) 38	7a NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School		
6c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, CA 93943-5100		7b ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, CA 93943-5100		
8a NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9 PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10 SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
		Program Element No	Project No	Task No
				Work Unit Accession Number
11 TITLE (Include Security Classification) THE ROOTS OF SOCIAL PROTEST IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON U.S.-R.P. RELATIONS				
12 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Stephens, William D.				
13a TYPE OF REPORT Master's Thesis	13b TIME COVERED From To	14 DATE OF REPORT (year, month, day) December 1990	15 PAGE COUNT 103	
16 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
17 COSATI CODES		18 SUBJECT TERMS (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUBGROUP		
		Philippines, Insurgency, United States Foreign Policy,		
19 ABSTRACT (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)				
The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the necessity to establish a new world order has presented a challenge to the United States (U.S.) to reformulate its foreign policy. Future U.S. policy in the Asia Pacific Region will inevitably affect the U.S. relationship with the Republic of the Philippines (R.P.) and this thesis provides a framework for understanding that relationship better. This thesis traces the roots of social unrest in the Philippines and demonstrates how the conflict between the elite and the common people has been the cause of rebellion, revolt, revolution, and insurgency from the beginning of the Spanish colonial era until today. It concludes that the "special" relations which have characterized traditional U.S. policy in the Philippines are no longer in the best interests of either the U.S. or the R.P. It recommends that the United States withdraw its military forces from the Philippines before the end of the century and substitute directed economic assistance for military assistance as the best method for promoting democracy and contributing to the removal of causes of insurgency in the Philippines.				
20 DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT		21 ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION		
☒ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS REPORT ☐ OTHER USERS				
22a NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Claude A. Buss		22b TELEPHONE (Include Area code) (415) 327-5439	22c OFFICE SYMBOL NS	

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

The Roots of Social Protest in the Philippines
and their Effects on U.S.-R.P. Relations

by

William Dale Stephens
Captain, United States Air Force
B.S., Auburn University, 1981

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

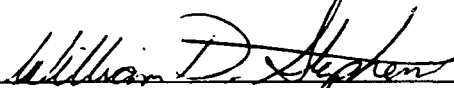
MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

December 1990

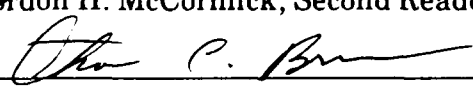
Author:


William D. Stephens

Approved by:


Claude A. Buss, Thesis Advisor


Gordon H. McCormick, Second Reader


Thomas C. Bruneau, Chairman
National Security Affairs

ABSTRACT

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the necessity to establish a new world order has presented a challenge to the United States (U.S.) to reformulate its foreign policy. Future U.S. policy in the Asia Pacific Region will inevitably affect the U.S. relationship with the Republic of the Philippines (R.P), and this thesis provides a framework for understanding that relationship better. This thesis traces the roots of social unrest in the Philippines and demonstrates how the conflict between the elite and the common people has been the cause of rebellion, revolt, revolution and insurgency from the beginning of the Spanish colonial era until today. It concludes that the "special" relations which have characterized traditional U.S. policy in the Philippines are no longer in the best interests of either the U.S. or the R.P.. It recommends that the U.S. withdraw its military forces from the Philippines before the end of the century and substitute directed economic assistance for military assistance as the best method of promoting democracy and contributing to the removal of causes of insurgency in the Philippines.



Accession For	
NIIS GRAAL	☒
DTIC TAB	☐
Unannounced	☐
Justification	
By	
Distribution/	
Availability Codes	
Avail and/or	
Dist	Special
A-1	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD (1565-1898).....	3
A. SPANISH CONTROL	3
B. THE NATURE OF SOCIAL UNREST.....	6
C. THE RISE OF FILIPINO NATIONALISM.....	8
D. THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR	11
III. THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PERIOD (1898-1946)	13
A. AMERICAN INTENTIONS	13
B. THE AMERICAN-FILIPINO WAR	15
C. AMERICAN CIVIL AUTHORITY	18
D. PEASANT UNREST.....	20
E. THE SAKDALS.....	23
F. THE HUKS AND THE PKP.....	26
IV. EARLY PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE (1946-1957)	30
A. SPECIAL RELATIONS	30
B. PEASANT UNREST.....	33
C. THE INSURGENCY AND MAGSAYSAY	34
V. BUDDING NATIONALISM (1957-1965)	38
A. NATIONALISM AND CORRUPTION	38
B. U.S. ASSISTANCE.....	40
C. A PRESIDENT FOR THE COMMON MAN	42
VI. THE MARCOS YEARS (1965-1986).....	45

A. THE PROMISES OF MARCOS	45
B. THE INSURGENTS	46
C. MARCOS, THE AMERICANS, AND THE INSURGENCY	48
D. MARTIAL LAW AND STATE CAPITALISM	50
E. U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE	53
F. BENIGNO AND CORY AQUINO	54
VII. CURRENT POLITICS	57
A. GOVERNMENT REFORM	57
B. LAND REFORM	62
C. STATUS OF THE CPP/NPA	66
D. THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES	70
E. U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID	75
VIII. CONCLUSIONS	80
IX. RECOMMENDATIONS	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	95

I. INTRODUCTION

After nearly one hundred years of colonial and "special" relations, the United States (U.S.) and the Republic of the Philippines (R.P.) have reached a critical point in their bilateral relationship. The evolving world order, changing interests of the United States, delicate sovereignty issues, and the reemergence of nationalistic feelings among Filipinos have brought the U.S. and R.P. to this point of decision. Together, the two governments will either positively redefine their relationship and build upon the many strengths in their long association, or attempt to retain this "special" relationship and allow their mutually beneficial national friendship to deteriorate.

Historically, the Americans have pursued their interests in the Philippines by working through the Philippine elite--a practice which pre-dated the arrival of the Americans and was initiated by the Spanish colonial administration. This practice is the reason there is a rift between the elite and the masses today. Over the years, U.S. policies in the Philippines have exacerbated this rift because they have tended to favor the elites and work to the detriment of the masses. The U.S. has had little choice but to work through the elites because the elite-led government ultimately controlled the access to bases which were vital to the national security of the U.S. However, the international relations environment is changing and along with it, U.S. interests in the Philippines.

U.S. interests around the world and in the Philippines began to change in 1989 when the retreat of communism in Eastern Europe eased tensions between the U.S. and U.S.S.R.. The end of the Cold War in Europe demonstrated how the U.S. strategy of "containment" had been very effective there; however, the strategy still faced a continuing challenge in the Asia Pacific Region from the People's Republic of China, the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Fortunately, Cold War tensions in the APR which were linked to U.S.-U.S.S.R. competition did ameliorate, and as they did, the relative importance of U.S. access to Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base in the Philippines began to fade along with the Soviet threat.

The U.S.-U.S.S.R. rapprochement which accompanied the end of the Cold War in Europe is the foundation upon which the international community can build a new world order and the U.S. can refocus its interests. As the bipolar world disappears, the U.S. will be able to retreat from the vigilance of "containment" and build a new strategy with a different mix of political, military and economic interests. U.S. military forces in the Philippines will inevitably be affected by these coming changes.

The United States must formulate a new policy to reflect its evolving interests in the Philippines. This policy should be based on a thorough understanding of the roots of social unrest, the long-standing conflict between the social classes, and the relationship between the elite and their former colonial patrons. The objective of this thesis is to trace the roots of social unrest in the Philippines and demonstrate how conflict between the elite and the common people has been the cause of rebellion, revolt, revolution and insurgency from the beginning of the Spanish colonial era until today.

This thesis will tell the story of social unrest from the 16th century through the Aquino administration. The historical eras for review include the Spanish Colonial Period, the American Colonial Period, Early Philippine Independence, the Period of Budding Nationalism, the Marcos Years and Current Politics. Note that throughout this thesis, the story of unrest will be largely framed by the conflict between the elite and the masses. With this foundation complete, this thesis will draw conclusions, analyze U.S. interests in the Philippines, pose three policy options, then recommend one option for the U.S. to implement.

II. THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD (1565-1898)

In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan landed on the island of Cebu in the archipelago which would later be named the Philippines. Spain would colonize the Philippines in 1565¹ and set out to exploit the people and resources for the benefit of the Spanish crown.² The Spanish colonial administration would impose the severest controls on the native population, lay the groundwork for centuries of social unrest, spark nationalistic feelings among the Filipinos and lose the colony in a war with the Americans. The primary legacy of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines would be one of class conflict.

A. SPANISH CONTROL

During its 350 years of rule, the Spanish Crown was efficient in its administration of the Philippines, controlling the archipelago until the revolt of 1896 with never more than 5,000 Spaniards.³ The colonial administration would enforce its rule and fulfill its agenda by exercising four levels of executive authority in the Philippines: the datu controlled a barangay (village), a gobernador-cillo controlled a pueblo, an alcalde mayor controlled a province and the governor-general ruled the colony.⁴ This system of executive authority continued until the Spanish exodus in 1898.

1. Teodoro A. Agoncillo, Introduction to Filipino History (Manila: Bookmark, 1974) p. 39.

2. Nina Vreeland, Area Handbook for the Philippines (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office/American University, 1976) p. 46.

3. Teodoro A. Agoncillo, A Short History Of The Philippines (New York: The New American Library, 1975) p. 45.

4. Pedro A. Gagelonia, Filipino Nation: History and Government (Manila: Navotas Press, 1977) p. 34, 78.

A datu was the native chief of his village and local custom prescribed that he inherit his position. The Spanish perceptively continued the traditions of the datu and used the position as an integral component in the colonial administration. However, the Spanish placed a limit on Filipino participation in government. Filipinos were not permitted to advance beyond gobernador-cillo, and even that appointment was controlled by the colonial administration and the Church.⁵

The key to efficient colonial rule in the Philippines lay in Spain's practice of co-opting the barangay's datu and monitoring local activities by placing Spanish clerics in each barangay. The depth of control is better understood when one learns that church and state were unified under the Spanish Crown and the union was so secure that government officials were "defenders of the faith" and priests were government agents. This practice permitted extraordinary control of the Filipinos because the marriage between church and state implied that obedience to the Church and allegiance to the state were both necessary for one to receive eternal salvation. The conversion of Filipinos to Catholicism may have been a separate and important achievement to the Spanish, but the near wholesale conversion of Filipinos permitted an impressive blend of Spanish civil and "spiritual" control, even down to the village level.⁶

What kind of people were the Spanish trying to control? When the Spanish arrived they found a native population of Negrito, Indonesian and Malay peoples; however, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese and Arab immigrants mixed with the blood of the native population.⁷ Interestingly, these diverse peoples were exposed to a common culture, yet

5. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 48-49.

6. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 49-50.

7. Gagelonia, Filipino, p. 19.

they were divided by eight major languages and countless dialects.⁸ Language diversity is one reason a central system of government never evolved to unite the barangays. Alliances between barangays did form, but they were temporary and typically designed to defend against attack from local enemies.⁹ Excluding the centralized governments of the Moslem-dominated islands further south, the barangay was the most sophisticated form of government in the Philippines prior to the Spanish arrival.¹⁰

The diverse languages and the absence of a central government in the archipelago divided the native people. The Spanish effectively exploited these disadvantages for their gain. Had Spain chosen, language could have been a common bond unifying its colonial subjects; however, only a handful of Filipino elites were permitted to learn Spanish.¹¹ The result would be two classes of native people: a very select group of Filipinos closely associated with Spanish government and business (illustrados), and a remaining population of unorganized peasants with little except the potential power of numbers. The Filipino elite consequently grew closer to the Spanish colonial administration but further away from the Filipino peasants.

Spain's language policy enabled the colonial administration to control its subjects more effectively. The colonial administrators would pit Filipino elites against Filipino peasants, employ conscripts from one linguistic group against another, and similarly manipulate competing barangays. The Spanish effectively implemented their "divide and rule" policy

8. Agoncillo, A Short History, p. 24.

9. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 19.

10. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 9.

11. Karnow, Stanley, In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines (New York: Random House, 1989) p. 201.

in the Philippines,¹² but the policy led the Filipino people to detect their common identity and work to overcome the divisiveness.

B. THE NATURE OF SOCIAL UNREST

Localized peasant rebellion, elite attempts at reform, and open revolt each played a part in Filipino efforts to improve their lives under Spanish control. Peasant rebellion in the Philippines grew out of four unfair practices the government permitted to continue: forced conscription, forced labor, the concentration of wealth among the elite, and the concentration of power among priests and their authority over agriculture interests.¹³ To exacerbate the problem, financial gain was the principal reason Spain maintained the Philippines as a colony;¹⁴ and as an unfortunate consequence, greed and corruption infected every level of the colonial administration. Local government officials, priests and landowners garnered much of their wealth by working in unison to exploit the peasants; and consequently, the peasants directed their grievances against these local elites.

Spanish exploitation of the native people was universal in the archipelago and created an environment ripe for peasant unrest. Initial protests such as the Pampanga Revolt of 1585 and the Tondo Conspiracy of 1587 erupted as peasants chafed under the final stages of Spanish conquest.¹⁵ Later, unrest seemed tailored to respond to specific losses suffered by the peasants. The clergy for example, were unrelenting and unforgiving in their program for converting Filipinos to Catholicism. The Filipinos responded to the

12. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 79, 85, 92.

13. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 45, 60, 71-79.

14. Gagelonia, Filipino, p. 74.

15. John Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959) p. 145.

denigration of their nativistic faith with the Bohol Rebellion in 1622 and the Panay Rebellion in 1663; both were failed attempts by the native people to revive their own faith and throw off the Spanish Catholic yoke.¹⁶

In the eighteenth century, agrarian rebellions like those in Batangas, Laguna, and Morong arose in response to abuses suffered by peasants on friar-owned estates. Increasingly, the Spanish relied upon the friars to control the people and through the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the Filipinos focused their wrath on the friars and other elites.¹⁷ Just as the Spanish exploitation of the peasants had been universal throughout the archipelago, peasant response to the abuse was also universal. Unfortunately for the peasants, they were not effectively unified in rebellion until 1896. The Spanish colonial administration, by contrast, was always unified in its policy of control. Peasant unrest through the late nineteenth century can be simply characterized as local uprisings designed to settle local peasant grievances.¹⁸

The peasants rebelled against local elites to improve their living conditions, but it should be noted that the unrest was neither national in scope¹⁹ nor aimed at independence from Spain. The peasants did not want the Spanish government to leave the Philippines, they just wanted better treatment. With this clearly being the Filipino peasants' attitude, it

16. David R. Sturtevant, "Philippine Social Structure and its Relation to Agrarian Unrest," A Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of History, Stanford University, California, 1958. pp. 106-108.

17. Gagelonia, Filipino, pp. 96, 110-111.

18. Phelan, Hispanization, p. 151.

19. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 73.

is clear that before the nineteenth century the peasants had not yet developed a national conscience.²⁰

Filipino peasants may not have had a national conscience, but neither did the Filipino elite. The peasants suffered from the inequities perpetuated by the Spanish and Filipino elite, but the Filipino elite suffered their own indignity--a second class status relative to Spanish citizens.²¹ However, to alleviate this indignity the Filipino elite did not seek independence, but instead subjected themselves to further Spanish ridicule. The elite sought the full inclusion of the Philippines as a province of Spain.

C. THE RISE OF FILIPINO NATIONALISM

In the 1870s, Filipino intellectuals living in Spain spearheaded a reform movement which advocated full inclusion of the Philippines by Spain. The movement championed five reforms: the assimilation of the Philippines as a province; full representation for the Philippine province in the Spanish national assembly; equality of Filipinos and Spanish before the law; equality of Filipinos and Spanish in the Church; and individual freedoms for Filipinos.²² The idea of reform was fostered by some of the brightest Filipino minds, but the movement was poorly organized and financed, and its leadership was divided. Supporters remained hopeful, but reforms and the rights of colonial subjects were of little concern to the Spanish.²³

In 1892, the intellectual soul of the reform movement, Jose Rizal y Mercado, was exiled to a distant Philippine island for his part in supporting reforms. Sadly for the

20. Phelan, Hispanization, p. 151.

21. Karnow, Image, p. 68.

22. Gagelonia, Filipino Nation, p. 114.

23. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 108.

Filipinos, any hope for reform was banished along with Rizal. In 1896, Rizal was released from exile when he volunteered to serve the Spanish as a military surgeon in the Cuban Revolution. However, before Rizal could reach his destination he was falsely accused of masterminding a growing seditious movement and forced to return to the Philippines where he was executed. In truth, Rizal had refused when rebels asked him to support their nationalistic movement.²⁴ Rizal may have functioned as the conscience for Spain in its administration of the Philippines, but he remained a patriot to Spain even as he faced his execution, stating, "I have sought political liberty, but never the freedom to rebel." The sad irony of Rizal's martyrdom indicates how strongly many among the Filipino elite identified with Spain.

With the failure of the elite in their attempts at reform, peasant leaders retook the initiative and turned to revolution. Out of frustration over Rizal's exile, a secret society, the Katipunan, was organized in 1892 to promote revolution and support Filipino peasants in *their difficult daily lives*. Initially, membership in the Katipunan grew slowly, reaching only 300 by 1895. Within a year, the membership had reached 10,000 as the awareness of independence grew.²⁵

While the Katipunan membership was growing, the peasants in central and southern Luzon began to rise up against their land owners. Food shortages and low crop prices drove them to these desperate acts. The peasants' hopeless situation and the uncommon injustice of Rizal's martyrdom primed them for revolt, but the Filipino elites maintained their allegiance to Spain, fearing most of all their loss of position and wealth. To co-opt the Filipino elite and drive a wedge between them and their Spanish masters, the founder of the

24. Karnow, Image, p. 71.

25. Richard J. Kessler, Rebellion and Repression In The Philippines (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) pp. 10-11.

