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The Philippine Armed Forces: Protector or Oppressor? A Historical Overview

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Military tradition and establishment has long been a part of Philippine society. The scholarly works on military history, done mostly by former soldiers and officers, cover the vast panorama of both formal and informal traditions in military history. These works are comprehensive in terms of data, rendering an 'ideal history" meant to instill pride and recognition for the military. Only recently has a more critical point of view surfaced. In the 'other history' the military is de-glamorized in accounts of atrocities and defeats. Readers are provided a glimpse of the armed forces' complex character and changing roles particularly in the last three decades. More thorough studies are necessary to understand why the Philippine Armed Forces in its history has been both protector and oppressor of the people.

The Philippine Armed Forces has been the subject of several historical and analytical works. Depending on which study one reads, however, the character of the military institution takes on different forms. If one were to read publications by military officers or commissioned by the armed forces, one finds a story of glory, bravery, courage under fire; an armed forces for the protection and defense of the people, of the country. And yet when on reads other sources – the glory and the courage is there at times, but also other more disturbing aspects. Oppression, killings, corruption and other issues come out. Which then is the Philippine armed forces – a real defender or else a political tool or an entity by itself serving other ends? For such a complicated establishment as the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the answer cannot be a simple one. This paper seeks to examine some of the historical works about the Philippine armed forces and what they present, and some comments on the character of the Philippine armed forces.

Military tradition and establishment has long been a part of Philippine society. War was a part of the life of the pre-colonization Filipino, and weapons and warfare, as well as military organizations, were part of Filipino culture throughout the archipelago. There is, however, not just one but two basic traditions in Philippine military history: informal, people's military or para-military organizations and operations, on one hand and, on the other, formal standing organizations and operations. The first tradition involves people's military forces which are called to

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service when needed, either to prepare for offensive warfare or in order to defend the territory from external attack. These are not professional organizations in the classical sense, but are organized and trained according to need. The aim of these organizations is for revolutionary change; resistance against a colonial or occupying power; or protection of the organizing authority, which is not necessarily a state. Into this tradition would fall the indigenous forces raised by barangays; every man in the barangay would be expected to participate in its defense or its military operations. Similarly, the anti-Spanish armed movements fall into this category, as do the guerrilla forces which fought the Americans and the Japanese. The Huk uprising after World War II also falls into this category. The NPA and MNLF can also be fitted into this classification.

The second military tradition is formal, involving standing armies following recognized lines of organization and operated by the state. These standing armies have professionally trained officers and men, with provision for raising reserves when necessary. These organizations are for the protection of the state against external and internal threats, and thus are used to maintain the status quo. Into this classification can be found formal armies created by the colonial powers to maintain their hold on the country, and also the formal forces created by the Philippine Commonwealth government and the post-World War II Philippine Republic. The army of the First Philippine Republic, or the government of Emilio Aguinaldo in 1898, attempted to be a formal army seeking recognition from the outside world, but as it was not recognized, would more properly fit into the first category. Today's armed forces fits into this category, as does the Philippine Army of the Philippine Commonwealth.

The fact that the standing formal armies organized by the state were to protect the state and maintain the status quo means a dual function for the armed forces. One is defense against external threats and aggressors; this was clearly shown in the Philippine Army's campaign of World War II. In this case, the defense of the state coincided with the protection of people's interests: fighting to stop the Japanese from invading the Philippines was a basic act. Although other writers have pointed out that World War II was a war between two colonial powers for control over the Philippines, Filipinos could not sit idly by as the country was invaded and turned into a battlefield. In fact, the formal and informal traditions merged into an anti-Japanese resistance movement, with formal resistance by the Philippine Army and informal resistance by the

guerrilla resistance movements. In the post-World War II world, defense against potential foreign aggressors remained a priority of the Philippine armed forces. However, due to budgetary and other limitations, this could not be handled by the formal Philippine armed forces alone.

The second task of the armed forces formally organized by the state was for the preservation of the state from internal threats, and thus maintaining the status quo. The Spaniards organized the Guardia Civil for this purpose; the Americans, the Philippine Constabulary. The post-war Philippine Republic maintained the Philippine Constabulary for domestic peace and order purposes, but the rest of the armed forces were usually involved in the various anti-dissident campaigns (as they are called by the Armed Forces of the Philippines). This results in maintaining prevailing social, political and economic conditions even if they are to the detriment of various sectors of society. In this case, the armed forces can be seen as an oppressor, supporting a flawed socio-economic and political order. As a tool of the state, it cannot do otherwise, unless the military organization turns evolutionary and breaks from the state.

