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## THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO REVIVING DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES

### INTRODUCTION

Philippine President Corazon Aquino has an opportunity to rebuild Philippine democracy. The major obstacle she faces probably is the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). It continues to wage its so-called people's war, which has cost the lives of over 250 Filipinos since the end of February. The CPP is active in all of the nation's 73 provinces and controls up to 20 percent of the population through "shadow governments." These "governments" maintain their hold over local citizens through a combination of promised reforms and selected terrorism. To make matters worse, until the election, the ranks of the CPP's guerrilla arm, the New People's Army (NPA), was growing by 50 percent a year. It can now engage 200- to 300-man government military units in the countryside.

The CPP's urban action arm, the National Democratic Front (NDF), foments unrest in the cities to complement the NPA's military action. Recent demonstrations in a provincial capital on Panay were coordinated with rural NPA attacks. The CPP, meanwhile, has infiltrated the powerful Philippine Catholic Church and receives international support from Western Europe, Australia, the U.S., Canada, and the Soviet bloc.

The CPP's vision of the Philippines' future resembles the repressive societies of Vietnam and Nicaragua. Totalitarian control would extend to all spheres of Philippine society. A CPP regime in Manila almost surely would mean that the U.S. would lose its access to vital Philippine military bases.

The great democratic enthusiasm and political sophistication demonstrated by Filipinos during the February 7 election was a great setback for the communists, who boycotted the voting. But the CPP remains a threat. In the near term, the CPP may reduce its military activity in favor of increased political struggle and infiltration to weaken the Aquino coalition. If the new government is not able to improve social and economic conditions, the CPP remains poised to resume its military campaign.

To turn the tide against the CPP, the Philippine central government will have to increase its credibility by strengthening democratic institutions, improving the leadership and capability of the military, and spurring economic growth in the countryside. Absent such reforms, according to a U.S. analysis last year, within two to four years the CPP/NPA could politically and militarily paralyze the central government nationwide.

Several of Aquino's economic advisors appreciate the danger that they face and advocate rural economic growth. And armed forces chief General Fidel Ramos has begun revamping the command structure by promoting competent commanders. Manila is also starting to formulate a civil-military counterinsurgency plan. But it will take several years to defeat the CPP.

Washington must be ready to help the Aquino government fight the communist insurgency. The U.S. should:

- o Accelerate delivery of FY 1986 military assistance, amounting to \$50 million. Congress should approve supplemental aid if requested by the Administration.
- o Provide assistance to improve the capability of Philippine police forces, which are the first line of defense against the insurgents.
- o Assist programs that increase rural employment..
- o Increase the U.S. information effort in the Philippines to counter propaganda by the left, including an increase in U.S. Information Agency's funded scholarships and continued funding for U.S. organizations promoting free trade unionism.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES

The CPP began its "peoples war" against Philippine democracy in 1968, when students from the University of the Philippines in Manila broke away from the pro-Soviet Partido Kommunistang Pilipinas (PKP), which had led the aborted Huk rebellion. At first, the CPP pursued a Maoist strategy of using armed struggle to create "revolutionary

conditions." But by 1975, the CPP shifted strategy and began concentrating on building an organizational base throughout the 7,000-island nation. This enabled the CPP to take advantage of the deteriorating economic and political conditions that started in the early 1980s.

American analysts believe the CPP has attracted one million active supporters plus at least six million sympathizers from all 73 provinces. Last year a Senate Intelligence Committee report estimated the CPP controls, or is contesting control over, almost 20 percent of the 54 million Filipinos.<sup>1</sup> CPP membership totals only about 40,000. But these cadres generally are rigid, ideologically committed nationalists, highly motivated and university educated.