Katipunan, Andres Bonifacio, forged elite signatures on the Katipunan membership rolls and secretly passed the document to the colonial police. When the police reacted to Bonifacio's ruse by arresting and executing Filipino elites, the newly persecuted elite had no choice but to support the coming revolt.²⁶

Open revolt erupted in Manila in August 1896, but the harsh conditions which fueled revolt there were present all over the Philippines. In Manila, the Filipino peasants rallied to Bonifacio who redirected peasant rebellious energies away from the local elite and toward Spanish colonial rule. The rebels won early military victories under the command of Bonifacio's brilliant subordinate, Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy. Aguinaldo's success created a power struggle between him and Bonifacio. When Filipino officers voted to abolish the Katipunan and establish Aguinaldo as the president of a new republic, Bonifacio established a rival regime. In a series of events not completely understood even today, Aguinaldo's men killed Bonifacio, thereby weakening cohesive peasant support for the revolution.²⁷

The Spanish were able to regain the military initiative and trap the revolutionaries in the mountains where Aguinaldo would offer to recognize Spanish rule under certain conditions. The Spanish refused all meaningful conditions and drove Aguinaldo and his key lieutenants into exile in Hong Kong in December 1897. Aguinaldo did receive a small financial payment and the promise of further payment to some non-combatant Filipinos. The Spanish had been very effective in throttling the military revolt, but the injustice perpetuated on the peasants by the Spanish and the elite remained.²⁸

26. Karnow, Image, p. 74.

27. Karnow, Image, p. 74-77.

28. Gagelonia, Filipino, pp. 143-144.

D. THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Spain was also fighting a difficult revolution in another one of their colonies, Cuba. The U.S. was intensely interested in that skirmish because it held agribusiness interests on the island. When the battleship, Maine, was blown up in Havana harbor, the U.S. charged Spain with the deed and declared war on 25 April 1898. On 1 May 1898, the Spanish fleet in East Asia was destroyed in Manila Bay by a U.S. fleet on a mission engineered by Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt.²⁹

The Filipinos viewed the American attack on the Spanish fleet as an opportunity to ally with the Americans and win independence from Spain. Years later, Aguinaldo would claim that the U.S. fleet commander, Admiral George Dewey, promised to support the Filipinos in their bid for independence. When questioned on the subject by President McKinley, Dewey denied he had promised any assistance to Aguinaldo or his insurgents.³⁰ Aguinaldo may have listened to Dewey with a selective ear. In any case, both Aguinaldo and the Americans were in position to benefit from the assistance of the other, but both would have liked assistance on their own terms.

The Americans may have taken Manila Bay from the Spanish, but the city remained under Spanish control. Aguinaldo returned from Hong Kong with American assistance and raised an army comprised of peasants, ilustrados, and Filipino soldiers who had defected from the Spanish army. Aguinaldo's forces engaged and easily defeated its Spanish opposition and soon controlled all of Luzon except Manila--under Spanish control, and the Port of Cavite--under U.S. Navy control.³¹

29. Agoncillo, A Short History, p. 106, 107.

30. Murat Halstead, The Life and Achievements of Admiral Dewey (Chicago: Our Possessions Publishing Company, 1899) pp. 379-392. Karnow, Image, pp. 110-114.

31. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 57. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 141-143.

On 12 June 1898, with his forces in a precarious position, Aguinaldo declared independence from Spain to improve his political bargaining position before the American forces landed. When the American ground forces finally arrived, the Spanish had the opportunity they had been waiting for. The Spanish had feared surrendering to "savage" Filipinos, so they agreed with the Americans to feign a battle then immediately surrender to them. Aguinaldo and his Filipino forces felt betrayed when the Americans forbade them from either participating in the battle, accepting the surrender or even entering the city.³²

The American-Filipino relationship had been ill-defined before the Spanish surrender, but after the surrender, President McKinley stated, "The insurgents and all others must recognize the military occupation and authority of the United States."³³ Aguinaldo had declared his country independent, but the Philippines was not even permitted to participate in the Treaty of Paris: a treaty signed on 10 December 1898 which resolved the Spanish-American War and ceded the Philippines to the U.S..³⁴ Aguinaldo and his army found themselves free of Spanish control, but under another colonial ruler--the U.S.. This surrender had little effect on peasant welfare.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the struggle of the Filipino peasants against the elite was temporarily overcome by the rise of nationalism. In fact, the Filipino peasants and elites finally joined together in a common struggle for independence. Nevertheless, the social conditions that separated the two classes remained intact. Would the relationship between the elite and the peasants change under American colonial rule?

32. Karnow, Image, pp. 116, 122-124.

33. Karnow, Image, p. 124.

34. Gagelonia, Filipino, pp. 165-166.

III. THE AMERICAN COLONIAL PERIOD (1898-1946)

So far as the United States government was concerned, it had assumed one responsibility for governing its new colony. Its challenge was to define an administration policy and select the best means for implementing that policy. Its goal was clear: to protect the American interest by increasing the benefits to the Filipino people. The U.S. colonial administration was forced to make changes: how much to tackle the problems of poverty and protest by seeking the cooperation of the revolutionist, and how far to follow the model of the Spanish before them by working through the intellectual elite. As will be seen, the Americans repeated the miscalculations of the former administration and worked almost exclusively through the elite. As a result, the social unrest became even more deeply enrooted under the American colonial administration than it had been under the Spanish Crown.

American intentions for their colonial administration of the Philippines were fundamentally good, but the American legacy would be both good and bad. The Americans would defeat the Filipinos in a brutal war, then impose a relatively benevolent civilian colonial government which would for a time pacify the bruised Filipinos. However, the subjugation of the peasants at the hands of the elite would continue and peasant unrest would reemerge as the Sakdal, Hukbalahap and Philippine Communist Party movements.

A. AMERICAN INTENTIONS

President McKinley outlined his policy for the Philippines after he signed the December 1898 Treaty of Paris which ended the war with Spain. McKinley wanted to "win the confidence, respect and affection" of the Filipinos and he planned to accomplish

this through "benevolent assimilation," the catch phrase describing the American administrative policy.³⁵ In desperation, Aguinaldo sent representatives to the peace conference, but they and their petition for independence were ignored.³⁶ The Philippines were firmly under American control and for Filipino nationalists, independence remained decades away.

Many American interest groups wanted to retain the Philippine colony for their own reasons: Politicians wanted the colony because it would exhibit American strength in a world where colonies helped define power; military officers coveted the colony for its usefulness as a springboard for protecting American commerce in Asia; protestant missionaries wanted to counter the advances of Catholicism and evangelize the Philippines through protestant teaching.³⁷

Though many American interests had plans for the new colony, the two political parties in the U.S. agreed that independence would be the ultimate goal for the Philippines. The disagreements which the political parties did have centered upon the degree of control and length of time necessary to prepare the Filipinos for independence. Republicans (who were in office) wanted to administer the colony by using large numbers of American administrators in an extended preparatory period. The Democrats (who were in opposition) wanted to work on a shorter time-line and quickly grant control of the archipelago to the Filipinos.³⁸ Among the Filipinos many of the elite cast their lot with the Americans, but other Filipinos continued their struggle for independence.

35. Karnow, Image, p. 134-135.

36. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 155-156.

37. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 160.

38. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 55.

U.S. military commanders and government officials had little respect for Filipino military skill or political initiatives. After U.S. forces took Manila from the Spanish, American officers ordered Aguinaldo, an ally, to remove his men from around the city. To add further insult, U.S. commanders refused Filipinos permission even to enter Manila under threat of death. Denied entry into Manila, Aguinaldo again proclaimed independence and was inaugurated President of his recently-established Malolos Republic on 23 January 1899.³⁹ The event did not even elicit a response from the U.S. Government. The U.S. Senate approved the treaty annexing the Philippines two days later.⁴⁰ Although the Filipinos had been suspicious of American intentions since Dewey's victory in Manila Bay, they saw themselves more and more from this moment on as a conquered foe.⁴¹

B. THE AMERICAN-FILIPINO WAR

The Filipinos were humiliated by American heavy-handedness, and tensions heightened while U.S. and Filipino forces faced-off in the Manila suburbs. On 4 February 1899, an incident involving the death of a Filipino soldier near an American sentry point ignited the conflict known to Americans as the Philippine Insurrection, and to Filipinos as the Filipino-American War. Within 24 hours, 3000 Filipinos and 59 Americans lay dead.⁴² The American army was out-numbered three to one, but was well organized, well armed, and fielded many experienced Indian fighters. The crushing blow American

39. Gagelonia, Filipino, p. 162.

40. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 57.

41. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 159.

42. Karnow, Image, p. 139, 144.

soldiers dealt Aguinaldo's army in the first day forced him to immediately propose a truce and request the establishment of a buffer zone. The Americans refused.⁴³

The first weeks of combat were a rout and in a few short months the significantly reinforced U.S. Army decimated the Filipino forces. The war quickly became one-sided, but the military engagements nevertheless remained deadly, and the treatment of prisoners by both sides became vicious and cruel. By November 1899, the war had been reduced to a simple manhunt for Aguinaldo.

In retreat, Aguinaldo forces reverted to guerilla tactics, and the nature of the guerilla warfare trapped soldiers on both sides in a ceaseless cycle of atrocity and retribution. By the time President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed victory in 1902, two hundred thousand Filipinos lay dead. The overwhelming majority were civilians.⁴⁴ Approximately 4,000 American soldiers had been killed.⁴⁵ Naturally, the war (or the insurrection) only aggravated the social, economic and political grievances that the Filipinos felt toward their new conqueror.

On the run for over two years, Aguinaldo and his guerilla force managed to avoid capture. On 23 March 1902, eighty badly needed Filipino reinforcements marched into Aguinaldo's camp with five American enlisted prisoners. The event was a charade. The prisoners were in fact American officers and the reinforcements were Filipino mercenaries, ethnically different from Aguinaldo's forces. The American forces surprised Aguinaldo

43. Karnow, Image, p. 154-155, 159.

44. Karnow, Image, p. 140, 157.

45. Otto Johnson, The 1988 Information Please Almanac (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988) p. 312.

and quickly captured him and his men.⁴⁶ Filipinos had betrayed their countrymen once again and the "divide and rule" methods employed so effectively by the Spanish began to work for the Americans.

Even before U.S. forces had captured Aguinaldo and subdued his guerillas in the hills of northern Luzon⁴⁷, the American military governors had enjoyed a measure of success in pacifying the remainder of the Philippines. Pacification implied restoration of law and order; it did not necessarily mean any rectification of existing social ills. By May 1899, the Filipino elite had already abandoned Aguinaldo to collaborate with the Americans.⁴⁸ The elite had returned to a familiar pattern, one rooted in Spanish times which emphasized close ties between the elite and the colonial master and meant subjugation for the Filipino peasants. The Muslims in the south also acquiesced to U.S. domination because, unlike the Spanish, the Americans allowed them to practice Islam freely.

In addition to pacification, American military governors worked diligently to lay the proper foundation for a new nation. Aware of the plight of the under privileged, they viewed education as a way to improve the lives of peasants and foster appreciation for the American presence. American soldiers were among the teachers who tried to "win the hearts and minds" of the Filipino people. This education program may have been the American military's greatest lasting contribution to the Filipino people and it is no coincidence that similar methods were later practiced in Vietnam.⁴⁹

46. David Howard Bain, Sitting in Darkness (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984) p. 22. Karnow, Image, p. 182-183.

47. Karnow, Image, p. 182-183.

48. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 168. Karnow, Image, p. 156.

49. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 183.

C. AMERICAN CIVIL AUTHORITY

The colonial administration passed from military to civil authorities in 1901, with the passage of the Spooner Amendment.⁵⁰ William Howard Taft was appointed the first civilian governor-general and, true to the Democratic party, set out to administer "the Philippines for the Filipinos."⁵¹ With great vigor he improved upon the infrastructure already laid down by the U.S. military. The Philippines soon enjoyed improved public health, communication, transportation and government institutions.⁵² These institutions were valuable contributions to the Philippines, but the American efforts also perpetuated the Filipinos' reliance on a foreign power.

American health programs, business practices and central government control established a safe environment for the creation of new wealth in the Philippines. However, there were negative repercussions rising from these improvements: startling population increases, ruthless business practices and a more powerful elite.⁵³ The improvements allowed many Filipinos to live a more comfortable life, but the joys of the elite did not filter down to the peasants. The daily life of a typical peasant became more difficult and increased the dissatisfaction on the part of those who were aware of the growing disparities between the rich and the poor.

The health programs established by the Americans improved the quality of life for many Filipinos, but they also created the unforeseen population explosion. Between 1903

50. Agoncillo, Philippines, p. 151.

51. Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Roskamm Shalom, The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship and Resistance (Boston: South End Press, 1987) p. 43.

52. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 55-56.

53. Benedict J. Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) p. 17.

and 1939 the Philippine population grew from 7 million to 16 million. The domestic agrarian system could not effectively absorb the rapidly expanding work force because the number of landowners and the acreage under cultivation had not increased. The application of simple supply and demand theory to these circumstances indicates that peasants would be in aggressive competition for jobs on the haciendas and landowners would be in position to demand more of their peasants. Both occurred.⁵⁴

The proliferation of American business practices in the Philippines would prove to be a double edged sword. Capitalism existed during the Spanish era, but the system matured only with the arrival of the Americans. Land ownership became more than just a badge of the aristocracy, it became a business venture. As a consequence, land speculation and efficient farming practices accelerated the creation of wealth. A cash economy quickly evolved and haciendas began to change hands. New landowners felt less obligated to long-time tenants and consequently demanded greater productivity from them. As the haciendas became extraordinarily productive, only the elite prospered.

The landed elite led a luxurious life even by international standards while the tenants were barely subsisting. Landowners became ruthless in their methods and learned to efficiently extract more from the peasants, give them less in return, and pass to them any losses incurred by the hacienda.⁵⁵ The wealthier they became, the more American they professed themselves to be. But, the peasants and the agricultural landless did not share the elites' prosperity.

The increasing political control exercised by the central government at Manila enhanced the landowner's position and power in the local community. In the traditional system, a

54. Kerkvliet, Huk, p. 18.

55. Kerkvliet, Huk, p. 17-18, 20.

landowner was a senior partner of sorts to the tenant and was obligated to provide the continuous use of his land and the basics of life in return for labor. The landlord was motivated to do this because much of his power was generated from tenant loyalty. Under the American system, landownership and the legal title to property held a position far above the traditional rights of tenants. This meant in a dispute over a tenant's right to continuous use of the land, the landowner held all legal rights and could even call upon the central government to enforce those rights.⁵⁶ Therefore, the landed elite became more powerful through central government support while the utility of tenant loyalty became less significant. With their stronger position, the elite took advantage of the rapidly growing labor market, became even more ruthless in their business practices, and made the already grim life of the peasantry more difficult.

D. PEASANT UNREST

American efforts in the Philippines may not have been ideal, but compared to European colonial practices they were the model of enlightenment.⁵⁷ The American colonial administration had been reasonably successful and unrest among the peasants did not reach a critical stage until the 1920s.⁵⁸ In the depression which followed the expansiveness of WWI, disorganized rebellions began to surface throughout the Philippines.⁵⁹ In the 1920s, a rebellious religious movement not unlike the Bohol Rebellion of 1622 began to flourish on Mindanao. The movement revolved around a religious leader who masqueraded as Jose Rizal. In the charade, Rizal had been resurrected

56. Kerkvliet, Huk, p. 21-23.

57. Karnow, Image, p. 197.

58. Sturtevant, "Philippine," pp. 123, 125.

59. Kessler, Rebellion, pp. 28-31.

to win independence for the Philippines. In 1923, the movement turned violent, but was put down by the Americans at the cost of one hundred lives.⁶⁰ The rebellion was labelled a religious fanatic movement, or Colorum. Colorum referred to a nineteenth century cult which combined Christian teachings with indigenous mystic religious concepts. Colorum movements typically involved charismatic leaders claiming mystical powers or knowledge. The term "Colorum" evolved until it became synonymous with lawless or unorthodox beliefs and behavior.⁶¹

In March 1923, Pedro Kabola, a field worker in central Luzon with Colorum appeal,⁶² organized a secret society, the Kapisanan Makabola Makarinag or "Association of the Worthy Kabola," to defend peasants from the theft of their property by the landed elite. The movement grew to 12,000 members by 1924.⁶³ Kabola called a Kapisanan meeting to finalize plans for a March 1925 revolutionary assault on San Jose in Nueva Ecija province. Six colonial constabulary soldiers interrupted the meeting, killed Kabola in the melee and captured 75 conspirators. Fear of a general uprising spread and more conspirators were arrested, but the panic faded and 76 were jailed for conspiracy and seditious acts.⁶⁴

Governor-general Leonard Wood attributed the uprising to unhealthy agrarian conditions. He stated, "Behind the revolt were homesteaders who lost their farms and tenants with grievances against landlords."⁶⁵ The official investigating committee was

60. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 128.

61. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 113.

62. Kessler, Rebellion, p. 12.

63. R. M. Stubbs, "Philippine Radicalism: The Central Luzon Uprisings, 1925-1935" (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1951) p. 37.