Military history is not just the study of campaigns and battles. A deeper study of the Philippine military includes an analysis of the various factors – internal and external – which affect the military as an institution. The budget and procurement of weapons and supplies; training and indoctrination of officers and men; promotions and appointments; missions and structure – all are part of the complex world of the military, and must be studied in depth.

Existing General Histories

Despite the fact that warfare and military tradition – be it formal or informal – has long been a part of Philippine life, there are few histories which attempt to cover the vast panorama of Philippine military history, or to examine the characteristics of the military in Philippine history and society. Recently, a doctoral dissertation[1] dealing with Philippine indigenous methods and views of war has been written, but this has not yet been published. In the said dissertation, Noelle Rodriguez notes that war was a part of Filipino life long before the Spaniards arrived; these were people's armies, called into being when the need arose. There were rules which were either overtly followed or discreetly understood. Another unpublished thesis attempts to trace the tradition of amphibious operations

in the Philippines.[2] Both of these works, together with William Henry Scott's *Barangay*[3] are important in that they try to trace the indigenous traditions of Filipino military tradition, a tradition which may have continued in the informal military organizations and operations through the colonial era and perhaps even today.

There is the work of Col. Ildarico Baclagon – *Philippine Campaigns* – which was a pioneering work in its day. This was the first formal military history by a Filipino. But it served a specific function: that of analyzing major military campaigns in the Philippines from before the Spanish conquest until World War II. Having been written in the 1950s, by a Philippine Military Academy graduate and professional military officer for military officers, it was more of a strategic military analysis of the various campaigns, relying mainly on American and Spanish sources. Only in the discussion of World War guerrilla operations does Baclagon go into the Filipino side of things, but even this is rather impersonal. The book became a textbook for cadets at the Philippine Military Academy for many years; indeed, for many years it was the only major military history which had been written. This work was reissued as *Philippine Military History* in 1975, with additional sections on the Huk campaign, Korea and Vietnam, as well as a chapter on Marcos' war exploits. Sources for these last chapters were not identified. Perhaps because of the controversial nature of Marcos' supposed war exploits, the work was reissued in the 1990s but again under the title *Philippine Campaigns*, basically unchanged from the 1952 work.[4]

Baclagon's work presents a military operational look at the Philippine armed forces. However, he does not link the different periods (anti-Spanish revolts; Fil-American War, WWII) into a whole, and examines the campaigns as separate campaigns with lessons to learn from each. The view of the military establishment is detached, with hardly any personality. It is a work for military officers and students of military tactics and strategy, rather than a work to examine Philippine military tradition and institutions.

Succeeding works dealt – or attempted to deal - with the whole of Philippine military history. Among these was Carlos Quirino's *Filipinos at War*[5] which strove to show the tradition of courage of Filipinos from Lapu Lapu through World War II; a later edition added Filipino participation in the Korean War. There was also Yap-Diangco's pioneering *The Filipino*

Guerrilla Tradition.[6] Quirino, a historian who was a reserve officer who had served in Bataan, tried to document and build up pride in the Filipino's courage and gallantry in war. Yap-Diangco, also a reserve officer, sought to establish a continuity in Philippine military history of unconventional warfare against invaders and enemies. Both served as pioneering works in their own field, although they suffered from various weaknesses. Neither, however, saw the Philippine armed forces as being oppressive and tools of the state; instead both tried to link the formal armed forces tradition to the people's own.

The book *Philippine Military Policy and Strategy*, by Cols. Primitivo Milan and Primitivo Catalan published in 1972[7] attempted to analyze the strategic policies of the Philippine armed forces. This was an ambitious work, and tried to tie up the pre-Spanish traditions through to armed forces during Marcos' first term. Its treatment of the subject was uneven, however, and although it used official sources not accessible to civilian historians, it barely sketched the major military policies of the different presidents, with much attention given to Marcos. Although a potentially important book, its uneven and sketchy treatment were serious handicaps; it also failed to fully acknowledge which policies were successful and why – it was more of an expository account. There was no mention of failures or excesses of the military. And it was of even more limited use because it was given a security classification of Restricted, which meant that it could not circulate outside of official armed forces circles.

