

Demilitarization, the Military and the Post-Marcos Transition

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I. Introduction: Demilitarization and the Points of Tension

Demilitarization remains to be one of the biggest problems that the Aquino government must resolve to fully restore liberal democracy in the Philippines. The new regime upon assumption to power was fully aware that without resolving the problem of demilitarization, no complete dismantling of the "structures of dictatorship" can take place. For while the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has - through a three-day revolt - relatively refurbished its tarnished image, it remains the very same intact apparatus that formed one of the most important basis of support for the Marcos dictatorship. It is the same Marcos military which is entrenched as an institution even if leading officers identified with the *regime ante* were quietly removed from their positions or deprived of their earlier powers.¹

On the eve of the February Revolution, events indicated that the AFP was headed towards institutional breakdown brought about by the debilitating effects of selective patronage, the failure to control the communist insurgency and the erosion of its image due to pervasive reports of human rights violations.² The apparatus that once ensured the power of the dictatorship was wracked with factional conflict and ridden with so much graft and corruption that even its main benefactor, the United States, started to demand radical reforms for the Philippine military.³ The lingering crisis exploded on

February 1986 when young officers demanding reforms inside the organization were set to launch an assault on the presidential palace to hold Marcos hostage and pave the way for a new government in the Philippines.⁴ This revolt was basically transformed into the February Revolution to which much has already been written about.

Ironically, the consequent February popular uprising put a stop to the process of breakdown. With the ouster of Marcos and the support given by the revolting faction to Aquino, majority of the members of the military organization shifted their loyalties to the new government for reasons that may indicate the extent of military disenchantment with the leadership of then Chief-of-Staff Fabian Ver and Marcos. The last minute support given to the Aquino government by the United States may also be the other factor which facilitated the swift shift of loyalty.

This shift in loyalty was likewise complemented by an overnight change in the military's public image. It could now boast that its old image of being the people's oppressor had been superseded by a new one, that of an indispensable ally of the struggle for "democracy and reconciliation". The AFP - or more particularly, the faction-in-revolt - became the overnight "heroes of democracy".⁵

The government that has been formed out of the Revolution is, thus, finding itself in a dilemma. Its rhetorics and electoral campaigns intended to convey to the people the need to create a political leadership that was the anathema of dictatorship but it had to incorporate a major facet of that dictatorship. It stood by the legacy of non-violence but in power, it had to establish a working relationship with the former regime's main instrument of violence. Thus, the military revolt and the succeeding dynamics of what is referred to as "people's power" found the new leadership joining hands

This paper was written as part of the research output on alternatives for the Philippine transition and preceded the series of coup attempts that were staged by "misguided elements" inside the Armed Forces of the Philippines. As such, it does not include an extensive discussion on the political dynamics of these coup plots. The author, however, hopes to devote another paper on what is referred to as the destabilization campaign from the Right in the next issue of *Kasarinlan*.

with the most powerful vestige of the overthrown regime to usher in a new political phase in Philippine society. The implications of such are significant. As David (1986) puts it,

because of the significant role played by the military in the February rebellion, (Aquino) has, somehow, to accommodate their interests in her government. However, this can only be done up to a certain point. To bring the military into the circuit of civilian affairs, is to court the same 'dual function' syndrome which has kept the military in power in countries like Indonesia and Thailand. On the other hand, to isolate the military altogether at this point, in the interest of a fierce assertion of civilian supremacy, would be to furnish the military enough reason to overthrow her government.⁶

The tension between the civilian leadership and the armed forces is aggravated by the nature of the political leadership itself. Aquino's government has been aptly called a "rainbow coalition"; an effort by the moderate populist Aquino to establish a tenuous coalition of forces from the extreme right to moderate left-wing liberals.⁷ This diversity, as has been frequently reported in media, has been the source of much intense infighting within the political leadership as reflected in the government's weekly cabinet debates.

The "political diversity" of the civilian leadership stands in direct contrast to the "unity" being projected by the AFP resulting from the smooth and sophisticated consolidation of the new factions-in-power.⁸ With the assurance exacted by leaders like Enrile from the other leaders of government of no civilian interference on military affairs as *quid pro quo* for the military's recognition of Aquino, and with the leadership of Gen. Ramos, the AFP has initiated a series of moves designed to solidify its ranks and resolve the factionalism that the previous dictatorship had bred. In the words of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*,

while the government work was under fire due to the officer-in-charge problems, the military tried hard to bring its Marcos loyalists into the new military fold . . . While the government was having problems with limited resources, the AFP has moved quickly to redistribute to the country's local commands much of the hardware that had been concentrated in Manila . . . (and while government find working harmony elusive due to political and ideological divergences) the AFP leadership has been visiting local commands throughout the country, preaching to its officers that security can only be achieved if local civilians can be prodded to support military and civilian policy objectives.⁹