64. Sturtevant, "Philippine," pp. 128,131.

65. Stubbs, "Radicalism," p. 48.

comprised of Filipino elites and, not surprisingly, they disagreed with the governor-general. The committee determined the uprising was caused by agitators such as Kabola who disrupted the traditional landlord-tenant relationship and ignorant peasants who made unreasonable demands.⁶⁶

The Tayug, Pangasinan incident of 1931 was led by a rice field laborer, Pedro Calusa, and would be the last Colorum uprising. Two former Kapisanan members joined Calusa to establish a secret society. The three devised a plan to seize the town of Tayug, destroy all land records and judicial documents, then proclaim independence. The membership grew quickly because living conditions for peasants in Central Luzon were growing worse and those who participated would be entitled to some of the confiscated property. On 11 January 1931, Calusa and his forces took Tayug and destroyed the government documents. By the following day Constabulary reinforcements had captured Calusa, ending the most successful challenge to American authority in Central Luzon.⁶⁷

When the uprising was put down, Governor-General Dwight F. Davis admitted there were regions in the Philippines where tenants were justified in their grievances against the landlords, but he did not believe Tayug to be one of the areas.⁶⁸ The Filipino Secretary of the Interior, Honorio Ventury, declared the Colorum movement "was a hash of religion, politics, fanaticism and a little of everything else that can serve to inflame them."⁶⁹ However, a Christian Science Monitor reporter, Joseph R. Hayden, wrote,

66. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 131-132.

67. Sturtevant, "Philippine," pp. 143-151.

68. New York Times, 22 January 1931.

69. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 150.

"The reasons why the Filipino leaders did not wish the Tayug incident to be investigated by a body containing the appropriate members of the Governor General's staff of advisors are obvious. Such an inquiry would inevitably be pushed into the whole realm of the oppression of the poor peasant by the local boss, the usurer, the Constabulary, and the local official."⁷⁰

He wrote further,

"...one of the highest officials in Government, a Filipino, declared to the writer that the Tayug incident should not be called an agrarian uprising because the use of the term might very well give rise to similar outbreaks elsewhere in the Islands."⁷¹

One may reject the disorganized Colorum rebellions of the early 1920s as fanatical religious movements; but, the creation of the Kapisanan in 1923 and Calusa's Colorum society in 1929 were sincere responses to the unfair treatment of peasants. As the unrest progressed into the early 1930s a definite pattern emerged. The pattern indicated that the plight of the peasants in relation to the elites was increasingly grim and that the peasants had reached their breaking point. After the Tayug Incident the peasants would no longer strike out in blind fury, but instead they would build a well-organized peasant movement: the Sakdal Party.

E. THE SAKDALS

The arrival of the Sakdals would signal a new era of unrest in the Philippines. Its leader, Benigno Ramos, was a strongly nationalistic, well educated middle class civil service employee whose journalistic and oratory skills earned him a place in the ruling Nacionalista party.⁷² Ramos' government career began in 1921, but was cut short in 1930 when the President of the Senate, Manuel Quezon, asked for his resignation. Ramos had

70. Ralston Hayden, "Cooperation in the Philippines Found to Carry its Penalties," Christian Science Monitor, 12 September 1931.

71. Hayden, "Cooperation."

72. Sturtevant, "Philippine," p. 155-156.

publicly condemned the Nacionalista party and its leaders for their support in the appointment of a decidedly racist American to a teaching position at Manila High School.⁷³ Ramos bitterly resented his dismissal and in October 1930, responded by establishing an anti-Nacionalista paper, the Sakdal.

The Tagalog term "sakdal" meant "to accuse" or "to strike,"⁷⁴ and Ramos lived up to the name when he quickly struck out against colonial rule by fanning the flames of discontent in the 1931 Tangulan Uprising. The uprising was minor and easily controlled, but the government revoked Sakdal's mailing privileges for its subversive activity. When the government permitted Ramos to put his paper back in circulation in 1932, Sakdal regained its readership in one short year. Feeling the support of the people, Ramos took advantage of a growing rift among the Nacionalistas and established the Sakdal Party.⁷⁵

The Sakdal Party built a reputation for supporting the disadvantaged and focused upon two key objectives: absolute independence for the Philippines by 31 December 1935; the partition of large haciendas and the distribution of that land to the poor.⁷⁶ The Sakdal's appeal to the masses reached its peak strength in the June 1934 elections; unfortunately for the Sakdal's, much of their success was due to the Nacionalistas' inability to unite. When the Nacionalista Party leadership realized the Sakdal Party posed a serious challenge, they quickly resolved their internal differences thereby eliminating any chance for Sakdal Party rule.⁷⁷

73. Kessler, Rebellion, p. 14.

74. Karnow, Image, p. 273.

75. Sturtevant, "Philippines," pp. 159-164.

76. Sturtevant, "Philippines," p. 166.

77. Sturtevant, "Philippines," pp. 162-172.

Having lost hope for effecting political change, Ramos used Sakdal and his association with the Japanese and their "Pan Asia" movement to reignite the flames of unrest in the provinces surrounding Manila. He focused upon the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act:⁷⁸ an act which provided for a ten year transitional commonwealth government, the restriction of Filipino immigration to the U.S., and the continuance of trade practices favorable to the U.S.. Even with these provisions, Ramos believed the act was a ruse to prolong American rule and forever frustrate Philippine independence.⁷⁹

On 2 and 3 May 1935, peasant revolt erupted in the four provinces surrounding Manila, driving the horrified elite into the city for protection. Once again the peasants were confronting the elite. The revolt may have been well organized when compared with earlier peasant uprisings in the Philippines, but the poorly armed and poorly led peasants were still no match for the American colonial administration. The Sakdal Uprising was put down and hope for improved working and living conditions died along with sixty peasant rebels.⁸⁰

The efforts of the Sakdalistas were not totally in vain because government officials like Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon began to identify socioeconomic factors as the source of peasant unrest. The Nacionalistas even called for measures to restrict landowner abuse of tenants, and they supported social reforms to attack peasant discontent at its root. For the first time, Filipinos in position of authority were looking for the root cause of discontent and not blaming ignorance and religious fanaticism for the unrest.⁸¹

78. Schirmer, Reader, p. 37, 55, 57-58, 69.

79. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 63.

80. Sturtevant, "Philippines," pp. 193, 197-198.

81. Sturtevant, "Philippines," pp. 199-200.

What were the long-term effects of the Sakdal Uprising? The R.P. Government implemented reform measures, but the landowners worked against the measures by closing ranks. They organized private armies and implemented tough programs to restrict peasant movement. Opposing the landowners were agrarian leaders who saw that direct confrontation with the government was deadly so they organized peasant unions and decided to settle their grievances through strikes and political activity. The peasant and landowner initiatives were fundamentally opposed and the two social classes were on a course which would collide after WWII.

F. THE HUKS AND THE PKP

The social dynamics which led to the creation of the Sakdal movement also engendered a communist movement in the Philippines. A communist effort to gain control of social revolt had been periodically active in the Philippines since Crisanto Evangelista established the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) or Philippine Communist Party in 1930.⁸² What was different about this communist organization was the leadership indicated they would not serve as an arm of an international communist movement. In fact, when the PKP merged with the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP) in 1938,⁸³ the alliance sought not to bring the Philippines a "Russian brand of communism," but instead to secure an equitable division of the fruits of labor for tenant farmers. Pedro Abad Santos, the

82. Jose Maria Sison, The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View (New York: Crane Russak, 1989) p. 200.

83. David R. Sturtevant, Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940 (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1976) pp. 121-125.

PKP/SPP merger party vice-chairman, said he would welcome capitalism in the Philippines if it could just restructure the unfair distribution of wealth.⁸⁴

The PKP/SPP was just one organization among many like the Sakdals which pursued moderate peasant objectives generally through nonviolent courses of action.⁸⁵ During their pre-WWII struggle, the peasants may have been idealists, but they were not ordinary communist ideologues. Further, their revolution did not begin to attract the widespread support of more recent conflicts in Korea and Vietnam. The focus of unrest was not a struggle for hard-line communist ideology, but instead a fight for practical agrarian reform against the landed elite and the economic injustices they perpetuated. In their struggle, the peasants were anti-American only to the extent that the U.S. Government was close to the landlords and the wealthy.

Evidence of nationalist and not ideological motives came at the beginning of WWII when the PKP/SPP merger party pledged full support and loyalty to the U.S. in the war against Japan.⁸⁶ During the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, much of the merger party senior leadership was either imprisoned or executed.⁸⁷ In addition, the PKP/SPP was able to link with the People's Anti-Japanese army (or Hukbalahap) and effectively support the American war effort.⁸⁸ During the war, the Huks were dedicated to agrarian reform, but the fight against the Japanese was their first priority. Communist ideology

84. Benedict J. Kerkvliet, The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977) p. 53.

85. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, p. 39.

86. Sison, Revolution, p. 41.

87. Richard J. Kessler, Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) p. 31.

88. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 439.

played only a small role in a few of the units which had come together to comprise the Hukbalahap.⁸⁹

The PKP/SPP linked with the Hukbalahap, but the movements were not one and the same. The Hukbalahap was essentially a loose confederation of many anti-landlord peasant organizations brought together to fight against the Japanese occupation. The landlords were almost universally Japanese collaborators. The PKP/SPP was just one of these organizations. It is true that a few guerilla training sessions held by the Huks included Marxist instruction; however, former Huk rebels affirm that Marxism was taught in only a few sessions, and not many among the peasants understood or saw the relevance of the instruction.⁹⁰

At the close of WWII, General Douglas MacArthur's intelligence staff warned him the Huks might seek a Soviet-style communist government for the Philippines. However, MacArthur sympathized with the peasants and refused to send armed force against them saying, "If I worked in those sugar fields, I'd be a Huk myself." On the other hand, MacArthur was also very loyal to his Filipino friends among the power elite and permitted piecemeal repression of the Huk peasants.⁹¹ (Especially after the war against the Japanese had ended.)

When MacArthur left to command the occupation of Japan, the Huks returned to the haciendas to again become subject to political and economic mistreatment at the hands of the landed elite.⁹² At first, the Huks fought the tenancy system with "the ballot and

89. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, pp. 84-86.

90. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, pp. 74, 84-86.

91. Karnow, Image, pp. 311, 340.

92. Schirmer and Shalom, Reader, p. 70.

petition," working toward an industrialized capitalist economy which would put an end to the feudal agricultural system.⁹³ The humiliation suffered by the Huks, a group which had fought bravely in WWII, coupled with the availability of weapons at the close of the war to create an environment ripe for rebellion in the soon to be independent Philippines.⁹⁴

The Americans can be accurately characterized as having been benevolent, but condescending in their administration of the Philippines. They did build a modern national infrastructure for the Philippines and from the beginning of their rule, like no other colonial master, the Americans made independence for their colonial subjects a stated goal. The Americans, in their methods of colonial administration, may have fundamentally differed with the Spanish in their system of rule, but the U.S. nevertheless managed to make many of the same mistakes. The Americans co-opted the elite, as had the Spanish, then permitted them to continue to control the daily lives of the peasants as they had for hundreds of years. The Americans were unable to solve the problem of peasant unrest in the Philippines. When the Filipinos gained independence, would the elites who controlled the reigns of power prove any more effective at pacifying peasant unrest?

93. Karnow, Image, p. 340.

94. Kessler, Repression, p. 32.

IV. EARLY PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE (1946-1957)

The social-economic problems of the underprivileged Filipino masses became indelibly linked to the problems of nationalism when the Philippines became independent. Since the old elites continued in actual control of Philippine politics, the national interests of the United States naturally came to be identified with the interests of the Philippine elite. The "special" relationship the U.S. would have with the elite-led government would leave the peasants out in the cold, neglected both by their own government and the United States. The peasants would rise again in protest, but this time they would be fighting a Filipino government.

A. SPECIAL RELATIONS

On 4 July 1946, the U.S. relinquished sovereignty of its colony to the Republic of the Philippines. After 350 years of foreign domination Filipinos finally had their independence; however, the military, social and economic ties which bound the Philippines to the United States were not as quickly severed with the ties of national sovereignty. Fortunately, the mutual struggle by the Americans and Filipinos against the Japanese created a reservoir of good will, making the transition to independence relatively smooth and even gratifying for both nations. This good will would set the stage for a "special" relationship between the U.S. and R.P.; a relationship which would be useful in the immediate aftermath of WWII as the R.P. continued to face social unrest and the U.S. struggled against the perceived threat of global communism.

When the first President of the Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon, died in August 1944, his Vice-President, Sergio Osmena, became President. However, the war and its immediate aftermath found General MacArthur in a position of near omnipotence in the

Philippines, and consequently Osmena was ineffectual during his term in office. Osmena was easily defeated in his bid for reelection when MacArthur openly supported his opponent, Manuel Roxas. In April 1946, Roxas was elected President of the Commonwealth, and in July became the first President of an independent Philippines. Roxas was immediately challenged with the Philippine Trade Act controversy, the defense arrangements with the U.S. and the grievances of some newly formed peasant unions.

The Philippine Trade Act of 1946 was an agreement between the U.S. and Philippines in which the U.S. would provide large amounts of postwar reconstruction money to the R.P. (promised by the Tydings Rehabilitation Act), if the R.P. would extend to the Americans the favored trading status they had enjoyed since 1909. This meant that Philippine markets would be open to American manufacturers, and U.S. citizens would have parity with Filipinos to exploit the resources of the Philippines. The Filipinos would have to amend their constitution to enforce this measure. The remnant Huks saw Philippine submission to this American demand as an affront to their sovereignty. Many Filipinos accused the Americans of conspiring with the Roxas administration-the new elites-to deprive the Huks of their seats in Congress, which if granted would have enabled them to thwart the passage of the Philippine Trade Act.⁹⁵

The act may have seemed one-sided in favor of U.S. interests and its passage may have been less than pure, but American businessmen were unwilling to risk investment in the redevelopment of the R.P. without a U.S. government guarantee that they would earn a worthwhile return on their investment. The amendment was passed, the R.P. received the desperately needed reconstruction money, and the "special" relationship between the Americans and the Filipinos continued in fact, if not in name.

95. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, pp. 150-151.

In 1947, the "special" relationship between the U.S. and R.P. was formalized with the signing of two agreements: the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) and Military Assistance Agreement (MAA). The Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) would follow in 1951. In the Philippine view, these agreements in effect exchanged a degree of Philippine sovereignty for a defense arrangement with the U.S.. They were right.

The MBA provided the Americans unrestricted use of military bases in the Philippines for 99 years and, with justification, many Filipinos would later argue that this agreement was an insult to their national sovereignty because it relinquished "extraterritorial" rights to the Americans. The MAA was a five-year, renewable agreement which accompanied the MBA and provided the "training and aid" intended to build a military force in the R.P.. The MAA was seen by many as an American payment for the generous provisions in the MBA.⁹⁶

In 1951, the Filipinos insisted upon a MDT because they wanted the Americans to be obligated to defend the Philippines against attack, presumably from Japan.⁹⁷ The treaty did recognize that an attack in the Pacific region on either the U.S. or R.P. would be a threat to both nations; however, the treaty did not commit the U.S. beyond calling for the Americans to act in accordance with their "constitutional processes."⁹⁸

Each of the three agreements in the comprehensive defense arrangement were freely signed by the U.S. and R.P.. From this arrangement, the R.P. received a great deal of desperately needed financial and military support, but the Americans had bargained for and received rights considered important for implementation of their own national interests.

96. Schirmer and Shalom, Reader, pp. 96-103.

97. Claude A. Buss, The Arc of Crisis (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1961) p. 164.

98. Vreeland, Handbook, p. 237.

Collectively, the agreements benefitted both nations, designed as they were for the mutual defense of both nations.

B. PEASANT UNREST

Another problem President Roxas would face in 1946 was social unrest. During WWII, the peasants had fought bravely under difficult circumstances, but when the war came to a close they once again began to articulate their demands for agrarian reform. Luis Taruc, a long-time organizer in the peasant union movement and Huk Supremo during WWII, pleaded for peasants rights and an opportunity for power-sharing.⁹⁹ President Roxas refused Taruc's pleas and cracked down ruthlessly on Taruc, the peasant unions, and the general peasant population. The peasant population willingly provided their allegiance to Taruc when he and many of his followers fled deeper into the countryside to establish an armed anti-government movement.¹⁰⁰

The deep-seeded rivalry between the elite and the peasants resurfaced as the Huk Rebellion. However, for the first time, the peasants were also challenging an independent Philippine government. But the Americans too were involved because they were so closely linked to the elite-led government. The Huk rebellion was confined to Luzon. However, similar movements flared throughout the islands, but they did not receive much attention either from the Philippine central government or its American backers.

After Roxas' untimely death in 1948, his successor, Elpidio Quirino, tried to win over the Huks through negotiation and an amnesty program. Quirino's attempts at reconciliation with the Huks failed and the rebellion only grew worse.¹⁰¹

99. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, p. 81.

100. Karnow, Image, p. 341.

101. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 236-237.

The Huks overwhelmingly consisted of poor peasants fighting for land reform rather than ideological revolution. According to Stanley Karnow, an old Huk rebel recounted that,

"They said we were Communists. I didn't even know what Communism was, and I still don't. But they called you a Communist and that was that. It made no sense to deny it, because they wouldn't believe you."¹⁰²

The peasants opposed the abuses of feudalism, but they were not sufficiently sophisticated to oppose the concept of feudalism. As patronizing as it may sound, the peasants simply wanted to work for benevolent landowners. The peasants were concerned with nationalism, but only to the extent that the Americans were identified with their government oppressors.¹⁰³ Ideological controversy had little attraction for a people who were still struggling to overcome the bitter heritage of war. Unfortunately, American intelligence gave another reading to Huk intentions and reported that a vigorous peasant movement would "seek to further the objectives of world communism."¹⁰⁴

C. THE INSURGENCY AND MAGSAYSAY

The U.S. government continued to side with the Philippine power elite because from Washington, communism in Asia appeared to be an insidious monolith.¹⁰⁵ The U.S. implemented a two-part policy. First, the Quirino-Foster agreement was designed to provide economic support to the government, and that support was to trickle down to the masses--it never did. Second, the CIA and military were to help Ramon Magsaysay

102. Karnow, Image, p. 342.

103. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, 265.