As the centennial of Philippine independence came, various other general works were commissioned and published. Each service came out with its own glossy, coffee-table book, which served more as a public relations stint than anything. The Army history attempted to be more historical, while the Navy, Air Force and Marines focused less on the past than on the present. A volume dealing with all the services, *Kawal, Pilipino*, tried to show Filipinos in the armed forces as being representative – and defenders – of the Filipino people. All of these works attempt to portray the services as organizations in the service and for the defense of the country. They were meant to instill pride and recognition for the armed forces and the separate services; indeed, one would think that the armed forces were ideal organizations with the officers and men exemplary Filipinos.[8]

Almost half a century after Baclagon's *Philippine Campaigns* came a relatively more balanced, scholarly attempt to cover Philippine military history. This was Colonel Cesar P. Pobre's *The Armed Forces of the Filipino People*.[9] This work sought a broader and more documented presentation of the history of the Philippine armed forces, from traditional times through martial law and after. Written by a Philippine Military Academy graduate, the thick opus covers much ground, taking a critical stand against the Americans after the war and trying to pinpoint weaknesses and failures, as well as successes, in the campaigns and development of the Philippine military establishment. It is ironic that it took so many years before this first thorough history of the Philippine military came out. Other countries with strong military traditions such as Japan, the U.S., Germany, France and England have, for years, had various studies on their own military histories and had developed generations of military historians.

Even though this is the most complete military history to date, many aspects of the Philippine military have not been covered. Because of the armed forces complex character and its varied roles, it would be impossible to put everything in a one-volume history. Pobre again tries to link the armed forces to the people, although he skips human rights abuses during the martial law years and in the anti-Huk campaign after World War II.

Most of these works have their purpose as works that try to build up confidence in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and are usually written by military officers. They show the AFP as a patriotic institution for nation building, an armed forces of the people. They try to develop a line of military tradition which is rooted in indigenous tradition running from Lapu Lapu through the anti-Spanish revolts through the Katipunan and achieving organized status during the period of President Aguinaldo. While the Philippine Constabulary was in existence and part of the AFP, it prided itself in keeping order and arresting criminal elements during the American period. The histories then focus on the heroism and courage of the military forces in Bataan/Corregidor and the guerrilla war against Japan. After the war, there are more sources of glory in the anti-Huk campaign and the Kamlon uprising; both were campaigns which saved the young republic. Other points of heroism which served the Philippines well were the participation of Philippine armed forces in international operations such as in the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and UN operations

in Congo. Then there was the period of Martial Law, where the benevolent soldiers kept order, saved the republic and kept the NPA and MNLF from either tearing the nation apart or taking over. After Martial Law, the histories focus on the role of the AFP in the February 1986 Revolution; and the New AFP in civic action programs and how the Lambat Bitag strategy worked wonders to win the people back to the government. The coup attempts are discussed, but considered more as aberrations rather than part of historical continuity. Also stressed were other non-traditional military roles which the AFP took such as protecting the environment, as well as the attempts at self-reliance and modernization.

The Other Side of the Picture

Some of the histories present a kind of ideal history and serve as public relations material for the AFP. But the other side of the Philippine military is hardly presented: that there were Filipinos who served in the Spanish armed forces which suppressed the revolts and fought the revolutionaries, some of whose descendants served in the Philippine Constabulary or the army. Up to now, there has been virtually no in-depth study on these Filipinos, save for short journal articles or papers.[10] Some military histories point to these Filipinos as exceptions and one work tries to explain that the Macabebes, who fought on the side of the Spaniards and the Americans, actually came from Mexico – Yaqui Indians – and hence were not really native Filipinos.[11] The attempt to build a strong national identity also has glamorized the Philippine Army during the Revolution and the Fil-American war, highlighting American atrocities but minimizing the fact that these were carried out by both sides. Disciplinary problems, looting and failure to obey orders are hardly mentioned, although they did occur. The Philippine army was top heavy with generals, officers and men were short on training, and loyalties were sometimes to officers or regions rather than to the institution. Landowners entering the army with their peasants were appointed officers depending on the number of men they brought with them. Aside from being short of arms and ammunition, the army was also short of trained non-commissioned officers and men, thus the failure of discipline in certain cases. Most histories of the revolution and the Fil-American War fail to discuss these issues in analyzing why the war turned the way it did. Cases of heroism and victories in the battlefield must be written about to build national character, but the defeats and their causes also have to be examined in

detail. Relations with the civil population, as well as relations of the different regional groups, and leadership also have to be examined. [12]

In the Fil-American War, the U.S. Army created a Filipino auxiliary army, the Philippine Scouts (PS). This fought against the Philippine Army of Liberation (as it was then called). As the war died down, the U.S. military government was replaced by a civil government, and the Scouts were jealously shielded from civil control by the U.S. Army. The civil government established its own paramilitary force, the Philippine Constabulary (PC). The PC was used to maintain internal security and suppress the continuing anti-American resistance, while the U.S. Army and the Scouts stayed back to protect the Philippines from external threats. In this sense, the military tradition becomes ambiguous, and the standard military and service histories either focus on the glory of the campaigns or how the PC maintained government presence and services in the boondocks.[13]