Most of the cadres live and fight in the countryside, although some make their base of operations in the cities. Cadres are often rotated to prevent regionalism, a strong characteristic of Filipino politics.<sup>2</sup> Personal conduct is closely regulated, courtship is restricted, and group activities stressed to stifle individuality.<sup>3</sup>

#### CPP ORGANIZATION AND TACTICS

The communist threat is greatest at a grass-roots level. In the countryside, the CPP seeks to co-opt local leaders or influence policy through "shadow governments." Organizing usually begins at the neighborhood council, or Barangay level, with a three to seven-member Semi-Legal Team. The team works to recruit a circle of close conspirators and then tries to politicize the community by stressing local economic and political grievances. If this succeeds, as it often has, a local New People's Army (NPA) unit is formed. The CPP then dispenses "revolutionary justice" by assassinating local officials and criminals. By one estimate, the NPA last year were killing 500 to 650 Filipino civilians a month.<sup>4</sup> The Philippine

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1. Staff Report to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, The Philippines: A Situation Report, October 31, 1985, p. 5.

2. Ross Munro, "The New Khmer Rouge," Commentary, December, 1985, p. 32; "Murder City," Asiaweek, September 13, 1985, p. 8.

3. Steve Lohr, "Inside the Philippine Insurgency," New York Times Magazine, November 3, 1985, p. 48.

4. Munro, op. cit., p. 21.

government estimates the NPA killed over 100 local officials in 1984, and in 1985, over 4,400 Filipinos died in insurgency-related violence.<sup>5</sup>

After the CPP takes control of villages, it levies heavy taxes, moves to control opinion and behavior, and institutionalizes terror.<sup>6</sup> CPP terror is so effective that often the communists conceal for years from city dwellers the fact that surrounding villages are controlled by the CPP.

### New People's Army

The military pay-off of the CPP's organizational successes has been the NPA's rapid growth. Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage last year told the Senate that NPA forces exceeded 16,500 guerrillas. The Senate Intelligence Committee report two months earlier put NPA strength at 30,000 full- and part-time guerrillas.<sup>7</sup> It is believed, moreover, that the NPA is growing 20 to 50 percent annually.<sup>8</sup>

NPA activities also are expanding. In 1984 the Philippine military estimated there was an average of ten clashes daily with the NPA, or roughly 3,600 annual incidents, up from 2,400 in 1983.<sup>9</sup> During the last two years the NPA has become increasingly bold against the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The Pentagon, for example, estimates that the NPA initiates at least 60 percent of all annual incidents with the government. The main goal of NPA operations seems to be capturing weapons. Isolated outposts or convoys are ambushed and overwhelmed before reinforcements arrive. Over the past two years, NPA has fielded units as large as 200 to 400 guerrillas.

NPA weapons are becoming more sophisticated. Both Philippine and U.S. sources indicate the NPA is building the capability to construct mines and mortars. Possession of mortars, for example, would enable

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5. Government of the Republic of the Philippines, The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines, May 11, 1985, p. 17; "Gen. Ramos Notes Rise in Insurgency Incidents," Hong Kong AFP, September 9, 1985, p. 20, in FBIS Asia-Pacific, December 26, 1985, p. 2.

6. John Whitehall, "Options in the Philippines, Part I," Freedom at Issue, March-April 1985, p. 48.

7. Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard L. Armitage, statement before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, December 18, 1985; Staff Report to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, p. 5.

8. "The NPA Threat: How Great?," Asiaweek, March 29, 1985, p. 14.

9. Ibid., p. 15.

the NPA to attack larger AFP units, army bases, and other military facilities.

### National Democratic Front

Through its National Democratic Front (NDF), the Communist Party of the Philippines hopes to form a "united front" of communist and noncommunist union, student, church, and political opposition groups to promote strikes and demonstrations to complement rural military operations. While the NDF pretends that it is independent of the CPP, its current spokesman, Antonio Zumel, is on the CPP's Propaganda Commission.<sup>10</sup>

Constituent groups of the NDF include the Association of Revolutionary Workers, Organization of Nationalist Women, Christians for National Liberation, Organization of Nationalist Peasants, Nationalist Youth (KM), and the Association of Nationalist Teachers.<sup>11</sup> Groups either controlled or strongly influenced by the CPP but formally part of the NDF include: League of Filipino Students, Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism (MABINI), May First Movement (KMU), Task Force Detainees, National Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, GABRIELLA, and the Association of Concerned Teachers.