104. Karnow, Image, p. 336.

105. Schirmer, Reader, p. 107.

(Quirino's Defense Minister who would later become President) formulate tactics to defeat the Huks.

Magsaysay and the CIA defeated the Huks, but the Quirino-Foster agreement was never used as designed--to help erase the causes of poverty and the massive growing gap between the rich and poor. Magsaysay employed aggressive anti-guerilla tactics against the Huks, and some sources may indicate differently, but in an in-depth review in Rebellion and Repression in the Philippines, Richard J. Kessler states these tactics contributed least to their.¹⁰⁶ Benedict J. Kerkvliet suggests war weary peasants and reform promises from Magsaysay accounted for two-thirds of his success in neutralizing the Huks.¹⁰⁷

The reforms Magsaysay promised the peasants, and the failure of vicious revenge attacks poorly conceived by the Huks, enabled Magsaysay to win peasant allegiance for the government.¹⁰⁸ With the peasants on the side of the government, R.P. forces were able to arrest the members of the PKP/SPP politburo in October 1950.¹⁰⁹ By December 1952, the PKP had renounced armed struggle and embraced legal opposition as their only means for attaining political change in the future.¹¹⁰ However, Magsaysay never followed through on his reform promises and the rich became richer and the poor became poorer.

The PKP renounced armed struggle, but Luis Taruc and a few Huk units continued their fight for agrarian reform. The link between the PKP/SPP and the Huks which had been formed during WWII was broken, and the two movements were separate again. The

106. Kessler, Repression, p. 33-35.

107. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, p. 236-241, 245.

108. Kessler, Repression, p. 35.

109. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 237.

110. Kerkvliet, Rebellion, pp. 220, 227.

Huks did change their name to the communist-sounding People's Liberation Army, but they remained focused on settling scores with landlords, and their allies and stooges in the Philippine government.¹¹¹

The Magsaysay strategy continued to wear down the Huks, and eventually the rebels were unable to remain in the field as an effective fighting force. In the eyes of the Huks, reform justice had never been achieved and a few guerillas continued fighting in scattered units under the leadership of Taruc.¹¹² However, many chose not to follow Taruc and began to use their fighting skills for criminal activity. These men would later become founding members in the New People's Army (NPA).¹¹³

In 1953, Magsaysay became President of the Philippines. His leadership during the R.P. fight against the Huks had made him very popular. However, Magsaysay's popularity did not translate into effective execution of the political and bureaucratic responsibilities of government. Even Magsaysay began to view his own presidency as anti-climatic, especially when compared to his hey-day when he defeated the Huks. He began to suffer criticism from Philippine nationalists who time and again would refer to him as "America's boy in Asia." Magsaysay was unable to fulfill his promises of agrarian reform and the causes of rural poverty were as persistent as ever when Magsaysay died in a plane crash in March 1957.¹¹⁴

The military defeat of the Huks appeared to be a success, but the U.S. and R.P. failed to achieve their most important objective. The arms supplied by the U.S. did not make the

111. Kessler, Repression, p. 33.

112. Kessler, Repression, p. 35.

113. Greg Jones, Red Revolution: Inside the Philippine Guerilla Movement (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989) p. p. 28-29.

114. Karnow, Image, p. 354.

Philippine military an effective instrument against an external enemy, neither did they bring peace or prosperity to the masses. Arms were the wrong medium for the social ills of the Philippines, because weapons would not relieve the pain of the hungry.

Here was an advance warning of the powerlessness of power. We might have seen that the Philippines needed something more than military assistance. Even though our intentions and motives were good, we still did not achieve the results we wanted. As long as the U.S. focused upon the "communist" threat, little thought was given to the possibility that some fundamental changes in policy might be in order.

V. BUDDING NATIONALISM (1957-1965)

The era of "Early Independence" was an awkward time for the Philippines; a time when the R.P. groped for direction and had to rely upon the United States to play a major role even in its internal affairs. The "special relationship" had already reached its peak during the Magsaysay administration and the Philippine nationalists became increasingly resentful as Magsaysay catered more and more to U.S. interests.

With the death of Magsaysay, the extreme nationalists moved to center stage. For the first time, the Philippine leadership seized an opportunity to break free from the omnipresent influence of the U.S. and find its own way in an era of "budding nationalism." Unfortunately, corruption would accompany nationalism and a weak Philippine economy would continue to require U.S. assistance. President Macapagal would attempt to end the corruption and fail, but he would be successful in boosting national pride.

A. NATIONALISM AND CORRUPTION

Magsaysay's Vice-President and successor, Carlos P. Garcia, would become known for his aggressive nationalistic objectives and penchant for corrupt activity. As President, Garcia blazed a new trail for national policy by rejecting the presumption of foreign domination. His goal was clear: true political and fiscal independence for the Philippines. He implemented a policy of economic nationalism which had been outlined three years earlier by the National Economic Council.¹¹⁵ This policy was labelled "Filipino First,"

115. Buss, The Arc, p. 135.

and with its implementation Garcia intended to resist foreign control and ensure the national interests of the R.P. took priority above all else--in particular American interests.¹¹⁶

Austerity was also a key component in Garcia's plan and he articulated a regimen of "more work, more thrift, more productive investment and more efficiency."¹¹⁷ He believed "extravagant consumption" must be stopped and that austerity in the daily lives of Filipinos was a "desirable end in itself." Garcia's rhetoric was both an appeal to nationalism and a call for national self-sufficiency, but apparently Garcia did not intend for either his "Filipino First" policy or austerity program to harm the elite.

Critics sarcastically labelled Garcia's policy "Some Filipinos First"¹¹⁸ because while he preached austerity, Garcia and his cronies were managing a system of graft and corruption that would only be surpassed when Marcos raped the nation. In one scheme, Garcia managed to accumulate \$700 million in a twelve month period.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, Garcia had set an example that his people would follow. More than ever, corruption infected people in every social class, and reached into every facet of Filipino life. Teodoro Locsin of the Manila Free Press lamented,

"We are no better than our leaders, we put them where they are and were we in their place, we might do as they do. Weakness is a matter of opportunity. We do not hate corruption, we hate our lack of a share."¹²⁰

It was not long before this degree of corruption would wreak havoc on the Philippine economy.

116. Gagelonia, Nation, pp. 274-275.

117. Gagelonia, Nation, pp. 274-275.

118. Buss, The Arc, p. 138.

119. Karnow, Image, p. 362.

120. Buss, The Arc, p. 141.

B. U.S. ASSISTANCE

As nationalism took root under Garcia and Macapagal, the U.S. military bases and aid and assistance programs increasingly became points of conflict. Since the signing of the MBA in 1947, the U.S. and R.P. relationship proceeded with the understanding that the system of military bases should continue so long as both nations considered it in their common interests and to their mutual advantage.¹²¹ The U.S. acknowledged R.P. sovereignty over the bases in 1956, but in practice, the U.S. continued to use the bases largely for its own national security and for the security and defense of those nations with parallel interests. The Americans used the bases in 1954 to support the French in their efforts at Dien Bien Phu, and again in 1958 to help the Republic of China in their sponsorship of the Indonesian rebels.¹²² Some Filipino nationalists were irritated by these abuses of R.P. sovereignty, but most Filipinos were reassured by the presence of U.S. forces. In the view of some, the Americans were taking advantage of the Filipinos; but was it the Americans' responsibility to look after the national interests of the Philippines even before their own?

The R.P. government officials continued to abide by the MBA; therefore, they at least tacitly agreed to their predicament. However, it was a bitter pill to swallow. The R.P. government leadership knew their interests were just one small variable in the American calculus of national security, and this realization humiliated them. However, they also knew that if the need to defend the R.P. against an outside aggressor were ever to arise, they would have to rely upon the Americans.

The R.P. enjoyed support other than military protection. Beginning with the Rehabilitation Act of 1946 and ending in the Garcia administration, the U.S. provided \$3

121. Buss, The Arc, p. 165.

122. Buss, The Arc, p. 165-166.

billion in aid and assistance to the R.P.: \$1 billion in grants, loans and credits; \$1 billion in payments and expenditures resulting from WWII; and \$1 billion in military aid.¹²³ The program was generous by any measure. In comparison, the Marshall Plan for the whole of Europe totalled \$13 billion.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, R.P. government officials continued to complain that the aid did not even cover their losses during the war and that too much of what was provided was in the form of military equipment. The Filipinos may have achieved political independence, but their desperate need for financial assistance left them with "hat in hand" in front of the Americans.

In the era of "budding nationalism" in the Philippines the United States was no longer responsible for R.P. internal security, but "special relations" and U.S. national interests continued to prescribe active American support. At that time world communism was what the American government feared most, and it seemed to take root in poverty stricken nations like the Philippines. The Americans believed Garcia and his policies were responsible for the failure of the Philippine economy, and if poverty were to grow out of that failure, it would ultimately revive the Huk Rebellion.¹²⁵ The Americans perceived the Huk Rebellion to be a wholly communist inspired movement, and since the U.S. was willing to do anything to strengthen its position against communism in the Cold War, Philippine nationalism had to be endured.

123. Buss, The Arc, p. 169.

124. Walter LaFeber, The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989) p. 456.

125. Karnow, Image, p. 362.

C. A PRESIDENT FOR THE COMMON MAN

In 1961, Garcia lost the Presidential election to his very own Vice-President, Diosdado Macapagal. The Americans backed Macapagal in his run for office, but he needed little help. As President, Garcia had humiliated his Vice-President at every opportunity, but Macapagal managed to turn the tables on Garcia by advertising himself as sober, frugal and above corruption--the antithesis of what Garcia's presidency had come to mean. Further, for a campaign which targeted corruption, Macapagal held impeccable credentials and had an unusual distinction for a Filipino President; he was from a poor peasant family. His campaign slogan read, "Honest Mac, the Poor Man's Best Friend."¹²⁶

With Macapagal as President, the "Filipino First" policy lost much of its extremism. He counseled the Filipinos to be realistic in their nationalism and understand that "the power of our economic development is in the hands of the United States."¹²⁷ The R.P.'s withering economy would become Macapagal's first priority.

To rebuild the economy Macapagal set into motion a five point plan to attack corruption on all fronts: set a personal example of honesty and integrity for the nation to follow; attain self-sufficiency for the nation in food, clothing and shelter; create jobs so Filipinos could earn the money to secure basic needs; launch an omnibus socioeconomic program for prosperity; establish practices and examples to strengthen morality.¹²⁸ Macapagal's plan was all-encompassing, but it was also naively optimistic and as a result its benefits never trickled down to the Philippines' poor.

126. Karnow, Image, pp. 363, 364.

127. Buss, The Arc, p. 137.

128. Gagelonia, Nation, p. 275

Macapagal's program for economic recovery did not take root, but he still managed to tap the well of national pride when he changed the celebration of Independence Day from July 4th to July 12th.¹²⁹ Nationalists were pleased because in their view July 12th, the date Aguinaldo declared independence from Spain, was an honorable Independence Day. The Filipinos generally liked their association with the Americans, but to them, July 4th was the American Independence Day and simply the date that President Harry S. Truman relinquished sovereignty of the colony to the R.P.. Macapagal's initiative was widely popular and for a time drew the Filipino people closer as a nation.

In another effort to make a lasting contribution to his people, Macapagal implemented a land reform code. Macapagal remembered his roots and refused to ignore the plight of the peasants. His land reform code had six provisions: establish and encourage the formation of family-sized farms as the basis of Philippine agriculture; improve the status of poor farmers by freeing them from pernicious practices such as illegal rates of interests; encourage bigger productivity to increase the income of small farmers; apply all labor laws to all irrespective of their status in life; provide a land settlement program and the distribution of land; make poor farmers independent, self-reliant, and responsible citizens in order to strengthen Philippine democratic society.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, Macapagal's program as all other land reform promises in the past never progressed beyond the paper stage.

At the end of his administration, Macapagal could be seen as an honest man who worked to invigorate nationalism, create a self-sufficient economy and bring positive change in the distribution of wealth. He was only reasonably successful in instilling

129. Agoncillo, Introduction, p. 238.

130. Agoncillo, Introduction, 238-239.

national pride. The landed elite were enraged by his agrarian reform proposals and the peasants were disappointed by his failure. Further, Macapagal may have been personally honest, but he was unable to curb corruption in his administration. By 1965, corruption and mismanagement had not released its grip on the economy, and unemployment and inflation were on the rise.¹³¹ Macapagal's track record as President was marginal at best and in the 1965 election he would be little competition for a savvy politician like Ferdinand Marcos. Above all, the ever increasing poverty in the city slums and the countryside aggravated to the bursting point the differences between the elite and the disaffected.

131. Karnow, Image, p. 365.

VI. THE MARCOS YEARS (1965-1986)

In the Philippines, the affairs of the nation were spinning out of control. The internal turmoil of the Macapagal government, evidenced by its inability to cope with a wide range of domestic problems, provided an opportunity for a strong national leader to fill the void. Ferdinand E. Marcos would be that leader and for the next 20 years rule the Philippines.

Marcos was the quintessential Filipino politician. He would promise a better life to the peasants, fight the communist movement, and deal effectively with the Americans. Marcos would construct a house of cards using martial law and state capitalism as his tools, then watch it collapse as Benigno and Cory Aquino inspired the Filipino people to revolution.

A. THE PROMISES OF MARCOS

In 1965, Marcos was a brilliant but tough minded Senator who had been in Philippine national politics since his 1949 election to the legislature--an election characterized as the dirtiest in Philippine history. In the 1965 presidential campaign, Marcos promised to "renovate society, introduce land reform, social justice and real democracy."¹³² After a convincing election victory over Macapagal, Marcos made an additional promise in his inauguration speech to end "every form of waste or conspicuous consumption and extravagance" in the nation and ensure the "supremacy of the law."¹³³ Marcos' promises would be an anachronism in the reality of his presidency.

Marcos faced many challenges when he took office, and most serious among these was the ever-present discontent of the peasants. To tackle the problem, Marcos announced

132. Karnow, Image, p. 365, 370, 375.

133. Karnow, Image, p. 365.

agrarian reform initiatives and established programs designed to update the nation's infrastructure. Land was to be distributed to peasants, roads and bridges were to be built, and agricultural improvements were to be implemented.¹³⁴ Under Marcos, the Philippines seemed to have a promising future.

Marcos' early efforts were directed at nurturing development, but as he settled comfortably into power, the hopelessness which peasants experienced in the Magsaysay, Garcia and Macapagal administrations, returned. Marcos' efforts at improving agricultural techniques were successful, and for a time the Philippines became a net exporter of food.¹³⁵ However, Marcos' land reform program fizzled quickly and soon Marcos was reported to be amassing a fortune from the corruption in his own administration. To make matters worse, the growing discontent among the peasants began to feed a rising tide of nationalism in Manila; and when these events linked with the anti-American sentiment stemming from the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, it created an environment ripe for the emergence of a radical political movement.¹³⁶

B. THE INSURGENTS

The communist movement would take new life in this environment. The PKP had been the focus of socialist reform in the Philippines since its split with the Huks in 1952, but it lost its vitality with the passing years. In 1967, a PKP officer and university lecturer, Jose Maria Sison, spurned the PKP for its passiveness and founded a new communist party, the CPP. Sison and the other founding members of the CPP were verifiably middle and upper class university students and their stated goal was to create a peasant-based

134. Karnow, Image, p. 377-378.

135. Karnow, Image, p. 377-378.

136. Kessler, Repression, p. 35.

armed revolution in the Philippines.¹³⁷ The year 1967 was the height of the cultural revolution in China and the year of the Marcos commitment of Philippine forces to Vietnam.

Sison and the fledgling CPP insisted they needed an army for their revolution and, conveniently, the same Huk rebels who had resorted to banditry and racketeering in the 1950s were open for solicitation.¹³⁸ Sison approached two experienced Huk guerilla leaders for help: Faustino del Mundo (Commander Sumulong) and Bernabe Buscayno (Commander Dante). Luis Taruc was no longer available because he had been arrested in 1954 and sentenced to 14 years in prison. Commander Sumulong assumed Taruc's position as Huk Supremo because since his release, Taruc had become an ordinary peace-loving citizen.¹³⁹

Commander Sumulong was living outside Clark Air Base in Angeles City and owned the protection and smuggling rackets associated with the base. Commander Dante was Sumulong's number one lieutenant; a man personally credited with committing 25 murders.¹⁴⁰ Sumulong did not join with Sison, but Dante felt that his aspirations for a better life for Filipino peasants would be improved by linking up with Sison.¹⁴¹ Sison and Dante cooperated, and by March 1969 they had created the New People's Army (NPA). They compared themselves to the earlier leaders of the PKP/Huk: Sison, an urban

137. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 17, 31.

138. Kessler, Repression, p. 41.

139. Karnow, Image, p. 354.

140. Jones, Red Revolution, pp. 27-29.

141. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 18.

intellectual, played the role of Crisanto Evangelista, and Commander Dante, a peasant, played the role of Luis Taruc.¹⁴²

Initially, few elites participated in the communist movement, but those who did were intellectuals and members of the CPP. The elites did not have a taste for the tougher life in the NPA and consequently the NPA consisted almost exclusively of individuals from peasant backgrounds. The social classes came together in the movement, but their goals could neither be characterized as identical nor linked in perpetuity. The elites in the CPP were motivated by ideology and wanted fundamental change in government whereas the peasants in the NPA were motivated by practical objectives and wanted land reform.