These differences in the way the political leadership and the military organization are organizationally characterized partly account for instances where the military's views towards certain policy issues are not in agreement with that of the civilian leadership.¹⁰

The apparent conflict of interest that rose between a military establishment nourished to power by 14 years of authoritarianism and a political leadership with a popularly democratic mass base had spawned contradictions whose resolution may go beyond the present democratic conjuncture. These contradictions are largely determined by the divergent views on concrete issues which the new regime inherited from the old. Expectedly they emerged and became blatant as the Aquino government moved towards political consolidation.¹¹

Paramount among these issues are the following: (a) the insurgency question and the meaning of "political reconciliation"; (b) the policy towards the U.S. military bases and American assistance; (c) the question of the military's human rights record under Marcos and the policy of the Aquino government to investigate military atrocities and prosecute erring officers; and, (d) the question of whether current state budgetary allocation for the military be reduced in favor of basic needs like health and other social services.

But before proceeding to these concrete issues, there is equally a different contradiction between the AFP and a politicized mass. The latter, appreciating better the political advantages of extra-parliamentary struggle, more conscious of the freedoms they restored last February and concerned that society must not revert back to dictatorship, will most likely come into conflict with an inherently authoritarian apparatus whose power and influence grew immensely under Marcos. This contradiction is most pronounced between those segments of the populace organized by the cause-oriented groups and the radical Left who view the "fascist remnants" inside the military as continuing obstacles to the full realization of the goals of the February Revolution.¹² Moreover, the spontaneous character of "people's power" has given a larger segment of the populace an experience in struggle and thus qualitatively reformatted their political experience. The military has yet to undergo such an experience, as the revolt only involved a faction inside it and not the entire establishment. No radical overhauling of the armed forces has occurred since February other than administrative and simple reorganizational procedures. This faction-in-power appears to be concerned more with institutional unity rather than launching a vendetta against rival factions.¹³

The Insurgency Problem. While the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was stunned by its "tactical blunder" last February, the most dominant organization of the Philippine Left has managed to maintain its cohesive unity in spite of the minor splits and an ideological upheaval that happened after



February.¹⁴ The CPP remains to be the strongest political force outside of government in the post-Marcos era and has become a major factor in the military-civilian tensions inside the new government.

The Aquino government has pledged to end the insurgency through a two-pronged approach: directly addressing the economic roots of the revolution and, at the same time, engaging the insurgents in a dialogue leading to a ceasefire and lasting peace in the country. This position is underpinned by what may perhaps be seen as a naive assumption by government that with the dictatorship ousted, the armed aspect of the CPP's revolutionary project has lost its relevance.¹⁵

Even as the first steps towards a ceasefire agreement are being taken, the military maintained a cynical attitude towards its success and had been, through individuals like Enrile and the RAM officers, been pushing for a more hardline position against the CPP-NPA.¹⁶ Relentless criticism by the military had the government drawn up closer to the former's position aggravated by the obvious lack of consensus within the political leadership towards how to handle the insurgency and the external pressure from the United States.¹⁷ The absence of a definite policy has been criticized by the military as a virtual absence of policy. Aquino, however, continued to maintain an optimistic view that the ceasefire talks would push through.¹⁸ [On December 10, 1986 a ceasefire agreement was signed between the government and the NDF over and above military objection. But one month later, the NDF withdrew using as pretext the violence that occurred at the Mendiola

bridge during a farmers' march and accusing the Aquino government of having no effective control over its military].

The resolution of the insurgency question constitutes the most decisive problematic in the demilitarization process. Without invalidating the principles by which the revolutionary movement stands for nor the strategy by which it hopes to attain its revolutionary project, the spiral of violence that the confrontation between the insurgents and the dictatorship's armed apparatus would deter whatever moves towards *real* demilitarization in the Philippines, short of perhaps a revolutionary victory. The AFP will continue to use the presence of the CPP as its *raison d'être* and the latter will likewise insist on a role for armed resistance because of the former's capacity to undermine the revolutionary movement.

The U.S. Bases Question. Related closely to the issue of the insurgency are the opposing views held by the civilian and military leaderships over the question of the United States bases in the country whose lease is set to expire in 1991. The United States government has reiterated its desire to extend the lease of the bases and in certain degrees have used the bases issue as a leverage in its negotiations with the Aquino government for more aid. The U.S. has also expressed its concern over the insurgency question and the "inability" of the new government to contain the expansion of the revolutionary movement even after Marcos.