Though the CPP has not stated its goals, the January 1985 NDF program is viewed by many as the CPP's minimal platform. The NDF program calls for the establishment of a "people's democratic republic" which will 1) establish "people's tribunals" to punish the "enemies of the revolution"; 2) terminate unequal military treaties with the U.S., nationalize the assets of the "big foreign capitalists," and cancel all foreign loans; 3) collectivize agriculture, 4) nationalize industry and institute state planning, and 5) seek support from "revolutionary movements and organizations abroad."<sup>12</sup>

The CPP has made great efforts to infiltrate the politically powerful Catholic Church. Since 1972, the CPP-controlled Christians for National Liberation (CNL) has won as many as 1,200 followers among the Philippines' 14,000 priests and nuns.<sup>13</sup> CNL members hide their

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10. Munro, op. cit. p. 33.

11. Guy Sacerdoti and Philip Bowring, "Marx, Mao, and Marcos," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 21, 1985, p. 55.

12. Drafting Committee, NDF Secretariat, Program of the Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF Publishing House, January 1, 1985).

13. Munro, op. cit., p. 26

CPP affiliation from their colleagues and seek to reshape church social programs to assist CPP propaganda efforts. The CNL priests even provide logistical support for the New People's Army. In 1982, Catholic bishops on Mindanao severed relations with their Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference Secretariat, the coordinating agency for their social action programs, because of communist infiltration of the Secretariat.<sup>14</sup>

After the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino in August 1983, the moderate opposition to President Ferdinand Marcos welcomed the National Democratic Front's ability to turn huge crowds into the streets for demonstrations. This cooperation with the moderates gave the NDF legitimacy. In May 1985, the NDF moved a step further, attempting to form a "united front" with the moderates by bringing about 500 opposition groups together into a broad-based alliance called BAYAN.<sup>15</sup> When it became evident to noncommunist leftists such as "Butz" Aquino and Jose Diokno that the CPP wanted to control BAYAN, they quit. Even though their withdrawal damaged BAYAN's credibility in Central Luzon, it has been able to mount general strikes, which have paralyzed cities in the central and southern Philippines.

#### Financial Support

Most CPP funds are raised in the countryside. "Revolutionary taxes" are levied on peasants, small businesses, and multinational corporations. Those who do not pay are attacked. The Philippine government estimates that between 1981 and 1984, the CPP damaged \$18 million worth of equipment of companies who refused to pay revolutionary taxes.<sup>16</sup> Now that the economy is sputtering, however, the CPP is finding that businesses are unable to pay the CPP levies. As such, the communists are squeezing the peasants and forming their own companies to generate income.<sup>17</sup>

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14. Dennis Shoemith, "The Church" in R. J. May and Francisco Nemenzo, eds., The Philippines After Marcos (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 83.

15. "Nationalist Alliance Holds 2-Day Congress," Business Day, May 6, 1985, p. 24, in FBIS Asia Pacific, May 8, 1985, p. 5.

16. "The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines," op. cit., p. 18.

17. William Branigin, "Philippine Communist Rebels Stumble in Bid to Expand," The Washington Post, August 23, 1985, p. A23.

## INTERNATIONAL AND SOVIET SUPPORT

The CPP enjoys support from leftist front organizations in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the U.S. and has established low level ties with the Soviet bloc. CPP fronts have channeled material support from Europe since the mid-1970s via NDF representative and former priest Luis Jalandoni, who maintains offices in Amsterdam, Paris, Utrecht, and Rome.<sup>18</sup> He has directed European church charities to support CPP-dominated lay organizations in the Philippines. In 1981, he provided travel expenses for CPP arms smugglers operating through South Yemen.<sup>19</sup>

In Australia, the CPP support network includes church, union, and political groups. NPA guerrillas harassed an Australian economic assistance project on Samar early last year, prompting the Australian government to cancel the project.<sup>20</sup> Several Philippine groups associated with the CPP such as the KMU, Christians for National Liberation, and the League of Filipino Students have close ties with Australian unions and Catholic overseas assistance groups.<sup>21</sup> The Australian Congress of Trade Unions, the major collective bargaining organization in Australia, recognizes the KMU as the "only legitimate Labour Movement in the Philippines."<sup>22</sup>

The CPP has been active in the U.S. since the late 1970s. U.S. organizations sympathetic to the CPP publicly acknowledge that NDF agents operate in the U.S.<sup>23</sup> One U.S. organization closely aligned with the CPP is the Oakland-based Katipunan Demokratikong Pilipino

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18. Sol Juvinda, "si Louie Jalandoni, NDF international representative, sa Paris," Malaya Sunday, February 2, 1986, p. 12.