Because the Philippine military has two traditions, writing about the evolution of the Philippine armed forces can be difficult because by celebrating glories and victories of the organized armed forces, the irregular or informal nationalistic forces sometimes (or often?) become the enemies, and the people are caught in the crossfire. This is particularly true of histories of the PC, as they did much fighting for the Americans and also committed atrocities. In addition to atrocities against men, women and children, there were several cases of lack of discipline, mutinies and even crimes of the peace which constables committed. Only in later works is the discomfort of writing about an armed force which suppressed nationalistic and legitimate social movements was felt.[14]

During the American colonial period, the PS and the PC remained rivals, one jealously guarded by the U.S. Army, the other carefully nurtured by the civil administration. One remained basically a military organization, while the other became identified with local politics and maintained the status quo in national and local society. When anti-government movements proved too massive for the PC to handle, the Scouts were called in to assist, but this resulted in problems of who would have authority – serious problems which plague the relationships of any separate but overlapping military organizations. None of the PC histories discusses this problem.[15]

There were other military organizations which were formed during the American regime, namely the Philippine National Guard and privately-organized groups like the Philippine National Volunteers. They were short-lived, however, and did not have lasting influence. But they did show the desire of some Filipinos to organize their own forces with or without U.S. support. The Philippine National Volunteers, formed in the early 1930s, was actually composed mainly of landowners and members of the elite, who served as officers; they could call their peasants or servants to serve as soldiers if necessary.[16]

To prepare for independence, the Philippine Commonwealth government in 1935 passed the National Defense Act and created the Philippine Army, which is the direct precursor of today's Armed Forces. Only recently have the politics and dynamics, as well as the controversies of this army been published. A deep examination of the pre-war Philippine Army reveals problems which are still current: politics in establishing military camps, in allocating funds, awarding contracts for equipment purchases, in promotions and appointments; ambitions, patronage, favoritism and rivalries within the service; larger, international issues in the acquisition of arms and ammunition, hidden interests and so on. These were not discussed in previous military histories, which merely focused on campaigns and battles.[17]

In order to provide a base on which to build the army, the PC was absorbed whole into the newly-created army. This had adverse consequences, as the PC was a para-military force which was supposed to enforce law and order. The army was meant to serve as protection from foreign aggression. At its birth, the army then was faced with dual functions – preparing to defend the country against external threats, while securing domestic peace and order. The PC had also gotten involved in local politics, since it could be called into action by provincial governors; in this sense the PC was like a large private army, which could be used by the elite and landowners. The army inherited this as well as several evils which had grown within the PC: Evils such as exclusivity – the "tayo-tayo" syndrome; and patronage and personal connections to gain promotion and prized assignments. These threatened the new army, which was supposed to ideally start on a clean slate.

The army, in fact, faced its first combat actions fighting Muslims in Mindanao and facing peasants in Central Luzon. In maintaining peace

and order, the army became a tool to maintain the social system, and became a symbol of hatred for oppressed peasants and Muslims. In order to remove the evils of the PC, and help the army focus on its main mission of providing defense against external threats, the PC was separated from the army in 1938. Up to the outbreak of war, the PC was involved in quelling peasant unrest, using force at times. The peasants and liberals saw the PC as far from glorious, but simply tools for the landowners.[18]

Original plans for the army were to create a small regular army with a large reserve force. Training for reserves was nationwide and large-scale; it was emphasized that this would be a way of spreading education and democracy, since Filipinos rich and poor were supposed to train together, as one; those who were unable to go to school were to be given basic education in the army. It did not work that way. The well-to-do were able to gain exemptions from training; and the time spent educating trainees in basic sanitation and literacy took time away from actual military training and thus resulted in half-baked soldiers who could stand at attention and salute smartly but who could not fire a gun. Protectionism was prevalent in the officers' corps; even enlisted men who had caused trouble were protected once they got inside military camps. There were reports of corruption, scandals, rivalry between regular and reserve, PC and army officers, Reserve Officers Training Corps and Philippine Military Academy graduates. On the other hand, not everyone who was called to train reported; and some of those who reported went AWOL, not aware of army regulations.

World War II brought with it tales of glory and valor, despite faulty equipment, lack of training and the failure of the US to provide promised reinforcements. Bataan Day has become a national holiday, not so much for the defeat suffered on that day in 1942, but for the courage and unrelenting sacrifice to defend the country from invaders. Many works have been written about the Bataan campaign, but few have attempted to explain the neglect, the cowardice, the incompetence of some officers and men – both Filipino and American – which contributed to that defeat. A number of officers were relieved for incompetence, and courts martial for not following orders were actually carried out in Bataan during the siege. Faced with a seemingly overwhelming foe, some units just fell back, without order, and men threw away their uniforms and donned civilian clothes, merging into the civilian population. To their credit, though, the men who did get to Bataan did not desert.