The American view is deeply shared by the AFP which has publicly expressed its desire to see the bases retained for the interest of what it calls "regional security". This position is tantamount to a refusal to recognize the government's position of "keeping the options open up to 1991". As an internal-oriented army, the AFP sees the bases as principally responsible for the country's external defense. This view has assumed greater importance in the light of the Soviet base in Camh Ranh which the military believes to be a threat. Also, as a result of a recent confrontation with Malaysian forces over a pirate problem, the AFP showed its inability and indecisiveness to act as the country's external defender.¹⁹ The military's pro-bases position, however, is mainly dictated by internal considerations. U.S. military assistance is crucial in the war against the CPP-NPA and the military's capability will be more seriously affected if government decides to opt for the removal of the bases in the light of a strong nationalist opposition.

Government, however, takes a different view towards U.S. - Philippine relations. Aquino has insisted that with the post-February political changes, a more equitable relationship should develop between the Philippines and the United States where the former is treated as a partner and not a vassal state.²⁰ This policy statement reveals a desire by the civilian leadership to assert a more autonomous position vis-a-vis the superpower in contrast to the ousted dictatorship's foreign policy. The tendency towards more independence in deter-

mining the country's relations with her former colonial master, has the potentials for generating apprehension from American policymakers; the same sentiment is likely to be articulated by the military.

The Issue of Human Rights. As the dictatorship's source of power, the military became deeply involved in the violation of human rights.²¹ These violations ranged from the wanton disregard of the civil rights of citizens to the overt displays of State coercion such as summary executions ("salvagings") to torture and illegal detention and hamletting. The containment of the revolutionary resistance became the most easily available pretext and rationalization for the pervasiveness of these atrocities.

This problem has gone beyond individual motivations and developed its own dynamics that violence became a structural phenomenon and the military is perceived by the people as the main purveyor of such institutional violence. And while the February events partly changed this (especially in the urban areas), the notoriety of the AFP remains strong in the popular mind in the areas where the insurgency continues to rage.²²

The new government's liberal democratic leadership is thus confronted with the problem of how to deal with an ally with a bloodied record but which wants civilian retributions against it curtailed, if not kept to the minimum. The AFP's reaction to the creation of a Presidential Commission on Human Rights (PCHR) to investigate human rights violations perpetrated by the military men during the Marcos era con-

formed to what Samuel Finer refers to as "personal self-preservation against . . . vengeful civilian foes".²³

The military initially demanded full amnesty for its "human rights violators" contending that such violations were done under orders from superior authority.²⁴ The refusal of the political leadership to give way to this demand (as seen by the creation of the PCHR) made the military adopt a new posture. The more recent (and most popular within the organization) demand of AFP officers is for "equal treatment" in the investigation of atrocities, i.e., that the PCHR do not confine its investigations on the armed forces alone but likewise devote its attention to atrocities committed by NPA guerrillas.²⁵

Problems of State Allocation. The civilian leadership and the military will most likely also confront each other on the question of budgetary allocations. Military expenditures had decreased in the final years of the Marcos dictatorship (see Table 1) owing partly to the effects of the economic crisis on government resources. After the revolution, the AFP leadership had reported that the Philippines in 1986 has the lowest per capita military expenditure compared to her ASEAN neighbours. Already, the AFP leadership has made use of the fact that the country has one of the lowest military spendings in the region to argue that "there is no truth that the Philippines is a militarized country". Ramos has indicated that the Philippines has a lower soldier to population ration (1:351) compared to Thailand (1:217) and Malaysia (1:148). He also cited that only 1.28% of the country's gross national product is spent on defense.²⁶

Table 1. Distribution of Expenditures By Sector, 1972 - 1985 (%)

Year	Economic	Social Services	Defense	General Public Services	Debt Service
1972	30.2	28.2	9.6	26.8	5.2
1973	41.8	23.8	10.0	18.7	5.7
1974	47.7	22.7	14.4	10.7	4.5
1975	46.9	18.6	18.6	10.7	5.2
1976	42.0	19.1	18.4	15.4	5.1
1977	34.5	22.0	22.7	13.0	7.8
1978	35.9	24.5	12.9	18.0	8.6
1979	38.3	27.6	14.4	10.7	9.0
1980	41.2	19.9	12.5	17.1	9.3
1981	39.7	20.6	11.1	19.9	8.7
1982	36.3	22.4	11.4	19.0	10.0
1983	31.0	21.0	12.3	18.5	17.2
1984	30.2	23.5	11.0	13.6	22.1
1985	29.9	23.9	8.6	9.2	28.4

Source: The Office of Budget and Management, Malacanang Palace.