19. Munro, op. cit., p. 37.

20. "Australian Aid Groups' Role in Suspension of Philippine Aid Project," News Weekly, May 29, 1985, p. 4.

21. Anthony McAdam, "Large Scale Australian Aid to Communists," The Bulletin, February 25, 1986, p. 25; B. A. Santamaria, "Communist Cloud Over Aquino Victory," The Australian (Melbourne), March 4, 1986, p. 13.

22. KMU, International Bulletin, October 1985, p. 23.

23. Philippine Resource Center, "Support Movement Grows in U.S., Canada," Philippine Report, September 1985, p. 9.

(KDP). In 1979 KDP members gained control of one of the larger anti-Marcos lobby groups, Friends of the Filipino People.<sup>24</sup> In 1980, FFP helped sponsor a U.S. tour for Edicio de la Torre, the leader of Christians for National Liberation. In 1985, FFP and the Honolulu-based Philippine Workers Committee sponsored a U.S. tour for KMU leaders Roberto Ortaliz and Meynardo Palarca. Ortaliz received official citations from the Massachusetts State Senate and House of Representatives in October 1985.<sup>25</sup>

Since at least the late 1970s, the CPP has received indirect funding from the Soviets. Moscow has tried to conceal this relationship by making connections with CPP members in third countries and pursuing highly visible relations with the former Marcos government. Former KGB agent Stanislav Levchenko told the House Intelligence Committee that, while he was based in Tokyo from 1975 to 1979 for the KGB, he witnessed Soviet money being passed to CPP messengers.<sup>26</sup> Negotiations between Soviet and CPP representatives are alleged to have been conducted in Australia.<sup>27</sup>

Overt cooperation between the Soviet-sponsored Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas and the CPP began in 1980 when the PKP's affiliate of Moscow's World Federation of Trade Unions, "Katipunan," joined forces with the May First Movement (KMU) to create an independent front called Solidarity.<sup>28</sup> Noncommunist Philippine labor leaders strongly suspect the CPP is receiving Soviet money through the KMU. Filipino communists have received training in Vietnam.<sup>29</sup> To date, only one Soviet attempt to ship arms to the CPP has been detected.<sup>30</sup> But the 7,000 islands of the Philippine archipelago provide ample opportunity for covert Soviet weapon drops from submarines or Soviet merchant ships, which often call on ports in central and southern Philippine

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24. "Rift Exposes Red Tint of FFP, KDP; Infiltration Strategy, Goals Questioned." Philippine News, May 19-25, 1979.

25. KMU, International Bulletin, December 1985, p. 25.

26. "Soviet Active Measures," Hearings before the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, House of Representatives, July 13-14, 1982, pp. 166-167.

27. Santamaria, op. cit.

28. Leif Rosenberger, "Philippine Communism and the Soviet Union," Survey, Spring 1985, p. 136.

29. Uthit Pasakhom "Beyond A Soviet-Vietnamese Condominium, The Case of Laos," Indochina Report, January-March 1985, p. 13.

30. Munro, op. cit., p. 37.



islands. Moscow is well positioned to aid the CPP directly should future circumstances warrant.

#### THE FEBRUARY ELECTION AND BEYOND

The CPP's decision to boycott the February 7 presidential election appears to have been a tactical mistake because most Filipinos enthusiastically welcomed the election. The boycott allowed the Aquino forces to distance themselves from the left during and after the voting. Aquino's release of detained communist leaders was viewed by many in her Cabinet as a necessary gesture of conciliation to the rebels. The CPP is now faced with the prospect of a government willing to pursue reforms that will undercut its strength.