The guerrillas also provide a proud chapter in Philippine history, with men, women and children joining in the war against the Japanese. Less glorious are the rivalries between guerrilla organizations which led to gun battles between Filipinos. Other guerrilla organizations served as cover to loot and rape. Tales of Japanese atrocities and torture are well known, but less known are the atrocities conducted by guerrillas against Filipinos; and the inhumanity some Filipino guerrillas treated Japanese. In some places, guerrillas were more feared than the Japanese; there were some towns which actually looked forward to the return of Japanese to restore order. Some guerrilla groups were really bandits, disguising themselves as guerrillas. Few works mention the guerrilla atrocities and summary courts of justice; one book that did (and which also challenged Marcos' war record) was actually seized and most copies destroyed.[19]

Even more unknown are the military organizations established by the Japanese. Some were regional groups based on pre-war anti-American peasant groups such as the Sakdals (these became the Makapili). But the Japanese did organize a formal semi-military force which they called the Bureau of Constabulary, or the BC. Most of the officers and men came from the pre-war PC. Majority were forced to join, having been captured in Bataan or other fronts. They were released from prison camp on condition that they join the BC. They underwent training under Japanese officers, and were used by the Japanese to fight against the guerrillas. Most did not fight well, not desiring to serve as tools for the Japanese; but a few did, and gained the enmity of the people. Because of the shame service with the organization brought, many of the pre-war professional officers removed any mention of service with the BC from their biodata.[20]

To further stain the record of legitimate guerrillas were the so-called Escolta guerrillas who spent the war discussing politics and conducting business in the safety of Manila. Only when the U.S. forces begun their return did they become guerrillas, and even so of dubious quality. They filed for recognition and many were actually compensated for fictitious deeds.

Up to now, there is no official or formal history from the Filipino side of the operations of Filipino military units in World War II.[21]

All the previous acts can be excused because the Philippines was not yet independent, and that the formal military forces were not entirely under Filipino control. After 1946, although independent, the Philippine armed forces were strongly linked with the U.S. military. Structure, training, equipment, commands, doctrine were all based on the U.S. system. There was hardly any real alternative at that time, considering the damage to the Philippines, the skimpy national budget and especially the advent of the Cold War. The Armed Forces of the Philippines – the Philippine Army, Navy, Constabulary and Air Force – were almost clones of the U.S. armed forces. Only in the 1950s were steps taken to change the image slightly: insignia of rank were changed to reflect insignia which had been used during the Fil-American War. In the 1960s, further changes would be taken, including the adoption of Tagalog commands and more distinct dress uniforms. However, until today, the American influence is obvious.

Because the Philippine budget could not support a large armed force, it was scaled down for Philippine needs, according to policies determined by General Headquarters and the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group. These policies basically placed the responsibility of internal peace and order on the AFP, while defense against external threats could lie with the U.S strategic forces which were in the U.S. bases. There was no clear clause, however, which assured the Philippines that the U.S. would automatically act in the Philippines' defense in case of war. The AFP, from 1946 up to the present day, became a domestic armed force to maintain peace and order.

In the years just after World War II, the AFP was tested by several uprisings, most prominent being the Huk uprising of the late 1940s. Government policies changed from mailed fist to policy of attraction to velvet glove: the AFP conducted operations but was unable to crush the Huk rebellion. Cases of incompetence in the field, weak leadership and lack of initiative were reported; camps were not on alert and at one time, Huks were able to attack a military hospital and kill patients, doctors and nurses. Some units of the AFP – particularly the quickly-inducted Military Police Command (MPC) – conducted serious atrocities against Huk suspects – rather than taking them alive, summary executions were carried out. Villages were burned, looting was conducted. These atrocities are not reported in most military histories. Instead of winning over the population to the side of the government, the excesses of the MPC – and

the way the officers tolerated such excesses – turned at least one PMA graduate away from the armed forces. This would not be the last time that professionally trained men questioned the operations of the armed forces.[22]

The organized military establishment supported the status quo by preserving the government and quelling disturbances of the prevailing peace. But even if the government and the socio-economic conditions were flawed, the AFP would support it. Ostensibly, the PMA and the military were to meld people from the different regions of the Philippines into one; new graduates were assigned to the field where they could observe actual conditions. The field exposure also showed the young officers the realities of oppression – but had to follow orders. Officers were thus led to support a corrupt government, rule by landlords and the few in political power, and quelling legitimate protests. Hence, the AFP could be seen as a big private army for the few in power. With officers joining the system and protecting each other (the "tayo-tayo" system would continue), the actual role of the AFP in the Philippines became ambiguous. Some presidents would use parts of the military for constructive roles, such as through civic action: Magsaysay and Marcos saw the value of this in building confidence in the military and in the government.