Table 2 Comparative Cost Per Soldier in Selected Asian Countries

Country	Cost (US\$ per soldier)
Malaysia	26
Singapore	452
Brunei	1,413
Philippines	9
Indonesia	14

Source: *Business Day*. 5 October 1986.

Given the extent of the economic crisis, however, the government will be hardpressed to control its current and future budgetary deficits. This will only mean lesser allocation for the different public sectors. It is in determining the proportions of the budgetary allocation where tensions and conflicts may rise between the civilian leadership and the military. The military may not agree to any further cut in the 1987 budgetary allocations, citing once more the insurgency as the main reason for its opposition. At the height of the coup rumours in the last months of 1986, the government had conceded to this view and vowed to maintain current military allocation in the 1987 national budget. This will likely be opposed by both the liberals in the government and the cause-oriented movements who will argue for more allocation for the people's basic needs at the expense of the military budget which these individuals and groups will view as the prime indicator of the military's dominant presence in society.

II. Demilitarization: The Salient Points

These difficulties notwithstanding, there still remains enough reason to believe that a process of demilitarization and a redefinition of the role and functions of the armed forces can occur to partially stabilize the Aquino leadership in the current Philippine "democratic space". Conscious of the growing disparity between the objective limits imposed on present Philippine society and the dwindling possibilities of the present conjuncture becoming a real transition towards a desirable social alternative, this effort must be seen as only being relative in the efforts to demilitarize society. What this essay will do is to outline the general features of this process and focus on the possibilities for their realization through a preliminary discussion of the following vital issues: broadening the meaning of national defense, ending military dependence on the United States, and institutionalizing civilian hegemony over the professional standing army.

Redefining National Defense and Reconstituting the Apparatus. The Philippine experience with a huge army is an eloquent proof that size does not automatically translate to effectivity.²⁷ The current size of the AFP has not guaranteed an adequate defense for even the authoritarian state and it is unlikely that it can do so at the present. Hence, it is questionable to maintain such a large standing army when its effectivity is seriously in question. Yet, other countries have shown the way that a "lean and mean" armed forces can effectively defend a nation against superior forces. National defense and national security can best be ensured through the proper combination of a professionalized external defense force combined with a well-trained civilian militia.

The question is then posed as to what constitutes a "lean and mean military". While this is essentially a military problem, it is nevertheless premised on the principle that a standing army's role in society is that of external defense and not internal suppression. It is the institutionalization of this principle which must set the parameters by which the current army can be transformed from its grotesque inefficiency to a more professional one. Behind this principle lies the more basic question of what is really meant by national defense.

The answer may lie in Mao Tse Tung's much-criticized concept of a "people's army". In his military tracts, Mao speaks of the successes of a revolutionary war (and wars of national defense) as being the result of an organic unity between the people and their "army". This organic unity is not only military but more importantly political in character. War is regarded in Maoist writings not only as the sole pre-occupation of a special body of men, but rather as a mass undertaking with a military and political orientation. Thus Mao speaks of blunting any invasion by drowning the invader under a "sea of people's war" by which is meant defeating the enemy in the battlefield and denying him the legitimacy of a new political authority.²⁸

Similar experiences have led to successes in terms of defending or asserting national sovereignty. One only needs to cite the Vietnamese Revolution and the Cuban defense against an American-inspired aggression to prove the viability of the Maoist dictum of popular defense.

This principle undoubtedly will encounter fierce resistance from a military organization whose frame of thinking and history were very much patterned after Western frameworks of military organization. But even in the Philippines, the successes of a vastly-inferior guerilla force against the huge AFP apparatus are enough indications of the validity of this concept of national defense.

The other obstacle is more structural in character. Force reduction can only be successful if other key sectors of the economy can absorb the military's excess manpower. With the crisis engulfing the country, troop reduction may be a difficult policy for the political leadership to insist on. Hernandez has a valid point when she stressed that,

it may not be wise to reduce the size of the military at this time when the economic pie has shrunk so much that unemployment remains a key problem. An expanded economy could facilitate troop reduction, assuming that threats to security would have been substantially reduced.²⁹

Yet, even as the crisis poses as an obstacle to reducing a huge apparatus, there will still be a need to do so, if only for the purpose of bureaucratic streamlining and shedding of the excesses brought about by the size of the Marcos bureaucracy.

There will still be a need for a highly professional army given the advances in weapons technology. But the overall task of national defense must be reoriented from a very specialized responsibility to a conscious mass concern.