The CPP founders also perceived themselves to be Maoists and they viewed the hard-line model of the Cultural Revolution as the most effective way to introduce wholesale political change in the Philippines.¹⁴³ They believed the CCP model would logically attract widespread support from Filipino peasants because it implicitly promised agrarian reform.

C. MARCOS, THE AMERICANS, AND THE INSURGENCY

In the late 1960s, Marcos also began to play the theme of nationalism to his advantage at home and abroad. He knew the American connection was of value to the Philippines and, for a time, he agreed to cooperate with the Americans in Vietnam by providing the Philippine Civil Action Group (PHILCAG)--a non-combative force whose second in command was then Major Fidel Ramos. However, Marcos became increasingly cautious as American embarrassments in Vietnam increased.

After the Tet offensive Marcos grew more ambivalent in his relationship with the Americans and became the foremost Filipino spokesman for "respectable independence."

142. Kessler, Repression, p. 42.

143. Sison, Revolution, p. 179.

First, he ordered the PHILCAG to return from Vietnam, then he began to probe for change in the U.S.-R.P. relationship. His suggested initiatives included a review of the MBA, a revision of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty, and the termination of special economic relations. Marcos further increased his options when he opened windows to the socialist world and announced a "New Developmental Diplomacy" which divested the Philippines from sole dependence on the United States.¹⁴⁴

While Marcos was distancing himself from the U.S., the CPP leadership was seeking legitimacy for their struggle from the Chinese Communists. The CPP sent nine of their own number to study in the PRC in 1971.¹⁴⁵ Although Maoism was failing even in China, the CPP and NPA still wanted to follow Mao's hard line; an idea which implied there was no other way for communism to succeed except by force of arms. The Philippines was not China and the Filipinos were not Chinese, but the NPA nevertheless employed a "Yenan Strategy" to emulate Mao's success. In theory, from a headquarters in remote Northern Luzon, the NPA would build a power base from which the movement was to advance in stages until final victory in Manila.

As Sison conceived, the NPA needed mass base support; a sea of people in which his guerilla army could swim. The development of "mass base" support and participation by the peasants, workers, soldiers, parish priests and intellectuals was crucial for the CPP leadership to lead a successful revolution and supplant the elites in government. By 1972, the CPP claimed to have several hundred guerillas, 350 rifles and a mass base of 300,000 sympathizers. On the other hand, Marcos estimated the NPA's armed strength to be much

144. Claude A. Buss, "The United States and the Philippines: A New Look at Old Problems" (Unpublished Manuscript, 1990) p. 17.

145. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 72.

greater: 8000 guerillas, 10,000 rifles, but only 100,000 sympathizers.¹⁴⁶ Launching his scheme to consolidate power, President Marcos used the exaggerated estimation of the NPA threat as justification for declaring martial law in 1972.

D. MARTIAL LAW AND STATE CAPITALISM

Initially, many Filipinos welcomed martial law because its immediate effect was to curtail dramatically the raging lawlessness and violence in their country. However, to justify the declaration of martial law abroad, Marcos identified the NPA as an insurgency: a definition which won further financial and military support from an American government that was wrestling with a similarly defined conflict in Vietnam. Both were perceived by the Americans to be manifestations of the worldwide communist movement. Marcos knew the U.S. would disapprove of his abandonment of democracy, but he guessed correctly that the Americans would accept martial law if the alternative was the rise of communism in the R.P..¹⁴⁷ The U.S. and the Marcos government seemed to have found a common cause.

For a time, the NPA was able to implement its "Yenan Strategy" with little resistance from the government, but in 1972, Marcos deployed the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to crush the NPA. From 1972 through 1974, insurgent bases located mostly in the Cordillera mountains of Northern Luzon were identified and destroyed. The AFP dealt the NPA a major defeat and forced them to take on a strategy of simple survival.¹⁴⁸ However, even though his armed forces enjoyed extraordinary success against the NPA, Marcos was unwilling to suspend martial law.

146. Jones, *Red Revolution*, pp. 106-107.

147. Buss, "The United States," p. 18.

148. Jones, *Red Revolution*, pp. 95-96.

A plan of economic reform, or "state capitalism," accompanied martial law in Marcos' plan to consolidate power. Marcos took capital resources from members of the private sector whom he disliked and redirected their resources into government "prestige" projects in Manila.¹⁴⁹ He confiscated profitable grain, meat, fertilizer, sugar and coconut enterprises then handed them over to his "cronies" (capital elitists who cooperated with him) to be run as "state monopolies."¹⁵⁰ Marcos grew wealthy receiving "kickbacks" from public contracts, and profits from the state monopolies. His tactics alienated many, but in the short run, Marcos was able to effectively consolidate his power by nurturing a strong allegiance among those who were benefitting from the corruption. In this fever of corruption, the poverty of the masses was of little concern to Marcos.

The economic and political excesses of Marcos continued to feed domestic opposition. The NPA regrouped after the debacle of its "Yenan Strategy," but suffered another major setback when many in the CPP and NPA leadership, including Sison and Dante, were arrested in 1976 and 1977.¹⁵¹ Even with this setback, the rolls of the NPA would eventually exceed 20,000.¹⁵² The NPA's extraordinary recruiting success was due to the near universal hatred of and opposition to the corrupt and ruthless tactics which Marcos' troops employed against the guerillas and the peasants.

The mass base also expanded because many peasants who had become the innocent victims of the hostilities were receiving no help or commiseration from their own

149. The Asia Society, The Philippines: Facing the Future (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1986) p. 11.

150. Claude A. Buss, Cory Aquino and the People of the Philippines (Stanford, California, Stanford Alumni Association, 1987) p. 59.

151. Sison, Revolution, p. 94, 96.

152. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 131.

constitutional government.¹⁵³ However, it is significant to note that the mass base was distinct from the NPA. The mass base was comprised of Filipinos who had been alienated by the government and were providing active, passive and often unwitting support to the NPA guerillas. However, neither active, passive, nor unwitting support can be equated to ideological unity. The NPA was a vehicle through which the otherwise helpless mass base could challenge Marcos.

As Marcos tightened his grip on the nation, many Filipinos began to interpret the "special relationship" between the U.S. and R.P. governments as clear American support for the Marcos dictatorship. In particular, the CPP saw American involvement in the Philippines as that of an imperialist nation infringing upon Filipino sovereignty. These views varied little with the ingrained belief among most Filipinos that the U.S. ultimately controlled events in the Philippines. As a result, many Filipinos naturally, linked the abuses of Marcos with the U.S. administration. As the U.S. became more and more a target for blame, protest, and eventually violence, an increasing number of Americans began to question the wisdom of the policy of all-out U.S. support for the Marcos regime.

Just like the peasant reaction to Roxas's methods in the 1950s, the peasants' suffering under Marcos in the mid-1970s increased their support for the rebel movement. The vast majority of those supporting the NPA, previously referred to as the "mass base," were not doing so to promote communism as an ideology, but instead to oppose the excesses of Marcos. It is clear that peasants who were not linked to the NPA often experienced a greater degree of justice in the rudimentary practices of the NPA than they did with the R.P. government.¹⁵⁴ *Those who suffer seek relief wherever they can find it.*

153. Jones, Red Revolution, pp. 125, 297.

154. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 13.

E. U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

In 1979, while beginning to modify the structure of martial law and promising restoration of democracy, Marcos agreed to a renewal of the MBA. In the new agreement, the U.S. could still conduct unhampered military operations and exercise command and control within certain facilities on the bases; but, ultimate sovereignty over the bases remained with the R.P.. At the same time Marcos let it be known that he (pro-American as he pretended to be) was not exactly happy with the MAA. Presidents Carter and Marcos agreed to a new security package of \$500 million for the period 1980-1985: \$50 million in military assistance; \$250 million in foreign military sales; \$200 million in security supporting assistance. In 1983, Marcos made an agreement with the Reagan administration to increase the security assistance to \$900 million: \$125 million in grant military assistance; \$300 million in foreign military sales credits; \$475 million in economic assistance.¹⁵⁵ Marcos recognized his need for American help, but he resisted the growing opposition in the United States to his dictatorial methods and his violations of human rights.

The military assistance gave the AFP weapons to defend themselves and kill NPA, but the economic assistance did not find its way to those people in the countryside or in the city slums who desperately needed it. As a result, the reason for the people to participate in the insurgency and harbor armed guerillas remained intact. The aid did nothing for U.S. interests except more closely link American aid to Marcos and his elitist cronies. Marcos would remain unsuccessful in his efforts to control the NPA unless he attacked the root cause of the insurgency--poverty in the countryside and in the cities.

155. Buss, Cory, p. 158.

F. BENIGNO AND CORY AQUINO

Filipinos became increasingly dissatisfied with Marcos and his repressive measures; but the people were most dissatisfied with Marcos' inability to destroy the causes of the social ills which he had advertised as being the reason for his desertion from democratic practices in the first place. The Filipinos faced a Hobson's choice for government: either a repressive dictatorship or a radical anti-government movement. However, when the failure of state capitalism began to squeeze all but the very wealthy in the early 1980s, the dissatisfaction of Marcos' domestic opponents increased and a moderate alternative emerged. Marcos' most formidable opponent, Benigno Aquino, would be that alternative. Aquino was above all the symbol of the opposition to Marcos, and not by any means the symbol of hope for the masses that his wife would become.

Benigno Aquino had been arrested in the 1972 crackdown and charged with subversion, murder and illegal arms possession. He was convicted and sentenced to death, but after widespread international protest, Benigno Aquino's sentence was commuted to life in prison. In May 1980, following a lengthy stay in prison and numerous protests from abroad, Marcos permitted Aquino to travel to the U.S. for medical treatment and remain there in exile.¹⁵⁶

As early as August 1980, Aquino again began to challenge Marcos from exile. Over the next three years Aquino called upon Marcos to curb repression, reverse state capitalism and redistribute the nation's wealth. His message naturally appealed to those suffering under Marcos.¹⁵⁷ However, to successfully oppose Marcos for the presidency, Aquino knew he had to return to the Philippines. On 21 August 1983, immediately upon his return

156. Karnow, Image, 440.

157. Buss, Aquino, p. 13.

from the U.S., but while still in the custody of R.P. government troops who were escorting him from the plane, Aquino was shot to death.¹⁵⁸ The assassination was never directly linked to--but ultimate responsibility was attributed to, President Marcos.

After the assassination of Aquino, Marcos was able to ride out the protests, and for a time reassert himself as the strongman ruler of the Philippines. However, Marcos was still unable to divert international attention from the Benigno Aquino murder trial and the possibility that witnesses may link him to the assassination. In December 1985, when General Fabian C. Ver, a longtime Marcos crony, was acquitted along with others in the assassination of Aquino, the immediate hope of linking Marcos to the murder was lost. However, in the eyes of the world community, President Marcos was discredited and his removal from office assured.¹⁵⁹

The Filipino people had been desperately searching for an alternative to Marcos and they finally found one in December 1985 when Cory Aquino agreed to run for president. Cory had qualifications which excited the Filipino public to adoration: she was the widow of the martyr, Benigno Aquino; she was the antithesis of Ferdinand Marcos, the quintessential Filipino politician; and something entirely new--hope for the masses. Cory seemed to represent a better level of living for the poor, particularly if it could bring about the elimination of the communist menace and the achievement of land reform.

The unrest following the unhappy verdict of the Aquino trial underscored the total decay of Marcos' political and economic house of cards. By early 1986, capital flight was spreading financial panic throughout the Philippines, and international banks began

158. Karnow, Image, p. 402-403.

159. Karnow, Image, pp. 440-441.

withholding credit and calling in mature loans.¹⁶⁰ It was common knowledge that by this time, Marcos and his cronies managed to garner one-half of all public and private assets in the Philippines and use them to amass their personal fortunes.¹⁶¹ In early 1986, the corrupt Marcos dictatorship and his economy of "state capitalism" were on the brink of total collapse.

Aquino won the snap election for a new president on 7 February 1986, but Marcos refused to leave Malacanang. In a desperate effort to retain power, Marcos declared a state of emergency on 24 February 1986, but his efforts were hopeless.¹⁶² The very next day the pressures at home and from abroad forced Marcos and his family to flee to Hawaii. Cory Aquino moved into Malacanang and the Filipino people finally had a leader they believed would carry out the promise of political and agrarian reform.

In his final years of rule, Marcos had become the personification of all the evils that he campaigned against in his first presidential election. What was his legacy? In twenty years Marcos managed to abandon democracy in favor of political dictatorship; turn a free market economy into one controlled by the state; create an environment ripe for a communist movement, complete with guerilla army, to flourish; participate in a level of corruption which would drive the average Filipino into abject poverty and the nation into bankruptcy. The political and economic devastation which Marcos left in his wake would be a daunting challenge for any successor, even for one who entered office with all the glamor and accolades accorded to Cory Aquino.

160. The World Bank, *Philippines: A Framework For Economic Recovery* (Washington DC, Government Printing Office, 1987) pp. 4, 17.

161. Buss, *Aquino*, p. 58.

162. Karnow, *Image*, p. 440-441.

VII. CURRENT POLITICS

Although President Aquino inherited the economic and political nightmare left behind by Ferdinand Marcos, her messianic-like rise to the presidency made even the most hopeful dreams of the Filipino people seem possible. Cory Aquino had humbly described herself before the election as a "simple housewife," yet she managed to unite her people as never before and bring down the most selfish dictator the nation had ever known.

Her singular accomplishments won immeasurable support from those who wanted no more of Marcos. She would be faced with the challenge not only of restoring democratic methods but of achieving a level of living for all Filipinos that would relieve the country of the threat of insurgency and the heaviest burdens of poverty.

Would Cory Aquino be able to restore confidence in the Philippine government? In fulfilling the dreams of the masses would she be the first leader to achieve land reform? How would she deal with the NPA? Could she transform the armed forces of the Philippines into a disciplined fighting force? Would the military and economic aid policies of the U.S. adequately support her program of national development? In sum, how would President Aquino deal with the social and economic ills which led to insurgency in the first place?

A. GOVERNMENT REFORM

Cory Aquino's most important task after assuming office was to attack the roots of insurgency which threatened the fundamental stability of her nation. But before she could do that, she would have to reestablish the democratic principles and procedures which had been traditional in the Philippines before the advent of Marcos' martial law. The Filipinos

would have to regain their faith in government for the Philippines to become a thriving nation.

President Aquino took firm control of the government when she moved into Malacanang. She knew that dismantling the remnants of the Marcos regime and reconstructing the government were the nation's most urgent challenges, but the people were the focus of her first official act.¹⁶³ On 3 March 1986, President Aquino issued a proclamation which restored the full protection for individuals against arrest without charges.¹⁶⁴ With this gesture she immediately let the Filipino people know that they were her first priority and that there would be a clear distinction between her administration and the Marcos administration. However, the President was not afraid to ask the people for something in return.

President Aquino believed she would need a "Freedom Constitution" for approximately six months to give her absolute authority to administer the government and make the changes she saw as necessary.¹⁶⁵ To take this radical step she would ask for support from the people, and she would get it.¹⁶⁶ On 25 March 1990, President Aquino revoked the 1973 Marcos' Constitution, abolished the national assembly and reserved all legislative powers for herself.¹⁶⁷ The Filipinos expressed a near reverence for their

163. Guy Sacerdoti, "Legitimizing Rebellion," Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 March 1986, pp. 12-14.

164. Seth Mydans, "Aquino Announces Full Legal Rights Will Be Restored," The New York Times, 3 March 1986, p. 5.

165. Lucy Komisar, Corazon Aquino: The Story Of A Revolution (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1987) p. 130.

166. Guy Sacerdoti, "Her House In Order," Far Eastern Economic Review, 20 March 1986, pp. 14-15.

167. Francis X. Clines, "Aquino Proclaims An Interim Government," The New York Times, 26 March 1986, p. 3. Karnow, Image, p. 442.

president and for a time were willing to permit Cory Aquino and the Philippine government to be one and the same.

The speedy composition of a constitution was central to President Aquino's plan for government. She selected fifty distinguished citizens to serve on a Constitutional Commission (Concom) and author a new constitution. Concom's work drew heavily upon the Commonwealth Constitution of 1935, but some provisions were tailored to the especially difficult problems faced by Filipinos during the Marcos years: the powers of the military and police were narrowly defined, the presidency was limited to one six year term, armed groups without duly constituted authority were outlawed, and the legislature was given a voice in the fate of the U.S. bases.¹⁶⁸

To ensure the integrity of the judiciary was included in her plans for a fresh start, President Aquino called for the resignation of all Marcos appointees on the Supreme Court, the intermediate Appellate Courts and the local Courts of First Instance. She appointed former Justice Claudio Teehankee to the seat of Chief Justice and depended upon him to recast the judiciary.¹⁶⁹ Her detractors, searching for anything to criticize, would call this the "massacre of the judiciary."

The Philippine public sensed Cory Aquino had their interests at heart and they freely gave her their unqualified support. However, this support was countered by the less than loyal stance of many of those in her administration. In particular her Defense Minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, and her Vice-President, Salvador Laurel, were vocal in their opposition.

Enrile fancied himself to be better presidential material than Aquino. He even called the president a "little dictator" in a bitter criticism of the way she exercised emergency

168. Buss, Aquino, p. 78.

169. Buss, Aquino, p. 65.

powers. Enrile made humiliating public demands of his President, insisting she reinstate the 1973 Constitution, remove cabinet officers who opposed him, call an early presidential election, permit the military to take part in negotiations with the NPA and return Marcos loyalists to their former government jobs.¹⁷⁰ Even in her humiliation, President Aquino remained tolerant and asked Enrile for his support. His answer was to take a hard-line position against the NPA and oppose President Aquino's attempts to negotiate a cease-fire agreement.