However, aside from being, in a sense, a huge private army, the AFP also had its own dynamics. Ideally it had countervailing institutions to check on its own men. There were the Inspector General and the Judge Advocate General, who were to ensure and maintain efficiency and provide for a system of justice for officers and men who broke the law. Because of the "tayo- tayo" system, padrino relations, classmate links and favoritism, some of these countervailing institutions failed. Promotions, assignments (local and foreign) could still be influenced by proper connections. Graft and corruption, particularly in logistics, could be rife.[23]

Politicization began to seep in, too. There was an attempted coup in the 1950s against President Garcia, but the PMA graduates and other professionals refused to join; the plan fizzled out. But the idea of the military getting into politics and influencing policy came in. There was politics in promotions; and just like before World War II, the PC had its links with local politics.

The AFP had foreign deployments in Korea, in Congo and in Vietnam, amidst a larger political context. Records now indicate that the U.S. did not really call for direct Filipino involvement in Korea, and apparently Quirino offered the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) for security and other guarantees. The case of Vietnam was different, where President Johnson of the US wanted Filipino involvement. Marcos sent the Philippine Civic Action Group to Vietnam (PHILCAGV) but also sought engineering equipment which he could use to build up the image of the AFP in civic action projects.[24]

By the late 1960s, elements of the AFP began receiving bad press. As demonstrations against the government increased in intensity, so did the violence which marked the dispersal of such rallies. Police forces could not cope, and the PC was called in. Numerous bloody dispersals resulted. Corruption, favoritism and other ills within the military organization led to exposes and led some officers to consider defections. Col. Ambrosio P. Peña, a decorated war veteran and military historian, revealed how careless planning and corruption were wasting money and resulting in an inefficient AFP.[25]

Then came the declaration of Martial Law in 1972. The military was given great responsibility in running various offices and economic enterprises, while maintaining order and fighting a full fledged war against the New People's Army and the Moro National Liberation Front. The military campaigns could not be handled by the AFP alone, which decided to create military auxiliaries. This resulted in summary killings, burning of villages, warrantless arrests, torture in detention and numerous disappearances. The threat of militarization was raised (one that had been first raised in the 1930s, when the Philippine Army was first established). Vendettas, atrocities and crimes against innocent people including women and children were carried out by the para-military forces. NGOs and human rights groups documented the case of thousands of victims of the violence which arose under martial law, but few, if any, military histories mention them. A book which is destined to be classic is Al McCoy's *Closer than Brothers*, part of which deals with the activities of PMA Class 1971 during Martial Law. Numerous other publications document the atrocities but as of yet there is no book length study on the AFP during martial law.[26]

The AFP tried to change its image after the February 1986 Revolution, and tried to show itself as a renewed armed force with loyalty to the people and not to a dictator; it called itself the New AFP (NAFP) for a while. But because of the nature of the transfer of power in 1986, the military establishment was basically unchanged except with the removal of the top officers who were loyal to Marcos. This failure to change elements of the AFP – including its politicization – led to the series of coups during the Aquino administration, leading the people not only to doubt the loyalty of elements of the AFP, but to the dangers of the ambitions of some officers. As a result of the coups, changes were implemented, such as terminating the PC and creating instead the National Police as a separate entity from the AFP.

From Aquino's time onward, the AFP has tried to improve its image: clean uniforms, new slogans and a more active public relations staff. The old ills are still there – favoritism, rivalry, politics, *tayo-tayo* and so on. The current handling of the campaigns against the Abu Sayyaff, operations against the NPA and MILF bring back claims of militarization, civilian casualties and disappearances, and incompetence. The AFP is still heavily dependent on the US, and its organization and weaponry indicate this; however, some external changes are adopted – such as Chinese marching techniques – which, however, may not be suited for Philippine conditions. With constant superficial changes, traditions are lost; in fact, there has been little awareness or appreciation of Philippine military history and tradition, and the lessons the AFP was supposed to have learned. [27]

The AFP is a political force, and cannot be simply returned to barracks. But it must be better understood, as an institution, and as part of the military tradition of the Philippines. There is a lot of color and pomp in parades, but does the symbolism really reflect the tradition of a Filipino armed force? In determining the tradition of the Filipino armed forces, one must first examine the character of the AFP. There is much that is not yet studied, as this paper has shown. Fuller and more thorough historical studies are needed to flesh out why the military developed the different images it has, and to find steps on how to resolve these conflicting images. ✪

Endnotes

[1] Noelle Felice Rodriguez, Ang Pakikidigma noong Ika-labimpitong Dantaon, PH. D. dissertation, Department of History, UP, 1999.