Terminating U.S. Influence. The evidence against the effects of American influence over the Philippine military and the militarization process during martial law have been well-established in earlier works on both topics thus needing no further elaboration in this paper.³⁰ The more difficult undertaking is to devise a strategy by which Philippine military dependence from the United States can be eliminated and thus pave the way for the establishment of a genuine national army.

The first concern pertains to resource support. The current AFP is totally dependent on U.S. assistance. For the demilitarization process to proceed there is a need to terminate U.S. material and advisory support to the present government. While initially difficult, military delinkage from the main supplier of Philippine arms poses no problem in the long run. Precedents from other countries have already been established and those countries which even radically broke ties with the U.S. manage to survive militarily by



PHOTO BY AP/WIDEWORLD

availing of war material from government and non-governmental sources.³¹ What needs to be determined at the onset is whether current military resources are appropriate to real needs. Out of a clarification of such needs can arise a well-planned strategy of developing alternative sources of material support.

Efforts must also be made towards the diminution of U.S. military influence in the so-called non-material spheres. This influence is most pronounced in the military philosophy that has guided the AFP in its long history. This philosophy has deep roots inside the military by virtue of its colonial past and is maintained through an elaborate system of American advisorship (through the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group [JUSMAG] agreement) and military education (via the U.S. International Military Education and Training Program or IMET). Jim Swick in an earlier paper on militarization cited a high U.S. official who argued that,

*Heaviest emphasis would be on the training of selected junior to mid-level officers not only to provide technical and managerial training that assists in force modernization, but also to give them better understanding of the United States, our political institutions, and U.S. policies. This is particularly important in dealing with a new generation of Filipinos which does not recall the shared World War II experience of our two countries.*³²

Delinking from U.S. influence, therefore, has also its ideological dimensions which can only be challenged through the propagation of a counter-ideology.

Herein lies the importance of a conscious formulation and implementation of a nationalist orientation by the political leadership in the different levels of the military's educational programme. What will be inculcated in military educational programmes is not merely the symbolic but would focus on a rich tradition of anti-colonial resistance. There is, of course, the dangers of fomenting a Nasserite perspective which in a way enhances the potentials for a military *pronunciamento*. But given the pervasive influence of US ideological themes, a strong nationalist ideology can serve to break the transnationalized ties that bind the Philippine military to its American counterpart.

Tied closely to this question is the presence of the U.S. bases in the country. For a demilitarization process to fully push through and to ensure a redefinition of the nature and functions of the armed forces, the leadership in the transition is left with very limited options other than to abrogate the bases agreement after its expiration in 1991.

The Re-affirmation of Civilian Hegemony. There is a need to re-affirm real civilian hegemony over the military apart from





constitution provisions. In the transition after the dictatorship this affirmation assumes major significance if only to prevent a restoration of the old order or the emergence of a more repressive mutation. "Democratic space" politics will also considerably be entrenched with the effective exercise of civilian control over the armed apparatus.

Civilian hegemony is political in nature, but ironically, its implementation must lead to the depoliticization of an otherwise politicized post-dictatorship army. The military must be made to understand that military politicization under a liberal democratic regime is more a liability rather than an asset. As Clapham puts it,³³

When the army goes into politics, so does politics come into the army. The degree of insulation from political affairs which can be maintained under a civilian regime is no longer possible once army officers control the state and are directly responsible for political decisions.

A decisive political leadership in the transition can impress this upon its military by citing the failure of military and political leadership in Third World societies, most particularly Latin America.³⁴ The Marcos regime itself can become an eloquent proof of how badly militarized regimes had ruled their countries.

The current military leadership must be made to understand that politicization is basically not healthy. The ideological bent of the current military is relatively shallow and limited. RAM was influential politically, but apart from its anti-communism, it wanted to proceed with the task of

"reprofessionalization" and the removal of the vestiges of political patronage endemic during the Marcos era. It has challenged Aquino but hesitates to push the civilian leadership or take power into its own hands. The military leadership, on the other hand, is extremely committed to the principle of "civilian supremacy over the military" and the non-involvement of the military in "politics". This is best represented by Ramos who recently issued an order prohibiting officers and men from participating as military men in politics.³⁵ The political leadership of the transition must, as a first step, strengthen the "constitutionalist" group within the military as it can become an effective support mechanism to the process of demilitarization.

Depoliticization of the military, after it has tasted power (the martial law years) or saw its potentials in exercising one (the February Revolution) is, however, no easy task for the political leadership in the transition. As the Latin American experiences have shown, once constituted as a principal force in government, the military becomes the "only sign that (a) government exists" and as such becomes a "very powerful lobby"³⁶ The presence of the insurgency also becomes a self-justification for its vocal presence in civil society.