Enrile continued to test Aquino's patience. He sought support from Marcos loyalists in what seemed to be a personal bid for power,¹⁷¹ but he committed his ultimate act of disloyalty as a cabinet member by participating in the failed coup of November 1986.¹⁷² Weary of Enrile's provocations, President Aquino finally fired him.¹⁷³ Had the President shown weakness by simply firing Enrile? Was his ouster an appropriate punishment for one perpetrating an act viewed in most other countries as treason--a capital offense?

President Aquino's problem with disloyal subordinates did not stop with Enrile. There had also been a growing rift between President Aquino and her own Vice-President, Salvador H. Laurel. Similar to Enrile, Laurel publicly criticized President Aquino for her "Freedom Constitution," indecisive handling of the NPA, and insistence on retaining certain cabinet members.¹⁷⁴ Laurel quit his post as Foreign Secretary in September 1987

170. Buss, Aquino, p. 65.

171. Karnow, Image, p. 424.

172. John McBeth, "A Common Thread," Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 October 1990, p. 22-23.

173. Karnow, Image, p. 424.

174. Lucy Komisar, Corazon Aquino: The Story Of A Revolution (New York: George Braziller, Inc, 1987) p. 192, 200, 212, 219, 241.

and claimed that he had been kept in the dark and never allowed to participate in the Aquino inner circle.¹⁷⁵ Laurel remained in his elected position as Vice-President, but he would continue to be a belligerent opponent to the efforts of President Aquino.

The draft constitution was approved by the Philippine Congress on 12 October 1986, thereby preparing the way for a national referendum on the issue. When the people were presented with the plebiscite on 2 February 1987, 85% of the eligible voters turned out to vote¹⁷⁶ and 80% of the voters approved the proposed constitution.¹⁷⁷ Overwhelming success in the referendum repudiated the argument that Cory Aquino was a "little dictator." It seemed that President Aquino was indeed leading her nation out from under the dark shadow of Marcos. It is unfortunate that this referendum may have been the high point in Cory Aquino's presidency.

In tribute to President Aquino, she had set the mechanics of government back into good working order by mid-1987. However, her success in restoring the government did not mean that she had instilled confidence in the people for their government. To do this, President Aquino would have to lead an effective attack on the social and economic roots of insurgency. In particular, she needed an agrarian reform program that worked, and a method for effectively dealing with the armed insurgents. In her campaign against Marcos, Cory Aquino made it clear that she had a mission--to right many of the wrongs in Philippine society. Now that the Philippines had the workings of a democratic

175. Seth Mydans, "No. 2 In Philippines Quits Cabinet Post In Rift With Aquino," The New York Times, 17 September 1987, p. 1.

176. Karnow, Image, p. 442.

177. Seth Mydans, "Aquino's Said To Win In Key Plebiscite On A Constitution," The New York Times, 3 February 1987, p. 1.

government, how well would President Aquino attack the chasm between the elite and the common people?

B. LAND REFORM

Within a year of taking office President Aquino had reconstituted the R.P. government and reestablished the pre-martial law Philippine tradition of democratic rule. President Aquino realized that she would have to attack the social and economic roots of misery because they threatened to reverse her government initiatives, fuel the insurgency, and perpetuate the suffering of the people. As has been seen, the unjust distribution of land in Philippine agrarian society had been a root cause for protest in the Philippines since the Spanish Colonial Era, and it was no different under the Aquino administration.

Cory Aquino knew this, and it was her campaign promise to implement land reform which became the cornerstone of peasant support for her presidency. The ordinary people of the Philippines gave the President their unqualified support for over one year, but in mid-1987 they began to question her sincerity concerning land reform. Could President Aquino make good on the campaign promises which Presidents Macapagal, Magsaysay, and Marcos also made, but failed to keep?

In July 1987, President Aquino issued a non-binding land reform proposal, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).¹⁷⁸ The proposal had non-specific, broad guidelines which distributed some land to the peasants, made tenancy on government property easier, and improved agricultural extension.¹⁷⁹ The proposal was a clear

178. Armando B. Heredia, "The Philippines Insurgency," in Military Basing and the US/Soviet Military Balance in Southeast Asia, ed. George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein (New York: Crane Russak, 1989) p. 84.

179. James Clad, "Redefining The Reform Plan," Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 June 1987, pp. 22-23.

compromise measure and disappointed Aquino's supporters at home and abroad who believed agrarian reform was finally at hand.¹⁸⁰ Her program was Marcos' reform plan warmed over; a program in which the real decision-making responsibility remained in the hands of a Congress dominated by landowners.¹⁸¹

President Aquino's plan clearly favored the large landowners and not the peasants and she would soon distance herself from the land reform issue.¹⁸² President Aquino delegated those responsibilities to her Agrarian Reform Minister, Heherson Alvarez and told him, "Do what you think is good and let's carry it out."¹⁸³ He resurrected the Marcos reform program which in 16 years had redistributed only one-fifth of the land identified for reform.¹⁸⁴ To make matters worse President Aquino did not restrain a swarm of central government officials who were needling local politicians to protect the lands of their constituents from the government program.¹⁸⁵ Simply, President Aquino was knuckling under to political pressure and some of the pressure was coming from her family members.

As a presidential candidate, Cory Aquino promised to make her family's 15,000 acre sugar plantation, Hacienda Luisita, an agrarian reform "model" for the nation's landowners

180. Anthony Dyson, "Asia Yearbook 1989," Far Eastern Economic Review, Jan 1989, p. 207.

181. Kessler, Rebellion, p. 148.

182. Seth Mydans, "Aquino Decrees A Compromise On Land Issue," The New York Times, 23 July 1987, p. 1.

183. Komisar, Corazon, p. 180.

184. Dyson, "Yearbook," p. 207.

185. Komisar, Corazon, p. 180. Alvarez had been a Marcos exile in the United States and was scarcely familiar with the complexities of the land reform program.

to follow.¹⁸⁶ But when Alvarez was questioned on the President's failure to implement the program on her family's property he stated,

"This is a very democratic president. She will have to talk to her brothers and sisters. There is a ticklish problem of family and interpersonal relationships there."¹⁸⁷

The fact was the President had the opportunity to unilaterally implement reform under the "Freedom Constitution." What she did was to convert her hacienda into a joint stock company, allegedly assigning some equity to each of her workers. In effect, she took her own property out from under the general provisions of the land reform law. Was it, as she said, that she did not want to abuse her authority by circumventing the democratic system, or was she having second thoughts about directly attacking the fabulous wealth of those within her own family and social class?

The land reform bill, which was finally approved by Congress and signed by President Aquino in 1988, disappointed even the least demanding farmer organizations. Nevertheless, the new Comprehensive Land Reform Law (CARL) was an improvement over previous reform attempts. Sugar and coconut plantations--areas never before considered for redistribution, were now targeted. Further, the plan called for peasants to receive either land for tilling or profit sharing on their haciendas. However, the program still excluded one-fourth of the intended beneficiaries.¹⁸⁸

By 1989, the landowners had labelled the effort as communistic and managed to find legal loopholes in the program to circumvent the law. Only 37% percent of the landowners

186. Jones, Red, p. 183.

187. Komisar, Corazon, p. 181.

188. Jones, Red, p. 183.

targeted by the program complied with the requirement to register their property.¹⁸⁹ Landowners even threatened to rise up in arms¹⁹⁰ and take steps toward independence for islands like Negros.¹⁹¹ The landowners had strong support from their peers in government. On two occasions when President Aquino attempted to appoint a new Agrarian Reform Minister, she was refused by the Commission on Appointments.¹⁹² Her appointees were rejected because they were considered too strict and too conscientious. The political strength of the landed elite had solidified such that redistribution of land became impossible.

President Aquino failed to live up to her campaign promises for land reform. The reaction of the people to Aquino's agrarian reform efforts was similar to the reaction to Macapagal's program--the landed elite were enraged and the peasants felt betrayed. The divisions between the elite and masses were being reinforced. Something had happened because the fervor with which President Aquino attacked the problems of government reform had faded. Aquino would join Magsaysay, Macapagal, and Marcos as a failure in her efforts to implement effective agrarian reform, and the masses would have nowhere to turn except to the communist leaders of insurgency.

189. Jones, Red, p. 183.

190. Seth Mydans, "In The Big Manila Land Plan Steps Are Small," The New York Times, 18 October 1987, p. 1.

191. Jose Galang, "Resistance To Reform," Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 June 1987, p. 31.

192. John McBeth, "Strike Two Against Cory," Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 April 1990, p. 10.

C. STATUS OF THE CPP/NPA

While President Aquino was restructuring the Philippine government and struggling with agrarian reform, she was also working toward a dialogue with the the NPA--the armed branch of the CPP. Marcos had begun the struggle against the NPA and he enjoyed varying degrees of military success, but the insurgency always managed to survive. President Aquino would take a different approach and attempt to reason with the rebels. She believed the twenty year-old insurgency would end if she successfully implemented agrarian reform and permitted repentant rebels to participate in her government. She lumped together the CPP, the NPA, the National Democratic Front (NDF) and all other opposition elements as communist rebels.

When President Aquino took office in 1986, it was her hope that all Filipinos would take part in rebuilding their nation, including the rebels. Even before becoming president, she had let it be known that she would be willing to permit those Communists who renounced violence to enter her government.¹⁹³ After becoming president, she began to make good on her promise and extended an olive branch to those in the communist movement. In the first week of March 1986, President Aquino released from prison Jose Maria Sison--the CPP's intellectual founder, and Commander Dante--the NPA's commander.¹⁹⁴ The two rebel leaders were divided in their reaction to her gesture. Sison neither publicly nor privately supported the President, but Dante declared support for

193. "Aquino Says She Will Fight Violent Communists," The New York Times, 10 January 1986, p. 5.

194. Claude A. Buss. *Cory Aquino and the People of the Philippines* (Stanford, California: Stanford Alumni Association, 1987) pp. 127-135.

Aquino and even wore a yellow shirt, Aquino's campaign colors, to their meeting at Malacanang.¹⁹⁵

For a time, the president and her communist opponents continued to show flexibility in their delicate relationship. President Aquino offered the communist insurgents a generous amnesty plan which would give them job training and provide a safe haven for the rebels and their families.¹⁹⁶ In the other camp the communists softened their rhetoric. Saturnino Ocampo, a high-ranking CPP official ostensibly responsible for the NDF, even proposed flexibility in the once hard-line economic and political policies of the CPP.¹⁹⁷ It was clear, some members on both sides were willing to discuss the prospects for an agreement.

The government and NPA entered into negotiations on 20 June 1986 and on 27 November signed a cease-fire agreement.¹⁹⁸ Approximately 900 people had died in the insurgency since Aquino's election.¹⁹⁹ For its duration, the cease-fire would save lives, but skeptics saw the agreement as an opportunity for military forces on both sides to rest and reformulate strategy.²⁰⁰ In the end, the government and the communists could not come to any long-term agreement and when the 60-day cease-fire ended, the two sides left the talks to redouble their efforts in the armed conflict.²⁰¹

195. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 253.

196. Francis X. Clines, "Aquino Plans A Pilot Program For Rebel Amnesty," The New York Times, 19 March 1986, p. 10.

197. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 279.

198. "This Week: Philippines," Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 July 1986, p. 11.

199. "Talking At Last," Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 May 1986, p. 11.

200. James Clad, "Please Hold Your Fire," Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 December 1986, pp. 48-49.

201. James Clad, "No War, No Peace," Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 February 1987, pp. 14-15.

President Aquino tried to reason with the rebels and for a time dealt with the communist representatives in an atmosphere of optimism. But as she settled into the second year of her presidency, rebels and government forces were again locked in a stalemate just as they had been during the Marcos regime. President Aquino recognized that she had to deal with the communist threat, but she also recognized that many of the disaffected supported the CPP, NDF, and NPA because they lacked hope.

Having endured harsh criticism in the past for being soft on the communists, President Aquino assumed a tough stance and vowed in a speech to Philippine Military Academy cadets that victory and not compromise would end the rebellion.²⁰² However, the hot tempo of the conflict existing before the cease-fire did not immediately resurface. In fact, some communists even participated in the May 1987 congressional elections.²⁰³ It was a surprising move because with their participation in the elections the communists legitimized the Aquino government.

In spite of the participation of some communists in the election, the conflict between the government and communists quickly approached its former intensity and returned to what the CPP defined as "strategic stalemate." By 1990, the NPA, the CPP's armed branch, would be operating on each of the eleven major islands and in 60 of the 73 provinces;²⁰⁴ however, the degree of control exercised by these rebels would remain uncertain. As will be seen below, the NPA would soon compete with coup plotters to be the major source of opposition to the Aquino government and its own armed forces.

202. Karnow, Image, p. 442.

203. Walden Bello, "Democratization and Stabilization in the Philippines," Pacific Focus, Spring 1989, Vol IV, No. 1, p. 20.

204. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 297.

To break free from the stalemate, the CPP modified NPA strategy and took the war to metropolitan Manila.²⁰⁵ To advance its political agenda, make headlines and embarrass the government, the leadership began targeting Americans and Filipinos for assassination. In 1987 alone, 100 Filipino soldiers, policemen and civilians were assassinated in metropolitan Manila.²⁰⁶ Between 1986 and 1990, ten U.S. servicemen were shot to death including three killed outside Clark Air Base on 28 October 1987.²⁰⁷ In August 1990, NPA Chief Romulo Kintanar (who succeeded Dante) warned that the R.P. government could "expect an escalated and more vigorous people's movement and urban partisan operations in these (urban) areas."²⁰⁸ These deaths and the Aquino administration's inability to bring the assassins to justice would underscore the R.P. government's weakness and the NPA's strength.

The CPP is entering its third decade of anti-government activity and boasts 20,000²⁰⁹ armed guerillas (the NPA) and 500,000 sympathizers.²¹⁰ These sympathizers were a small part of the "masses" whom the Communist claimed to represent. In Maoist terminology they were the sea in which the fish (the armed guerillas) must swim. However, the CPP leadership, traditionally manned by university educated cadres, is being replaced by

205. James Clad, "War In The Streets," Far Eastern Economic Review, 26 November 1987, pp. 24-25.

206. Heredia, "The Philippines Insurgency," p. 75.

207. James Clad, "Yanks Under Fire," Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 November 1987, pp. 52-53.

208. John McBeth and Rigoberto Tiglao, "Streets of Fire," Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 August 1990, p. 18.

209. Donald A. Jagoe, "Perspective On The Philippines: A Survey Of Desk Officers," A paper directed by Dr. Robert S. Wood, Dean, Center for Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College, Rhode Island, 1990.

210. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 297.

peasants at every level in the hierarchy. Current leaders still have links with the middle and upper class in the Philippines, but the participation of peasants, labor, students, parish priests and others of the under-privileged in the leadership--formerly the CPP's ideological objective--is now the cause of some consternation. The current elite leadership in the CPP condescendingly claims that a less educated, peasant-led CPP would lose its motivation and focus.²¹¹ Are those in the CPP leadership dedicated ideologues or could it be that they have become comfortable in their leadership role and are just another elite interest group jealously guarding their power?

Aquino failed to achieve lasting peace as she failed to bring land reform and it became increasingly apparent that she would be unable to bring about the prosperity she had promised to the people. President Aquino weathered these difficulties, but as her failures mounted she became increasingly vulnerable to a grab for power and military men disloyal to their president would take advantage of this opportunity.

D. THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

President Aquino faced difficult times in restructuring the government, implementing land reform and opposing the rebels, but it was the disloyalty of her own military which became the greatest threat to her administration. The military had been the bedrock of President Marcos' strength, however President Aquino's inability to handle the nation's problems and her less than aggressive leadership style alienated many military officers. As a result, President Aquino would face a string of coup attempts.

211. Jones, Red Revolution, p. 308-309.

The Filipino people had bestowed "hero" status upon members of the AFP for their efforts in ousting Marcos,²¹² but a military coup attempt in the summer of 1986 began to denigrate that fledgling reputation. On 6 July three hundred and fifty rebel soldiers led by Marcos' former running mate, Arturo Tolentino, took over the Manila Hotel. Tolentino declared himself President and held out for two days before it became apparent that his support was limited only to the rebel soldiers within the hotel. Tolentino and his men surrendered to an Aquino representative without a fight.²¹³

Tolentino's coup attempt never posed a serious threat to the government, but a dangerous precedent was set when General Fidel Ramos unconditionally welcomed the rebel soldiers back into the AFP and Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile declared that all military men involved in the coup attempt would be absolved of their crime.²¹⁴ In what became a mockery of the "Manila Hotel Incident," the men were required to do push-ups.

Aquino may not have been intimidated by the coup attempt, but her administration displayed questionable judgement when the charges against Tolentino were dropped in exchange for his pledge of allegiance to the existence of the Aquino government. The coup attempt did not seem to affect Aquino's popularity, but her timid handling of the perpetrators set the stage for further trouble.

Her performance in the "Manila Hotel Incident" and the persistent coup rumors attempts led many to question the president's ability to lead. On 23 November 1986, General Fidel Ramos detected another plot against Aquino and confronted its chief

212. Rodney Tasker, "Re-form and Reform," Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 March 1986, p. 14-15.

213. Jose Galang, "A Room With A Coup," Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 July 1986, pp. 14-15.

214. Galang, "A Room," pp. 14-15.

perpetrator, Defense Minister Enrile. The plot was stopped before it had really begun. The fact that a government minister and a professional organization of dedicated young officers, the Reform the AFP Movement (RAM), were involved made this attempt particularly threatening.²¹⁵ With this revelation, Aquino had to fire her entire cabinet to preserve her diminishing credibility.