[2] Omar Torsay, Pakikidigmang Ampibyo: Pag-uugat sa Kasaysayan ng Pilipinas (800 BK-1946), MA thesis, Department of History, UP, 1998.

[3] William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (QC: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994). See also F. Landa Jocano's *The Philippines at the Spanish Contact* (Manila: MCS, 1975) and A.P. Patanne's *The Philippines in the World of Southeast Asia*.

[4] Ulsarico S. Baclagon, *Philippine Campaigns* (Manila: Graphic House, 1952). Updated as *Military History of the Philippines* (Manila: St. Mary's Publishing, 1975). Reissued in the 1990s without the added chapters of *Military History*.

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Ruben V. Tangco (ed.), *Flight to the Future: Perspectives on the First 50 Years of the Philippine Air Force* (Makati: Infinit-I/Philippine Air Force, 1997).

Each service also published histories earlier. More frank in its discussion of the internal dynamics and problems of the Air Force is Eldon Luis G. Nemenzo, with Guillermo Molina Jr. II, *The Philippine Air Force Story* (Metro Manila: Kaunlaran Trading and Printing, 1992).

[9] Cesar P. Pobre, *History of the Armed Forces of the Filipino People* (Quezon City: New Day, 2000).

[10] See, for example, the chapter on the armed forces in Eliodoro G. Robles, *The Philippines in the Nineteenth Century* (QC: Malaya Books, 1969). A work on the Spanish forces in the Philippines exists, complete with heraldry and uniforms, but this is in Spanish.

[11] Luis Camara Dery, *The Army of the First Philippine Republic and Other Historical Essays* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1995), pictorial section. Dery does not cite his source for this.

[12] Compare the accounts of the Philippine-American war of Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000) with Onofre Corpus' *Roots of the Filipino Nation* to see the difference in treatment. Much partisanship still surrounds histories of the revolution and the Fil-American War, insofar as who was a better commander or who betrayed who. Organizational problems and other issues, as a result, have often been omitted. Indirect evidence of some of the lapses of discipline can be found in the army orders in John R.M. Taylor (ed.), *The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States* (Pasay City: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971).

[13] See, for example, Vic Hurley, *Jungle Patrol: The Story of the Philippine Constabulary* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1938); Harold H. Elarth, *The Story of the Philippine Constabulary* (Los Angeles: PC Officers Association, 1949) and Public Information

Office, Headquarters, PC, *The Constabulary Story* (Quezon City: Bustamante Press, 1978).

14 Margarita R. Cojuangco et al., *Konstable: The Story of the Philippine Constabulary* (Manila: AboCar, 1991). Cases of failure of discipline are reported in the annual reports of the chief of the constabulary. See also the chapter "Janus-Faced Constabulary" in Theodore Friend, *The Blue-Eyed Enemy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). Hurley's books on the PC were reprinted by Renato Constantino in his Filipiniana Reprint series to show how, even as Hurley spoke of the glories of the constables, the extent of their brutal campaigns could be seen.

15 The politics and rivalry between the PS and the PC is best discussed in James R. Woolard, The Philippine Scouts: The Development of America's Colonial Army (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1975). Unfortunately, this has never been published.

16 See Ricardo T. Jose, "The Philippine National Guard in World War I," *Philippine Studies*, 36 (1988); Ricardo T. Jose, *The Philippine Army, 1935-1942* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1992).

17 Jose, *Philippine Army*. See also Vicente P. Lim, *To Inspire and to Lead* (Manila: privately printed, 1980). Although dated, Joseph Ralston Hayden, *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* (NY: Macmillan, 1942) still can be read insights on the army.

18 See, for example, Luis Taruc, *Born of the People* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1953), pp. 28-32.