Yet, this can be contained or even eliminated through the creation of deterrents to its political resurrection by establishing what may perhaps be tentatively called the "organs of people's power". The depoliticization of the standing army must necessarily be complemented by the rapid politicization of the people. From the perspective of demilitarization, this "institutionalization of people's power" serves to entrench civilian supervision over the military. In short, the meaning of civilian supremacy must be broadened to include not only "duly-constituted authorities", but also communities and other forms of popular organizing.

III. Towards the Democratization of Defense: Notes on the Civilian Army as An Alternative in the Transition

One of the more concrete proposals forwarded by cause-oriented groups has been the creation of a citizen's army to replace the discredited Civilian Home Defense Units (CHDU) as an internal defense force in the country.³⁷ This plan coincided with the proposal of elite politicians to form a new 30,000 to 50,000-man civilian army under the jurisdiction of local officials with the intention of taking over the role of the badly-discredited Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF). Militant groups cited the Swiss defense force as a model and underscored the need for a "well-trained and highly-motivated reserve army" of civilians that is autonomous of the professional army. A civilian army, according to the proposal, is "a better formula for national security" compared to the current reliance on a huge, western-trained armed force.

These proposals for an alternative civilian army depart from the same premise that the Armed Forces of the Philip-

piners (AFP) be drastically cut in size and its political influence eroded. They are worth studying for they are indicative of the seriousness and urgency of demilitarizing a society which had suffered under the bayonet's yoke for the last 14 years but ironically finds the same bayonet being declared as its partner in the so-called "redemocratization" of society.

The Potentials. The creation of an autonomous armed civilian force, if done seriously, can serve two important functions. First, it initiates the process of disassembling the huge and inefficient military apparatus created by the Marcos dictatorship. It also facilitates the efforts to reprofessionalize the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and reorient its effectivity towards lesser emphasis on size and more on an efficient capability to defend national interests. In the long run, the process hopes to effectively remove from the professional army the responsibility of internal defense and allow it to revert to its principal role of defending the country from external aggression.

Secondly, this citizen's army becomes but another mechanism by which popular democracy (as currently manifested by the phenomenon of "people power") is institutionally preserved and defended while allowing the extent of its democratizing potentials to be meaningfully explored. The training of civilians in military defense effectively supplements

the expected post-February upsurge in popular organizing. For while unarmed resistance did indeed prove its political viability as a strategy during the February days, sustaining the Revolution – i.e., coming to grips with the basic issue of demilitarization, and pushing for the social agenda – demand a more complex set of mass political action which may include armed confrontation between the masses and those who would resist their continued politicization and empowerment.

History has time and again indicated that the lasting outcome of a class confrontation to resolve social contradictions is decisively determined by the relation of military forces in contention. And only the politically naive would think that the preservation of popular democracy and resolution of social contradictions – particularly in the heavily militarized Philippine countryside – could be done through sheer political guts or a barrelful of prayers.

The Limitations and Obstacles. However, these functional definitions do not necessarily lead to smooth actualization. It is precisely because the concept of a civilian army in the Philippines goes beyond mere military considerations and must be seen as a part of an overall democratization process, that makes its creation a political question.

The biggest obstacle to the idea is expectedly the military establishment whose influence has considerably broadened





since February. As a power bloc, the AFP is expected to defend its new-found powers by invoking its right as the sole legal institution of coercion in society. The creation of a military force outside the AFP command structure threatens this institutional prerogative and creates the possibilities for dual power to emerge between an armed "people's power" and a refurbished yet politically tainted AFP.

The insurgency is the second major obstacle. On the one hand, the raging war in the countryside is enough reason for the military to oppose the existence of an autonomous armed force by citing the importance of a unified military establishment in the government's war with the CPP-NPA. An army autonomous of the current command structure would definitely tell on the effectivity of counter-insurgency operations by creating bureaucratic bottlenecks in the chain of command.

On the other hand, a citizen's army whose presumed concern will be civil defense has a slim chance of not confronting the NPA unless any significant result is achieved in the current ceasefire talks. A new army of the people, which owes its juridical legitimacy to government, can be torn between an insurgent movement that shares similar aspirations with the people and the State which allows the formation of another armed organization. Once the State decides that talks

and negotiations are ineffective and opts for the military solution, then the citizen's army must obey the national leadership (or defect if it recognizes the CPP Central Committee as its national political center). It is difficult to optimistically imagine that military encounters between the civilian army and the rebel forces will not happen.