NPA military activity, which was curtailed during the election campaign, now has been resumed. Over 250 have died since the election in insurgency-related violence. To Aquino's call to end violence, the CPP and the NPA have responded by saying that they are willing to consider a cease-fire.<sup>31</sup> But the NDF conditions for this amount to surrender by the government. They include: demilitarization of the provinces, recall of military units stationed there, release of "political" prisoners, and a purge of "fascist elements" in the Army.<sup>32</sup> But even if a cease-fire is achieved, CPP founder Jose Maria Sison recently stated, "it would be impossible for the CPP-NPA to abandon armed struggle."<sup>33</sup>

CPP propaganda is aimed at forcing a split in the Aquino coalition between the liberals and those conservatives led by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Armed Forces Chief Fidel Ramos.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the CPP stands ready to support so-called progressive elements in the coalition. These elements apparently include former human rights lawyer, now executive secretary to the President, Joker Arroyo, presidential spokesman Rene Saguisag, and Labor Minister Augusto Sanchez, co-founder of MABINI and former member of the BAYAN national council.

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31. "Communists Open to Negotiations," Business Day, March 25, 1986, p. 19 in FBIS: Asia Pacific, March 26, 1986, p. P13.

32. Comrade Ernesto's Terms," Le Monde, March 19, 1986, p. 1 in FBIS: Asia Pacific, March 21, 1986, p. P3.

33. Sison on Armed Struggle," Yomiuri Shimbun, March 9, 1986, p. 5 in FBIS: Asia Pacific, March 11, 1986, p. 7.

34. "CPP Trying to Split Aquino From Enrile, Ramos," Business Day, April 1, 1986, p. 5 in FBIS: Asia Pacific, April 4, 1986, p. P8.

A far more typical path to power for the CPP is through infiltration and united front activity. Though Aquino said during the campaign that communists would not be included in her Cabinet, the CPP could pursue an indirect route. BAYAN had planned to support its own candidates if local elections were held in May 1986 as originally scheduled. Jose Maria Sison is helping to form a new political party.<sup>35</sup> If it were able to join the Aquino coalition Cabinet, the CPP would gain enormous legitimacy and would be in a much better position to consolidate its control.

#### MANILA'S COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORT

The Aquino government is now formulating a comprehensive counterinsurgency program that will include amnesty for guerrillas, rehabilitation, and rural economic development. As acting Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces under Marcos, General Ramos tried to initiate reforms to improve professionalism in the military. Now as Chief of Staff, Ramos has started to dismantle the old military command structure loyal to Marcos but ineffective against the NPA.

Should the CPP-NPA resume its military campaign, the armed forces must be improved dramatically. Most effective against the NPA are the Marines, with 9,600 men, and the regular Army, with 70,000 men. Less successful have been the local full-time police, with 40,000 men, and the 70,000-man part-time, volunteer militia that comprises the Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF). CHDF members receive little training but are merely issued weapons and put under the nominal command of a mayor or neighborhood leaders. The local police and CHDF are in the forefront of the counterinsurgency effort, but their effectiveness has been limited by their poor training and their pursuit of gambling, personal business ventures, and vendettas. Consequently, they are easy targets for NPA/ CPP propaganda.<sup>36</sup> Most NPA attacks are against the local police and the CHDF, who consequently have become the major source of NPA weapons.

Because of their superior leadership and better training and equipment, the Marines and Army succeed against the guerrillas, but their units are being spread increasingly thin as the NPA expands its areas of operation. The Marines are particularly effective because of their stress on civic action, counter-CPP propaganda, and strict troop

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35. "Sison Helping to Form New Political Party," Business Day, April 3, 1986, p. 22 in FBIS: Asia Pacific, April 7, 1986, p. P13.

36. Larry Niksch, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the Philippines," Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, July 1, 1985, pp. 58, 64.

discipline. Many feel the Armed Forces of the Philippines places too much emphasis on military action and does not devote enough attention to economic infrastructure construction and relations with local civilians.<sup>37</sup>

The armed forces increasingly lack adequate resources to meet the NPA threat. The Philippine defense budget is the smallest in Southeast Asia, with \$422 million allocated in 1985 and \$588 million budgeted for 1986.<sup>38</sup> This amounts to 1 percent of gross national product compared to 6.25 percent in Singapore, 2.2 in Indonesia, and 5.8 in Malaysia. As the NPA grows, the burden it places on the AFP increases dramatically, because each major Philippine island requires its own command and logistics network.