19 Ernesto R. Rodriguez, Jr., *The Bad Guerrillas of Northern Luzon* (Q.C.: J. Burgos Media Services, 1982) is one of the few books which documents guerrilla atrocities. The book also cast doubt on the war record of Ferdinand Marcos and his father, resulting in the closure of the newspaper which serialized this work, and in the seizure of copies of this book. Other works which deal with rivalry and other problems in the guerrilla resistance movement include Eden M. Gripaldo, The Guerrilla Resistance Movement in Camarines Sur, 1942-1945 (MA thesis, UP, 1983); Proculo L. Mojica, *Terry's Hunters*. (Manila: Benipayo, 1965); Cesar P. Pobre, The Resistance Movement in Northern Luzon (1942-1945) (MA thesis: UP, 1962) and Melinda C. Tria, The Guerrilla Resistance Movement in Cavite, 1942-1945 (MA thesis, UP, 1966). Again, many of the scholarly works dealing with this subject have not been published.

20 See Ricardo T. Jose, *Captive Arms: The Constabulary under the Japanese, 1942-1945*.(Quezon City: CSSP Publications, U.P., 1997). Various guerrilla histories also cite cases of the BC being more active than the Japanese. See, for example, Taruc, *Born of the People*, pp. 126 et seq.; Jose L. Llanes, *I Saw the Nation in Travail* (Manila: The Aid Magazine, 1968).

21 Attempts have been made, but none reach the level of official histories in other countries. One such attempt was *Alab ng Puso: The Filipinos in World War II*, (QC: Department of National Defense, 1996), which tried to give emphasis on the role of Filipinos in the campaigns against the Japanese. However, it tended to use U.S. accounts and did not really bring out the Filipino voice.

22 Several works examined the anti-Huk campaign, but few go into detail on the atrocities. Some of the works which focus on the anti-Huk campaign and stress the need for better relations with the people are: Ulderico S. Baclagon, *Lessons from the Huk Campaign in the Philippines* (Manila: M. Colcol, 1960); Lawrence M. Greenberg, *The Hukbalahap Insurrection* (Washington DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1987); Edward Geary Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Richard M. Leighton, *The Huk Rebellion: A Case Study in the Social Dynamics of Insurrection* (Washington, D.C.: Industrial College of the Armed Forces, 1954); and Napoleon D. Valeriano, and Charles T.R. Bohannan, *Counterguerrilla Operations: The Philippine Experience*, (New York: Praeger, 1962).Valeriano's Nenita Unit had a reputation for

being very brutal. The *Philippines Free Press* reported many accounts of summary killings and burnings of villages during the late 1940s.

On the Huk side, to provide a balance to the previously mentioned accounts, see Taruc, *Born of the People* and Luis Taruc, *He Who Rides the Tiger* (New York: Praeger, 1967); and Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977; local reprint, Quezon City: New Day, 1979).

[23] Manuel B. Mariano et al., *The Power of Reform in the AFP LOGCOM*, (Np: RHP Coop. Dev., 1992) is an attempt to show that corruption in the Logistics Command was licked, but it apparently has not and is more deeply rooted than many think.

[24] Surprisingly, there has been no serious scholarly historical study published by Filipinos of PEFTOK and PHILCAG; neither is there one analyzing the history and role of the Philippine military in such organizations as the Southeast Treaty Organization (SEATO).

[25] Some of Col. Peña's articles were: "AFP - Bottomless Pit?"; "PAF: A White Elephant' and "Our Fledging Navy" *Weekly Nation*, (August 30, Sept 20, and Sept. 27, 1971). In the National Defense College of the Philippines, basic concepts and laws were also being questioned, as in Fidel V. Ramos, The National Defense Act: A Reexamination, (Unpublished thesis, National Defense College of the Philippines, 1969).

[26] Alfred W. McCoy, *Closer than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999; Quezon City: Anvil, 2000).

On the armed forces during martial law, see among others, Carolina G. Hernandez, "The Role of the Military in Contemporary Philippine Society." *Diliman Review*, 32:1 (Jan-Feb 1984), pp 1, 16-24; and Carolina G. Hernandez, The Role of the Philippine Military During Martial Law, 1972-1980, unpublished paper, 1982; Roland G. Simbulan, "Militarization in Southeast Asia," in Yoshikazu Sakamoto (ed.), *Asia: Militarization and Conflict* (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1988), pp. 47-58.

On the AFP in Mindanao operations, see Fortunato U. Abat, *The Day We Almost Lost Mindanao* (Metro Manila: Privately printed, 1993); Maritess Danguilan Vitug and Glenda M. Gloria, *Under the Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*, (Quezon City: Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, 2000).

[27] Some of the changes are apparently done because a senior officer is impressed by what he saw. There have been attempts to reorient the doctrine of the armed forces to more suitable, indigenous doctrines, but it will take much longer for these to be conceptualized and operationalized. Although the AFP publishes pamphlets on lessons learned in combat and elsewhere, they are not, apparently, taken very seriously.