On 27 January 1987, there was another coup attempt against Aquino. This time 500 rebel soldiers loyal to Marcos were the perpetrators and they took control of key military installations, broadcast stations and public utilities.²¹⁶ The rebels claimed to be saving the Philippines from its drift toward communism and chanted "Marcos forever." When President Aquino learned of the attempt, she went on television and stated,

"Let me be perfectly clear: we will not treat this like the Manila Hotel incident. There is a time for reconciliation and a time for justice and retribution."²¹⁷

Her threats seemed to make little difference to the rebels.

A charismatic RAM leader, Lieutenant Colonel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, and one hundred of his supporters approached General Ramos and threatened to join the rebellion if soldiers supporting Marcos were killed in a government attack. The rebel soldiers were never attacked, but left their positions on 29 January without a fight. The rebels were neither arrested nor punished. Aquino was once again successful in resisting a coup attempt, but it was a hollow victory because she appeared increasingly out of control.²¹⁸

215. Komisar, Corazon, p. 234.

216. Seth Mydans, "Army Dissidents Reported Foiled In Manila Raid," The New York Times, 27 January 1987, p. 1.

217. Komisar, Corazon, p. 248.

218. Komisar, Corazon, p. 248-249.

On 28 August 1987, "Gringo" Honasan led 800 of his own supporters, the "RAM boys," in yet another coup attempt against the Aquino government.²¹⁹ Honasan and his men attacked two military bases, four of the five television stations and President Aquino's residence at Malacanang. Sixty people were killed before forces loyal to Aquino crushed the two-day rebellion.²²⁰ Honasan temporarily escaped arrest, but was eventually captured in Manila and jailed on 9 December 1987.²²¹ In early April 1988, Honasan escaped from his prison boat and the 13 men assigned to be his guards joined him.

On 1 December 1989, in the fifth major coup attempt (as of Jan. 1991, there had been eight coup attempts of differing degrees) against Aquino, rebel soldiers attacked government installations and strategic facilities in Manila. "Gringo" Honasan was at the center of this most extensive and serious attempt against Aquino.²²² However, there was a new dynamic in this coup attempt. President George W. Bush authorized U.S. fighter planes to overfly Manila in a show of American support for President Aquino.²²³

The psychological effect of the American involvement was devastating to the rebels and a pro-Aquino resolution to the rebellion became apparent at that point.²²⁴

219. "Dissident Soldiers In Manila Attack Presidential Palace In Apparent Coup Attempt," The New York Times, 28 August 1987, p. 1.

220. Seth Mydans, "Philippine Rebels Defeated By Forces Loyal To Aquino; Toll At 19 killed 249 Hurt," The New York Times, 29 August 1987, p. 1.

221. Seth Mydans, "Leader Of Uprising Captured In Manila," The New York Times, 10 December 1987, p. 3.

222. Sheila Coronel, "Rebel Philippine Troops Bomb Aquino's Palace and Take Base," The New York Times, 1 December 1989, p. 1.

223. David E. Sanger, "Officials In Philippines Tell How Leaders Almost Lost," The New York Times, 8 December 1989.

224. Sheila Coronel, "Aquino Forces Seem To Prevail In Manila Battle," The New York Times, 2 December 1989, p. 1.

Approximately 80 people had been killed, but once again the rebel soldiers were permitted to return to the ranks of the AFP--this time singing. Juan Ponce Enrile even stated, the rebels "never even entertained the thought that they lost."²²⁵ A result of American military support for Aquino would strain the relationship between U.S. military officers and many R.P. officers who had been sympathetic to the rebellion. For the first time the Americans had actively taken one side against the other.

President Aquino set up the Davide Commission, named after the chairman, to investigate the December 1989 coup attempt. The chief suspects in the rebellion were Vice-President Salvador Laurel, former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, and President Aquino's cousin, Eduardo Cojuangco.²²⁶ The commission's report indicated that there had been a collaboration between troops loyal to Marcos and troops loyal to Honasan. The report further stated the coup attempt would have continued and maybe succeeded had General Ramos not agreed to some rebel demands.²²⁷

By the fall of 1990, President Aquino had survived the five major coup attempts which had been staged by one of two cliques within her own military. It was abundantly clear that President Aquino had failed to instill discipline in the AFP and as a result did not have a military which was loyal to the constitution which she had worked so hard to attain. The AFP had become more interested in the assumptions of power than in the elimination of the insurgency. This caused the Americans to make an "ongoing reappraisal" of their own position in the Philippines. Heretofore, it had been assumed that the common concern of

225. David E. Sanger, "Officials In Philippines Tell How Leaders Almost Lost," The New York Times, 8 December 1989, p.

226. David E. Sanger, "Aquino Accuses 3 Of Leading Rebels," The New York Times, 9 December 1989, p. 3.

227. John McBeth, "A Common Thread," Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 October 1990, p. 22.

the government of the United States and the government of the Philippines had been to bring the Philippines insurgency to an end and that the chief instrumentality for that purpose had been the AFP. With the attempted coups this assumption was no longer valid.

All this had its immediate effects on the U.S. government policy of unequivocal and enthusiastic support for the Aquino administration. The time had come, particularly when considering the global collapse of Soviet power and communist ideology, to reexamine the continuing U.S. policy of military and economic support for its democratic ally, the Philippines.

E. U.S. MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID

For President Aquino, accepting financial assistance from the United States was at the same time a necessity and a burden. Through the experience of her husband and herself during the Magsaysay years, she was thoroughly aware of the value of American support to the Philippines in its struggle against insurgency. The President still desperately needed American assistance for the Philippines to recover from the devastation of the Marcos years in spite of the necessity to project herself as an independent thinker free of American control. The Americans would continue a policy of support for Aquino, and economic and military assistance would be a key instrument for implementing that policy. But what would President Aquino really accomplish even with American assistance for either the R.P. or U.S.? Would the combined efforts of Americans and Filipinos stop the communist rebels, promote the welfare of Filipinos, or end the coup attempts?

The Philippines needed assistance badly. The World Bank completed a study in 1988 which observed that more than half of the fifty-six million Filipinos had been unable for years to even satisfy their basic needs. Further, there were more poor people in the Philippines than at any time in history. The study faulted the government's neglect of rural

areas, the tax evasion of the wealthy and the inequitable distribution of land.²²⁸ Beyond worsening living conditions, the nation was burdened with a foreign debt of \$28 billion²²⁹ and a population growth rate of 2.8%. This meant an annual debt service of \$2 billion and a population increase to 85 million by the year 2000.²³⁰

U.S. government officials realized the Philippines was facing a grim future and desperately needed American assistance. On 16 May 1986, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John Monjo articulated American foreign policy goals for a post-Marcos Philippines. The goals were to forge strong ties with the new Philippine leadership, help restore economic prosperity, enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of the AFP and maintain a close defense relationship with the R.P..²³¹ Presumably, the American aid program was designed to assist in achieving these goals. It was not clear to what extent "defense relationship" meant defense against external aggressors or internal insurgents. The promotion of democracy in the Philippines was apparently taken for granted.

American aid to the Philippines was already \$400 million annually,²³² but after Aquino's victory over Marcos President Ronald Reagan increased the contribution by \$150 million.²³³ The larger portion of the \$550 million was in the form of military and

228. Karnow, Image, p. 425.

229. John F. H. Purcell and Alastair G. Tedford, "Market Offers Philippine Debt Relief," The Wall Street Journal, 3 Ma 1989, pp. A-19.

230. Anthony Dyson, "PHILIPPINES," Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Yearbook, 1989, January 1989, pp. 6-9.

231. Buss, Aquino, p. 174.

232. Nayan Chanda, "Reagan Pays Up," Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 May 1986, pp. 12-13.

233. Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan Has Talks On Tokyo Summit and Calls Aquino," The New York Times, 25 April 1986, p. 1.

economic support aid. The Reagan administration's rationale was that well-armed communist guerillas were the greatest threat to democracy in the Philippines and Aquino needed more arms to continue the fight where Marcos had left off.²³⁴

However, American expenditures were not limited to the \$550 million. Each year the U.S. government also spent a total of \$357 million on Filipino worker salaries, local purchases by U.S. personnel, military construction, local U.S. government procurement and checks to retired service personnel.²³⁵ The total annual economic impact of the U.S. government on the Philippines between 1984 and 1989 would be approximately \$900 million.²³⁶

Hoping for more, President Aquino told Secretary of State George P. Schultz that the U.S. aid package fell far short of what was needed, but she was reconciled to not getting any more at the time.²³⁷ In her 18 September 1986 speech before the U.S. Congress, President Aquino stated that Marcos "set aside democracy to save it from a communist insurgency that numbered less than 500...By the time he fled, that insurgency had grown to 16,000."²³⁸ The only Communist she counted were the NPA. Implied in her speech

234. "Aquino On The Hill: Warm Words, Added Aid," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 20 September 1986, Vol 44, No. 38 (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.) pp 2186-2187.

235. Richard Gordon, "Philippine Military Bases: Economic and Social Implications," in Military Basing and the US/Soviet Military Balance in Southeast Asia, ed. George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein (New York: Crane Russak, 1989) p. 139-141.

236. A. R. Magno, "Cornucopia or Curse: The Internal Debate on US Bases in the Philippines," in Military Basing and the US/Soviet Military Balance in Southeast Asia, ed. George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein (New York: Crane Russak, 1989) p. 155.

237. Bernard Gwertzman, "Aquino Tells Schultz She Accepts US Refusal To Provide More Aid," The New York Times, 10 May 1986, p. 1.

238. "Aquino," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pp 2186-2187.

was the fact that the Americans had provided an abundant stockpile of weapons to Marcos in his twenty year fight against the NPA, but the NPA still managed to thrive.

President Aquino was right. The AFP had been provided all the weapons it needed to fight the NPA. If those other than the Philippine elite were to prosper, only economic assistance provided to the needy people would really benefit the R.P. in its recovery from the Marcos fiasco. Unfortunately, military hardware was readily available in the U.S. and dollars for tangible and direct assistance for the masses were not. The U.S. Congress was wrestling with its own federal budget crisis and faced fiscal cuts mandated in the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings bill.²³⁹

Because of the desperate need for further aid on the part of the Philippines, and in spite of the budgetary difficulties in the United States, the two nations agreed to review the MBA in October 1988. The Filipinos did not agree, but the Americans believed the promises they made during the MBA review were fair. There were five significant provisions: the reaffirmation of a mutual security relationship; the promise by the U.S. to make its best effort to provide financial assistance to strengthen R.P. security and support economic and social development; the promise by the U.S. to purchase more Philippine products; the agreement on improving security of the bases; the promise by the U.S. to develop a program of budget support for the R.P. government.²⁴⁰

The Americans had no more resources to provide beyond the military agreements so they spearheaded an international effort to get more assistance for Aquino. They created a Multi-lateral Assistance Initiative (MAI) which was to raise \$2 billion annually from the international community. The Americans were to contribute \$200 million each year in

239. Buss, Aquino, p. 176.

240. Claude A. Buss, "RP-US Relations: For Old Time's Sake," Solidarity January - March 1989, Vol no. 121. (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1989) pp. 23-24.

addition to the aid package related to the bases.²⁴¹ By the fall of 1990 the program was just getting under way.

The U.S. could not possibly provide enough assistance to the Philippines to solve the economic problems of President Aquino. But, would any amount have been enough?-- there were as many NPA guerillas and sympathizers as there had ever been; the Filipino people were as poor as they had ever been; the landed elite were defying the new land reform law; and the military had proven its disloyalty in five major coup attempts.

Some disturbing realities plagued both Americans and Filipinos who were seeking a new and improved program for U.S.-R.P. relations. U.S. foreign policy objectives had not been reached: ties between the U.S. and Philippine leadership were only slightly better than under Marcos; the stability of the Philippine economy was not restored; and the Philippine military could not defend its President or its constitution. Further, the Philippine military could neither defeat the insurgents nor protect the Philippines from a reasonable external threat. Finally, the relationship between the U.S. and R.P. military was additionally strained when it became abundantly clear in the December 1989 coup that it was only the appearance of the American jets that saved President Aquino's position.

Unfortunately, charisma alone could not solve the national problems facing the R.P. and in time it became apparent that Cory Aquino had the moral strength, but maybe not the political skill to effect the necessary changes her nation so desperately needed. She was able to reconstruct the government, but the hopes she held for reconciliation with the communists, land reform and a disciplined armed forces were never realized.

241. U. S. Congress. House of Representatives. Foreign Assistance Legislation For FY 1990-1991. 101st Congress, 1st session, 1989, p. 569.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The roots of the current insurgency in the Philippines reach deep into the history of the Filipino people and arise from the inequitable relationship between the landed elite and the masses. For nearly 100 years the U.S. has exercised varying degrees of control over the Philippines and executed a wide range of policies, but none of these efforts have been directed at the root causes of insurgency. While U.S. policies have advanced U.S. national interests, within the Philippines they have often worked for the benefit of the elite and to the detriment of the common people. Today, the centuries-old division of the classes is perpetuated by those who benefit most from the division--the Philippine elite. Unfortunately, current U.S. policy tends to aggravate this situation. The time has come to reassess the interests of the U.S. in the R.P.--to reappraise our policies--giving full consideration to the effects that our judgement will have on the future of democracy in the Philippines, and the ability of the Philippine government to solve its social and economic problems.

Traditional U.S. policy has worked to advance the interest of the Philippine elite--whether deliberately or inadvertently. It has been dedicated first to U.S. national interests, but second to the interests of the Philippine government. During the American colonial administration, the elite were able to use the new land ownership laws and business methods to consolidate their power and suppress the desires of the common people. When the Philippines regained independence, the elite would be the ones to take charge of their nation's destiny. By controlling the seat of government and also enjoying the leverage associated with American economic, military and political support, the Philippine elite were able to consolidate their power as never before.

What does a review of the Philippine elite's leadership record indicate? The elite have shown in each era of Philippine history that their allegiance is not primarily to their nation, but first and foremost to perpetuating themselves and their class in power. From one era to the next, the elites have had more in common with the Spanish and Americans who presided over them than they did with the Filipinos whom they ruled. When independence was regained, the Filipino elite did not forge stronger bonds between themselves and the underprivileged; instead, they continued many of the practices they learned while managing other Filipinos for their colonial patrons. This track record indicates that the Philippine elite may not be particularly suited to lead a government for all the people.

The Philippine elite have poor political leadership credentials, but they also demonstrate an inability to resolve their own disagreements. Opportunistic elite elements and not the insurgents represent the greater threat to government in the Philippines today. The five major coup attempts against the current government illustrate this point. Sadly, it appears the essence of elite *in-fighting* in the Philippines is motivated by the simple desire by those out of power to be in power. However, in the midst of inter-class conflict, the loyalty among the elite to one another remains steadfast. Elite loyalty is clearly demonstrated by their shocking inability to jail one of their own--even for treason. This is a concrete example of how membership in the ruling class of the Philippines takes priority over national interests.

The AFP plays a role in inter-elite conflict, but it still manages to ensure the elite are in political, military, and economic control of the nation. The AFP was developed during the American colonial administration and became an effective anti-guerrilla force under Magsaysay. However, it subsequently evolved into a guardian of the elite. The AFP became a tool which elites in government would wield first against opposing elite cliques and second against the insurgents. When factions within the AFP took sides in elite

attempts to illegally overthrow the R.P. government, the AFP clearly demonstrated that it could neither satisfactorily defend the constitution nor the institution of the presidency. By their actions, the AFP has confirmed that class interests are their first priority and national interest only a secondary consideration.

While the Philippine elite were enjoying the new-found prosperity of the American colonial period, some did so at the expense of the non-elites. When the elite took advantage of the land ownership laws and business methods implemented by the Americans, the profits were enhanced by the toil of the peasants. When the colonial administration considered implementing land reform to calm agrarian unrest during the Sakdal movement in the 1930s, the elite closed ranks to prevent the reforms. When the elite took control of the government after independence, they jealously guarded their power and denied to the peasants both land reform and the opportunity to share power. In the years after independence, those who benefitted most from continued American support to the Philippines--the elite in government--would renege on their promises to implement land reform. The common people continued to be subjugated for the benefit of the Philippine elite.

Individual Filipino leaders have intermittently introduced initiatives designed to alleviate the suffering of the common people, but generally they governed their nation with little consideration for the masses. Cory Aquino was the one leader who peasants believed represented their hopes for socioeconomic reform. However, even she would disappoint them. Her half-hearted attempt at land reform would be only one of her many failures. Unfortunately, even though her efforts in favor of peasant demands were weak, they were enough to infuriate her fellow landed elites and cause them to close ranks and resist the reforms just as they had during the Sakdal Uprising. In the end, the Aquino administration

was no more effective in improving the life of the peasants than was the larcenous administration of Ferdinand Marcos.

Today, the traditional relationship between the elite, the masses and the Americans can easily be seen: power and national wealth are as concentrated among the Philippine elite as they have ever been; the Filipino masses are as poor as they have ever been; and the Americans provide as much assistance as they ever have. Unfortunately, since 1899, traditional U.S. policy in the Philippines has supported an elite leadership which has failed the Filipino people miserably. But, could the U.S. have worked through the opposition instead of the elite?

The time has come to seek a new way to provide assistance that will overcome the failures of the past. This new way is not to extend help to the CPP and the NPA which are avowed enemies of constitutional government. The CPP and NPA spearhead the current insurgency but their organization is as fractured as that of the elites. The two groups are aligned against the government, but the elites within the CPP seek power through political change whereas poverty stricken masses supporting the communists traditionally seek relief through agrarian reform.