The most serious AFP shortages inhibiting counterinsurgency efforts are in transport and communications equipment, spare parts, fuel, and uniforms. Some U.S. officials estimate the AFP has only half the number of trucks needed to respond to the NPA. But the AFP has not been able to maintain even the trucks it does have. It lacks trained mechanics and spare parts. To make matters worse, pay for soldiers is very low, often not enough to meet basic needs. As a result, soldiers routinely confiscate produce from farmers or impose impromptu road blocks to collect tolls. Predictably, this feeds CPP/NPA propaganda against the military.

#### HOW WASHINGTON CAN HELP

It is clearly in U.S. interests in Asia to ensure that Manila is able to defeat the CPP threat to Philippine democracy. The Aquino government is beginning a process of military reform and is developing a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy. Washington should provide material and other assistance to counter the local and international dimension of the CPP threat. The Administration should accelerate delivery of \$55 million in military assistance allocated for FY 1986. If the Administration believes that more aid is needed this year, Congress should approve supplemental requests and should fund the FY 1987 request of \$100 million.

Military aid should be designed to promote professionalism and the Philippine military's ability to counter the NPA. This can be

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37. Whitehall, op. cit., p. 7.

38. The International Institute for Strategic and International Studies, The Military Balance, 1985-1986 (Litchworth: The Garden City Press, 1985), 132; "Opposition MP's Criticize Defense Budget," Veritas, November 3, 1985, p. 13, in FBIS Asia-Pacific, November 6, 1985, p. 28.

accomplished by providing supplies such as uniforms and boots, which improve the soldiers' self-image and reduce the likelihood of stealing from peasants. The AFP also needs spare parts for inoperative trucks, helicopters, and troop transport ships. If NPA activity increases in the future, additional transport and communications equipment will be required. In addition, the Administration should consider aid to improve the capability of Manila's police forces, as it is in El Salvador. The U.S. also should consider helping to fund amnesty and rehabilitation programs that Manila may launch to entice rebels to surrender.

To help the Aquino government bolster its credibility and strengthen democracy, the U.S. should urge Manila to hold local elections soon and provide aid to stimulate economic growth in the countryside. This will help eliminate the political and economic grievances that feed CPP propaganda. Finance Minister Jamie Ongpin seems to favor stimulating private sector investment and growth, especially in agriculture. U.S. economic assistance can help Manila diversify Philippine farming away from such traditional crops as sugar and coconuts for which demand has been declining for several years. The NPA is strong in areas where these crops dominate the local economy, such as Negros and Mindanao.

The U.S. should increase its information effort to help counter increased CPP attempts to inflame Filipino nationalism by attacking U.S. influence in the Philippines. Additional funds should be allocated for student scholarships. For FY 1986, only \$293,000 was allocated for 21 new and continuing students by the Fulbright scholarship program. The National Endowment for Democracy should continue to fully fund the Philippine program of the AFL-CIO's Asian-American Free Labor Institute. This program has successfully enabled Filipinos to create free trade unions in Negros and Mindanao, where the communist-controlled KMU is strong.

In addition, the U.S. should increase its efforts to expose the CPP's international supporters, especially Soviet attempts to assist the CPP. The U.S. should share such information with Manila and allied governments to facilitate interdiction of the CPP's international support network.

## CONCLUSION

The Communist Party of the Philippines poses a serious threat to Philippine democracy. It has a nationwide political organization, guerrilla army, and a united front strategy that infiltrates church, student, union, and political groups and foments strikes and demonstrations. It is funded by a sophisticated tax system and receives financial and political support from Europe, Australia, and

the U.S. The Soviet Union maintains a low-level relationship with the CPP, but that relationship could be upgraded easily and rapidly.

If it succeeds in gaining power through military or political means, the CPP will create a brutal, repressive regime based on institutionalized terror. It will also end U.S. access to Philippine bases, thus severely reducing American ability to meet commitments throughout the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Helping Manila defeat the CPP insurgency should be a top U.S. foreign policy objective. It is the best way to protect such U.S. regional interests as the promotion of Philippine democracy and continued access to crucial military facilities.

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