Finally, in the absence of any fundamental political change towards broader popular participation, and without a rigid enlistment process backed up by a systematic political education for recruits, a civilian army can still be transformed into institutional instruments of elite power, especially in the local level (e.g., the private army). A rehash of the CHDF, complete with its fascist and corrupt trappings, may just be the result of this citizen's force.

The Prerequisites for Realization. Yet, no matter how significant these obstacles are, the fact that the possibilities co-exist alongside these hindrances, allows us to conceptualize some concrete measures that shall hopefully become the prerequisites for a genuine people's army. It is not utopian to conceive of measures which will help pave the way for the emergence of a citizen's army that reflects the democratic essence of February and which is hopefully armed with a far-reaching vision to make national defense a popular and democratic endeavor.

A citizen's army must be premised on the existence of popular organizations in the community level. In short, the growth of a civilian army must run alongside the development of autonomous popular organizations. The reasons for this are twofold. First, under the assumption that their political understanding and appreciation is more developed than the unorganized mass, these popular organizations can ensure that the citizen's army is not only a military instrument. Political education – especially on popular democratic politics – is also an essential feature of the civilian armed force. The popular organizations, therefore, also act as the political guide to the civilian army as well as its watchdog up until popular democratic politics becomes truly popular and becomes an organic part of popular consciousness.

Secondly, the popular organizations are important to prevent the cooptation of the civilian army into the framework of elite and/or militarized politics. Given the reality that at its inception, a civilian army must rely on State largesse, this support becomes the entry point by which elite parties and politicized military commanders would try to transform them into their coercive instruments. The existence of organized forces and organized communities will deter this cooptative efforts.

Eventually, as the popular organizations develop into effective political organs in the local levels and communities begin to appreciate their political influence as power centers outside of formal State structures, then the citizen's army becomes a real community concern. The popular organizations then assume a supervisory role over the citizen's army and the former are, in turn, accountable to an entire community. The AFP, at this point becomes an outside party to the process as it is expected to be trimmed down, brought back to the barracks and made to undergo reorientation as an external defense force.

The political consciousness of a community and the development of popular organizations outside of the revolutionary underground, however, are themselves a problematique. At this current context, where organs of popular participation remain relatively undeveloped compared to elite political parties and other power blocs in society, it is essential that popular instruments of force are created outside of the power orbit of these power blocs and parties. Without the popular organization playing a determinant role in the formation of a citizen's army, the creation of such an army will elude those who desire thorough democratization in society. **K**

Notes

¹Carolina G. Hernandez. "Aquino in the Tiger's Den: A Real Military Threat". *International Herald Tribune*. 17 July 1986. See also Lily Ann Marcos. "The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Revolution of 1986". Political Science 199 paper. University of the Philippines. March 1986. pp. 42 - 46.

²P.N. Abinales. "The Philippine Military and the Marcos Regime". Paper prepared for the 3rd Meeting of the United Nations University Asian Perspectives Project (Southeast Asian Sub-Region) on *Transnationalization, the State and the People – The Philippine Case*. October 1985.

³"National Security Study Directive: U.S. Policy Towards the Philippines - (1985) Executive Summary". See also the Speech of Sen. J. Kerry, Congressional Records - Senate, August 5, 1985. S-10621-10628, and; Reply of the U.S. Department of Defense to Questions by the Sub-Committee on Asian-Pacific Affairs, U.S. Congress. October 4, 1984. After February 1986, see Col. William Wise. "The Philippine Military After Marcos". Paper prepared for the Conference on "The Philippines and U.S. Policy", sponsored by the Washington Institute for Values in Public Policy, Washington, D.C., April 30 - May 1, 1986.

⁴Gemma N. Almendral. "The Reformists of the February Revolt". *Diliman Review*. Vol. 34. No. 2, pp. 3-6. See also Alan Berlow. "The Military Revolt: All Things Considered". Interview with Navy captain Rex Robles, former RAM spokesman, National Public Radio. 1986.

⁵Enrile and Ramos had also been referred to as the "born-again democrats" by members of the Philippine Left. See Edicio de La Torre et. al. "The February Revolution: A New Political Phase or

A Return to Pre-Martial Law Politics? " *The Philippines in the Third World Papers*. Series No. 42. Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines. April 1986.

⁶Randolf S. David. "Revolution without Tears: Notes on People Power and the February 1986 Uprising in the Philippines". *Kasarinlan: Journal of Third World Studies* (henceforth referred to as *Kasarinlan*). Publication of the Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines. Vol. 1. No. 4 2nd Quarter. 1986. p. 27.

⁷Francisco Nemenzo. "Beyond February: The Task of Socialists". *Kasarinlan*. Vol. 2. No. 1. 3rd Quarter. 1986. pp. 32-34.