It is important to recall that peasant grievances such as those voiced by the current insurgency were addressed briefly by Magsaysay, Macapagal, Marcos and Aquino. In each case the simple promise of land reform was enough to assuage peasant unrest. Today, promises may no longer be enough, but some basic land reform is essential. A successful attack on poverty would immediately rob the communists of their program and deprive them of their reason for a separate guerilla army.

The same class conflict which characterizes Philippine society also exists in the communist movement. The elites within the CPP resent the less educated NPA members who are rising to take leadership positions within the CPP, even though participation by the

peasants at every level of the organization was a principle objective of the movement's founders. This fundamental change in attitude may stem from the CPP leadership's own social roots which are found in the upper and middle classes of Philippine society. The CPP leadership can be characterized as just another clique of elites who work to preserve their own position.

The communists are not even secure in their own ideology. The intellectuals within the CPP understand that in today's international environment they will find it impossible to justify their movement in ideological terms. In the past, ideological platforms have been little more than intellectual exercise or political plays. Since the events of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R. in 1989 and 1990, it is impossible for any communist, even in the Philippines, to claim that communist ideology is the way to socialist utopia. It is difficult to interpret the CPP leadership's intentions in any other light than their fear of losing political influence. After reviewing the communist record in the Philippines, there is no reason to believe that the communist elite would have been better than any other elite in controlling the Philippine government.

How do the Americans fit into this complicated equation? The Americans have been both colonial master and wealthy patron to the Filipinos, but today they play a lesser role in the affairs of the Philippines. The Americans cannot be viewed as the catalyst for the class-related problems which have plagued the Filipinos for over 400 years, but neither can they be credited with solving the problems which they inherited. In any case, American influence in the Philippines has now faded and the U.S. has less to do with the ultimate success or failure of the current insurgency.

Every American administration since 1899 has determined that U.S. national interests in the Philippines were best served by dealing exclusively with the elite. As a consequence, the plight of the Philippine masses was not the major factor in determining

U.S. policy. There are no apologies to be made by the Americans for implementing policies adopted in the national interest; however, there was a price to be paid as those policies became increasingly identified with the interests of the Philippine elite. Anti-Americanism, nagging insurgencies, and the perpetual neglect of the common people by the Philippine elite took their toll on the reputation of the U.S..

The U.S. is in position to reassess its policies in the Philippines and make them reflect U.S. interests in the new world order. The containment of communism is no longer the overarching strategy of the United States, and therefore the presence of U.S. forces on Philippine bases is no longer as critical as it was. A military relationship which includes access to Philippine bases need no longer be the major focus of U.S. interests in the Philippines.

It is in the national interest of the U.S. of course to support the emergence of a truly democratic Philippines which will provide all citizens the opportunity to participate in the wealth and power of the nation. Since the American policy of helping the Philippines has centered on its military component, it is appropriate to concentrate on changes in military relations that will most advantageously contribute to the implementation of this fundamental national interests. With this in mind, three alternative changes in direction of American policies may be considered. Should the U.S. keep forces in the Philippines and persist with current policy; should the U.S. keep forces in the Philippines and change current policy; or should the U.S. withdraw forces from the Philippines and alter current policy?

If the U.S. keeps its military forces in the Philippines and persists with the traditional policies which have benefitted the elites at the expense of the common people, the already tenuous U.S.-R.P. bilateral relationship will continue to deteriorate. The Americans will become even more closely identified with the Philippine elite and as a consequence, Philippine nationalism and anti-American sentiment will thrive. Policy option one

represents traditional U.S. policy and will allow the current insurgents to continue to use their greatest propaganda weapon--the presence of "imperialist" U.S. forces and the affront they pose to Philippine sovereignty.

By persisting with this policy, the chasm between the Philippine elite and the masses will grow and cause the presence of U.S. forces to become even more necessary for the perpetuation of the elite's position. However, the use of U.S. forces in domestic Philippine political conflict would be senseless. If U.S. forces were to defend the elite-led government as they did in the December 1989 coup attempt, the R.P. government's inability to cope with very basic problems would be again uncovered and undoubtedly lead to the government's overthrow. This policy will not nourish a more egalitarian society in the Philippines, but instead it will denigrate the traditionally warm relationship between the Philippine and American people. Since for 100 years traditional U.S. policies have not brought a more egalitarian society in the Philippines, it can not be assumed that they would achieve this objective today.

If the U.S. keeps its military forces in the Philippines, but establishes a new policy which does not favor the elites, the U.S. will face opposition from the extremes in Philippine society. When the elites in government detect the change in U.S. policy they will likely threaten to remove U.S. forces from the Philippines to ameliorate their dilemma. It is conceivable, albeit unlikely, that a "Guantanamo Bay" paradox may arise. In any case, the elites would direct the wealth and political strength of the Philippines against U.S. interests. When the Americans split with the elite, the insurgents will enjoy a propaganda windfall. The insurgents will still be able to point to the continued presence of U.S. forces as an affront to Philippine sovereignty, but they will be able to claim that their efforts drove a wedge between the Americans and the elite "puppets."

If the U.S. implements this second option and chooses not to support the elite, who will receive U.S. backing--the present insurgents or some other possible moderate faction? It is certain that the Americans will have no stomach to aid the current insurgents and, as long as U.S. troops are present, any Filipino faction accepting American aid is likely to be labelled as an American puppet and therefore doomed in Philippine politics. It seems unlikely that option two will advance U.S. interests in the Philippines. In fact, the U.S. will probably lose support from every sector of Philippine society and possibly face decades of poor bilateral relations. This policy will be a mistake unless the U.S. faces an unforeseen crisis which makes the presence of U.S. military forces in the Philippines seem essential.

As for option three, if the U.S. withdraws its forces from the Philippines and changes its traditional policies to reflect a neutral approach to internal politics in the Philippines, the U.S. will be better able to advance its own interests. The current U.S.-U.S.S.R. rapprochement makes withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Philippines practical. "Containment" is no longer a relevant worldwide strategy for the Americans, and U.S. forces which are stationed in the Philippines for this purpose are no longer a necessity. Further, the bases have become a simple convenience because even without U.S. facilities on Philippine bases there is not a nation which can successfully challenge the U.S.'s ability to project naval and air power into Southeast Asia.

The present stature of U.S. forces in the Philippines makes them ineffectual because they cannot be sensibly committed to either fight the insurgency or defend the elite-led government. U.S. forces have never been employed against the Philippine insurgency and if they were to be, a political storm in the U.S. and Philippines would stop it. Further, as explained earlier, U.S. forces also cannot be practically used to defend the elite-led government in the Philippines. The use of American forces in either case would ultimately

lead to the collapse of the R.P. government, and defeat the purpose of committing U.S. forces in the first place.

The withdrawal of U.S. forces does not mean that the U.S. will abandon its interests in the Philippines. It will likely deliver a psychological blow to the Philippine elite, but it will also strip the insurgency of its greatest propaganda tool. The right-oriented leadership in the government and the left-oriented leadership in the opposition will be forced to compete for legitimacy, but be unable to use the Americans as either a crutch or an excuse. The competition for leadership may lead to bloody conflict, but the division between the elite and the masses is a problem only Filipinos can solve. When the Filipinos do solve this problem--and they will, the chances are that a more democratic and egalitarian Philippines will emerge.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The international community is adjusting to the end of the "Cold War" and when the adjustment is complete a new world order will be at hand. The national interests of all nations are changing as former allies and enemies reformulate their policies to meet the challenges of the emerging world order. In light of the new world order, the U.S. must reformulate its policies in the Philippines. U.S. interests are no longer served by the traditional U.S.-R.P. relationship. The presence of U.S. forces on Philippine bases is no longer of critical interest to the U.S., but a truly democratic government which will provide all citizens the opportunity to participate in the wealth and power of the nation is. To pursue this latter objective the U.S. should withdraw its military forces from the Philippines and find new methods to support democracy there.

Withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Philippines should begin as quickly as practical and be completed before the century mark in U.S.-R.P. relations--1998. The withdrawal should be conducted through bilateral agreement if possible, but through unilateral decision if necessary. The U.S. must take care to meet the needs of former Philippine national employees through early retirement and severance pay.

To bolster democracy in the Philippines the U.S. should limit the conditions for military assistance and make resources available for economic relief instead of economic support for military assistance. This means rice and pan de sel instead of guns. To ensure this the U.S. should not provide dollars to the R.P. government, but instead work directly with those in need and provide them the appropriate assets and educational extension.

The U.S. withdrawal of its military forces from the Philippines and the provision of economic assistance does not mean the abandonment of fundamental U.S. interests in peace,

stability and progress for the Philippines or for the entire region of Southeast Asia. It only means that with the end of the cold war, and the reappraisal of its global opportunities and responsibilities, the U.S. is seeking the most effective way of sharing its leadership and expertise with the Philippines as one of the more deserving of the third world countries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agoncillo, Teodoro A. Introduction To Filipino History. Manila: Bookmark, 1974.
- Agoncillo, Teodoro A. A Short History Of The Philippines. New York: The New American Library, 1975.
- "Aquino On The Hill: Warm Words, Added Aid." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, 20 September 1986, Vol. 44, No. 38.
- "Aquino Says She Will Fight Violent Communists." The New York Times, 10 January 1986.
- Bain, David Howard. Sitting In Darkness. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984.
- Bello, Walden. "Democratization And Stabilization In The Philippines." Pacific Focus, Spring 1989, Vol IV, No. 1.
- Buss, Claude A. Cory Aquino And The People Of The Philippines. Stanford, California: Stanford Alumni Association, 1987.
- Buss, Claude A. "RP-US Relations: For Old Time's Sake" Solidarity January -March 1989, Vol no. 121, pp. 23-24.
- Buss, Claude A. The Arc Of Crisis. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961.
- Buss, Claude A. "The United States And The Philippines: A New Look At Old Problems." Unpublished Manuscript, 1990.
- Chanda, Nayan. "Reagan Pays Up." Far Eastern Economic Review, 8 May 1986.
- Clad, James. "Please Hold Your Fire." Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 December 1986.
- Clad, James. "No War, No Peace." Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 February 1987.
- Clad, James. "Redefining The Reform Plan." Far Eastern Economic Review, 11 June 1987.
- Clad, James. "War In The Streets." Far Eastern Economic Review, 26 November 1987.
- Clad, James. "Yanks Under Fire." Far Eastern Economic Review, 12 November 1987.
- Clines, Francis X. "Aquino Proclaims An Interim Government." The New York Times, 26 March 1986.
- Clines, Francis X. "Aquino Plans A Pilot Program For Rebel Amnesty." The New York Times, 19 March 1986.

Coronel, Sheila. "Aquino Forces Seem To Prevail In Manila Battle." The New York Times, 2 December 1989.

Coronel, Sheila. "Rebel Philippine Troops Bomb Aquino's Palace And Take Base." The New York Times, 1 December 1989.

"Dissident Soldiers In Manila Attack Presidential Palace In Apparent Coup Attempt." The New York Times, 28 August 1987.

Dyson, Anthony. "Asia Yearbook 1989." Far Eastern Economic Review, January 1989.

Galang, Jose. "A Room With A Coup." Far Eastern Economic Review, 17 July 1986.

Galang, Jose. "Resistance To Reform." Far Eastern Economic Review, 25 June 1987.

Gagelonia, Pedro A. Filipino Nation: History And Government. Manila: Navotas Press, 1977.

Gordon, Richard. "Philippine Military Bases: Economic And Social Implications." In Military Basing And The US/Soviet Military Balance In Southeast Asia, edited by George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein. New York: Crane Russak, 1989.

Gwertzman, Bernard. "Aquino Tells Schultz She Accepts US Refusal To Provide More Aid." The New York Times, 10 May 1986.

Halstead, Murat. The Life And Achievements Of Admiral Dewey. Chicago: Our Possessions Publishing Company, 1989.

Hayden, Ralton. "Cooperation In The Philippines Found To Carry Its Penalties." Christian Science Monitor, 12 September, 1931.

Heredia, Armando B. "The Philippines Insurgency." In Military Basing And The US/Soviet Military Balance In Southeast Asia, edited by George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein. New York: Crane Russak, 1989.

Jagoe, Donald A. "Perspective On The Philippines: A Survey Of Desk Officers." A research paper directed by Dr. Robert S. Wood, Dean, Center For Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College, Rhode Island, 1990.

Jones, Greg. Red Revolution: Inside The Philippine Guerilla Movement. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989.

Karnow, Stanley. In Our Image: America's Empire In The Philippines. New York: Random House, 1989.

Kerkvliet, Benedict J. The Huk Rebellion: A Study Of Peasant Revolt In The Philippines. Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1977.

Kessler, Richard J. Rebellion And Repression In The Philippines. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

- Komisar, Lucy. Corazon Aquino: The Story Of A Revolution. New York: George Braziller, Inc. 1987.
- LaFeber, Walter. The American Age: United States Foreign Policy At Home And Abroad Since 1750. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1989.
- Mango, A. R. "Cornucopia or Curse: The Internal Debate on US Bases in the Philippines." In Military Basing and the US/Soviet Military Balance in Southeast Asia, edited by George K. Tanham and Alvin H. Bernstein. New York: Crane Russak, 1989.
- McBeth, John. "A Common Thread." Far Eastern Economic Review, 18 October 1990.
- McBeth, John. "Strike Two Against Cory." Far Eastern Economic Review, 19 April 1990.
- McBeth, John and Tiglao, Rigoberto. "Streets Of Fire." Far Eastern Economic Review, 23 August 1990.
- Mydans, Seth. "Aquino Announces Full Legal Rights Will Be Restored." The New York Times, 3 March 1986.
- Mydans, Seth. "Aquino Decrees A Compromise On Land Issue." The New York Times, 23 July 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "Aquino's Said To Win In Key Plebiscite On A Constitution." The New York Times, 3 February 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "Army Dissidents Reported Foiled In Manila Raid." The New York Times, 27 January 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "In The Big Manila Land Plan Steps Are Small." The New York Times, 18 October 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "Leader Of Uprising Captured In Manila." The New York Times, 10 December 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "No. 2 In Philippines Quits Cabinet Post In Rift With Aquino." The New York Times, 17 September 1987.
- Mydans, Seth. "Philippine Rebels Defeated By Forces Loyal To Aquino: Toll At 19 Killed 249 Hurt." The New York Times, 29 August 1987.
- Phelan, John. The Hispanization Of The Philippines. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959.
- Purcell, John F. H., and Tedford, Alastair G. "Market Offers Philippine Debt Relief." The Wall Street Journal, 3 March 1989.
- Sacerdoti, Guy. "Her House In Order," Far Eastern Economic Review, 20 March 1986.

Sacerdoti, Guy. "Legitimizing Rebellion," Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 March 1986.

Sanger, David. "Aquino Accuses 3 Of Leading Rebels." The New York Times, 9 December 1989.

Sanger, David. "Officials In Philippines Tell How Leaders Almost Lost." The New York Times, 8 December 1989.

Schirmer David B., and Shalom Stephen Roskamm. The Philippines Reader: A History Of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship and Resistance. Boston: South End Press, 1987.

Sison, Jose Maria. The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View. New York: Crane Russak, 1989.

Stubbs, R. M. "Philippine Radicalism: The Central Luzon Uprisings, 1925-1935," A Doctoral Dissertation, University Of California, Berkeley, 1951.

Sturtevant, David R. "Philippine Social Structure And Its Relation To Agrarian Unrest," A Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of History, Stanford University, California, 1958.

Sturtevant, David R. Popular Uprisings In The Philippines, 1840-1940. Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976.

"Talking At Last." Far Eastern Economic Review, 29 May 1986.

Tasker, Rodney. "Re-form and Reform." Far Eastern Economic Review, 13 March 1986.

The Philippines: Facing The Future. The Asia Society. Lanham, Maryland: University Press Of America, 1986.

"This Week: Philippines." Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 July 1986.

Philippines: A Framework For Economic Recovery. The World Bank. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1987.

U. S. Congress. House of Representatives. Foreign Assistance Legislation For FY 1990-1991. 101st Congress, 1st session, 1989, p. 569.

Vreeland, Nina. Area Handbook For The Philippines. Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1976.

Weinraub, Bernard. "Reagan Has Talks On Tokyo Summit And Calls Aquino." The New York Times, 25 April 1986.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | Defense Technical Information Center
Cameron Station
Alexandria, Va. 22304-6145 | 2 |
| 2. | Library, Code 52
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, Ca. 93943-5002 | 2 |
| 3. | Professor Claude A. Buss, Code 56Bx
Department of National Security Affairs
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, Ca. 93943-5100 | 1 |
| 4. | Professor Gordon H. McCormick
Rand Corporation
1700 Main Street
Santa Monica, Ca. 90401-2138 | 1 |
| 5. | Ambassador Nicholas Platt
American Embassy Manila
U.S. Department of State
APO San Francisco 96528 | 1 |
| 6. | HQ AFOSI/CC
Bolling AFB
Washington DC 20332-6001 | 1 |
| 7. | AFOSI District 42/CC
Clark Air Base, RP
APO SF 96274-6338 | 1 |
| 8. | Dr. Tim Wright
C/O Commander in Chief
U.S. Pacific Fleet
Pearl Harbor, Hi. 96860-7000 | 1 |
| 9. | Dr. Leif Rossenberger
U.S. Army War College
Karlisle Barracks, Pa. 17013 | 1 |
| 10. | Dr. Lawrence Grintner
Air War College
Maxwell AFB, Al. 36112 | 1 |