⁸*Far Eastern Economic Review*. May 29, 1986 (henceforth referred to as *FEER*).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid. see also *Malaya*, June 30, 1986.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²"Obstacles to Peace". *Liberation: Official Organ of the National Democratic Front, July-August 1986*.

¹³*FEER*, May 29, 1986.

¹⁴NPA leader Rev. Conrado Balweg split from the NPA and formed his own Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA). For the admission of the CPP of its error last February see *Ang Bayan*, May 1986 as reprinted in *Kasarinlan*, Vol. 2. No. 1. 3rd quarter. For the debates raging inside the Party after the boycott fiasco, see the journal released by the National Urban Commission of the Party, *Praktika*:

Journal of Theory and Practice. Vol. 1. No. 1. 1986. See also the article of Marty Villalobos, "Where the Party Faltered", mimeo, 1986.

¹⁵ *Ang Bayan*, September 1986.

¹⁶ *Business Day*, October 7, 1986.

¹⁷ Reflective of the American hardline position towards the insurgency is R. Fischer's, "The Communist Threat to Reviving Democracy in the Philippines", *Asian Studies Center*. Backgrounder. The Heritage Foundation. April 23, 1986.

¹⁸ *Veritas News Magazine*. April 10, 1986. See also James Goodno. "General Machinations mark Aquino's Army". *In These Times*. May 21 - 27, 1986. p. 9.

¹⁹ Comments of Comm. Danilo Vizmanos (ret.) in the symposium on "The Role of the Military in the Philippine Crisis", University of the Philippines, September 17, 1986.

²⁰ See Pres. Aquino's speech in the banquet tendered on her by U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz.

²¹ "Militarization Trends in Philippines". Ecumenical Conference on the Philippines. September 27 - October 2, 1983, as cited by Jim Swick, "Militarization in the Philippines: From Consolidation to Crisis" Revised version of an earlier paper of the same title published in *Philippine Research Bulletin*. Fall 1984. See also P.N. Abinales. "Militarization in the Philippines". *The Philippines in the Third World Papers*. series No. 34. April 1982.

²² Sawada Akiko. "As If Nothing has Happened: A Report from Mindanao". AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review. Vol. 18. No. 1. 1986. pp. 53-54.

²³ S.E. Finer. "The Retreat to the Barracks: Notes on the Practice and the Theory of Military Withdrawal from the Seats of Power". *Third World Quarterly*. January 1985. p. 27.

²⁴ *Veritas News Magazine*. April 10, 1986.

²⁵ *Ibid*. See also *FEER*, May 29, 1986.

²⁶ *Business Day*. October 6, 1986.

²⁷ By the late 70s, a significant percentage of AFP-NPA en-

counters had been initiated by guerillas. See Felipe Miranda and Ruben Ciron, "Philippine Defense Expenditures and Threat Perceptions: Significance of the US Role", paper delivered at the Workshop on Defence and Development in Southeast Asia: Defence and Threat Perceptions", Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 20-22 August 1986, Singapore, Table 2 - 4.

²⁸ For example, see Mao Tse Tung. "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party" and "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War.. War". *Selected Works*. Volume 1. Peking Language Press. 1979. pp. 105 - 116 and pp. 179 - 254.

²⁹ Carolina Hernandez. "The 'Military Mind': Its Implications for Civil-Military Relations in the Philippines". Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Psychological Association of the Philippines on "The Philippine Scenario after the February Revolution: A Psychological", Philamlife Auditorium, Manila, August 5, - 7, 1986, p. 12.

³⁰ Walden Bello et. al. *Logistics of Repression and Other Essays*. Friends of the Filipino People. Washington. 1977. See also Jim Swick. *Militarism and Repression in the Philippines*. Arms Control and Disarmament. Earlham College. August 1980.

³¹ The Iranian army is a classic case. Nearly dependent on U.S. support during the days of the Shah, the military survived the Revolution and the consequent American arms embargo by buying its arms from Europe and private arms dealer in order to sustain its war against Iraq. See William Hickman. *Ravaged and Reborn: The Iranian Army, 1982*. The Brookings Institute. Washington D.C., November 1982.

³² Swick, op. cit. p. 10.

³³ Christopher Clapham. *Third World Politics: An Introduction*. Croom Helm. London/Sydney. 1985. p. 150.

³⁴ Finer, op. cit. pp. 26-29.

³⁵ *New Day*, October 4, 1986.

³⁶ Peter Calvert. "Demilitarisation in Latin America". *Third World Quarterly*, op. cit. p. 38.

³⁷ This section is a revised version of an article by the author published in *Veritas News Magazine*. July 28-30, 1986.

