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CONFRONTING THE MOUNTING THREAT TO PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACY

INTRODUCTION

Philippine President Corazon Aquino's eighteen-month-old government has just survived its most serious military coup attempt, when over 1,000 troops last week attempted to take over key government posts. From the evidently wide support in the military for the coup, it is clear that the Aquino government for some time will not be out of danger.

Aquino needs a loyal and effective military if she is to succeed in restoring democracy to her country. Yet many in the military question whether their government is loyal to them. They know that they are not trusted by many civilian advisors close to Aquino. These civilians are reluctant to cooperate with the military to form a comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency plan. The government, moreover, lacks the resources to carry out a full-scale plan against the insurgents who contest government rule in most of the countryside and may control as much as one-fifth of the countryside. The insurgents are led by the Communist Party of the Philippines--or CPP. In their daily fight against the CPP, Philippine soldiers lack such basic supplies as boots and medicine; they are underpaid and need transport vehicles.

To make matters much worse, the military's morale plummets when Aquino appears to give in to communist demands. Example: on August 26, she capitulated to demands from the communist-dominated May First Movement and rolled back a fuel price increase one week after it had been imposed.

Despite last week's coup attempt, it is not the Philippine military but the communists who pose the greatest threat to Aquino and to Philippine democracy. In some respects, it has been the perceived indecisiveness in her dealing with the communist insurgency and with the CPP's political movements that provoked the coup attempt. There may well be further coup attempts if she and her government

do not take the steps needed against the increasingly bold communists and their forces in the field.

During her first year, Aquino tried reconciliation with the communists. She released communists jailed by former President Ferdinand Marcos and has offered communist insurgents amnesty if they surrender. After long negotiations, the government and the communists arranged a 60-day cease-fire from December 10 to February.

Failed Reconciliation. Following the cease-fire, the CPP resumed its military campaign that is now killing about eight Filipinos daily. The CPP's New People's Army "sparrow" assassins now roam Manila and CPP officials threaten to attack foreigners. The CPP is receiving international support from the Soviet bloc and its own "solidarity group" network, such as leftist unions in Europe, Australia, and the U.S. that fund communist-front unions in the Philippines. The CPP also has formed a political party, which is trying to gain power legally.

Conditions are most critical in the countryside. There the CPP is strongest, and its appeal is based on rosy economic promises. While Aquino measures have spurred some rural economic growth, much more help is needed. Rural security is also affected by a controversial land reform program, controversy over the future of the local police, and upcoming local elections in which the communists may support candidates. Out of frustration and fear of the CPP, many Filipinos have formed local self-defense organizations, called "vigilantes," which stress education and community watches.

Damaging Reductions. Last year the Reagan Administration and Congress greeted the new Aquino government with firm bi-partisan support and boosted U.S. economic and military aid from \$182 million in 1985 to \$550 million in 1986. Congress this year, however, balked at giving the Philippines the \$50 million in additional military aid promised by the Administration for 1987. Now the level of economic and military aid has declined to \$260 million for 1988. These reductions damage U.S. interests.

The Reagan Administration and the Congress must recognize the lesson from last week's failed coup: serious problems remain in the Philippines that continue to require U.S. assistance. Some of this assistance should be "Dutch-uncle" advice. The Reagan Administration should urge Aquino to place a higher policy priority on defeating the CPP and upgrading the material condition of her soldiers. Most of the U.S. help, of course, should be quantitative and qualitative increases in U.S. assistance to improve Aquino's capability to meet these tasks. Such U.S. help should include:

◆◆ **Congressional approval of the Reagan Administration's FY 1988 request of \$148 million in economic assistance.**

◆◆ **Pressuring such other donors as Japan and Australia to increase their aid to the Philippines.**

- ◆◆ Raising the Administration's \$110 million FY 1988 request for military aid to \$200 million.
- ◆◆ Doubling to \$30 million the FY 1988 aid allocated to purchase construction equipment for civic action projects.
- ◆◆ Offering to help improve the capabilities of Philippine territorial militia and police forces.
- ◆◆ Helping to improve Philippine military intelligence capabilities.
- ◆◆ Helping identify Soviet and other international support to the CPP and urging Manila to publicly identify foreign political fronts of the CPP.
- ◆◆ Pressing the Aquino government to formulate a comprehensive counterinsurgency program.

THE CONTINUING COMMUNIST THREAT

By their enthusiastic participation in two national elections and one constitutional plebiscite within 16 months, the Filipino people have proved their preference for democracy. Aquino's ascent to power in February 1986 has damaged the CPP but not defeated it. Perhaps the most serious impact on the CPP has been a drastic reduction in the growth rate of the CPP's New People's Army guerrillas, from 30 percent in 1985, to 9 percent growth in 1986.

The loss of appeal in part caused by the CPP's decision to boycott the February 1986 election led to CPP Chairman Rudolfo Salas being relieved of some duties. By May the CPP admitted the error of boycotting the 1986 election. In September Salas was captured in Manila and remains in prison.

Favoring Armed Struggle. There was also an intensified interparty debate over whether the CPP should deemphasize "armed struggle" in favor of an "insurrectionist" strategy, such as that used by Nicaragua's Sandinistas to take power. Those favoring armed struggle seek to complement military and political action, while insurrectionists emphasize political action. So far, those favoring armed struggle have prevailed. After the congressional elections this May, CPP spokesman Satur Ocampo stated "armed struggle is still the main form of struggle for the people to achieve fundamental change in Philippine society."¹

Since Aquino came to power in 1986 the NPA has grown modestly from about 23,000 to 24,400 armed guerrillas. These guerrillas have military fronts in 63 out of 73 provinces. The Communist Party is estimated to control about 20 percent of the Philippine countryside through clandestine "shadow governments," and the Party seriously challenges government rule in another 17 percent. In the Bicol region of Southern Luzon, the CPP is estimated to be in control of 37 to 50 percent of

1. Gregg Jones, "Rebels Denounce Poll Results," *The Washington Post*, May 18, 1987, p. A21.

countryside.² In these areas the CPP collects taxes and maintains tight intelligence networks that allow its New People's Army to retain the initiative against the military. The party has started to formalize its control by taking steps in early February to form a national provisional revolutionary government.³

Guerrillas continue to attack military outposts and ambush military patrols. The CPP was responsible for nearly 3,200 government, civilian, and rebel deaths in 1986, or about nine daily.⁴ So far this year, about 2,000 Filipinos have died from the CPP's war. The NPA also attacks economic targets. On May 31, it attacked a Japanese-owned firm in Ilocos Norte province and took a \$25,000 payroll and two trucks. Now the NPA has escalated its war by infiltrating into Manila so-called sparrow assassination squads, which have killed 46 police and soldiers so far this year.⁵ Party officials have also threatened to kill foreigners, including Americans, who are involved in assisting the Aquino government's counterinsurgency efforts.⁶

Killing Fields

A minimal CPP program for the Philippines is outlined in the January 1985 program of its National Democratic Front (NDF). After establishing a "People's Democratic Republic," according to this document, the NDF will terminate all treaties with the U.S., cancel all foreign loans, and create "people's tribunals" that will "try and punish the enemies of the revolution."⁷ A preview of this, reminiscent of the rampage of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge a decade ago, began in late 1985, when an internal CPP purge in Northern Mindanao went out of control. Witnesses report brutal summary executions of villagers suspected of being spies; 690 bodies are estimated to reside in one "killing field" alone.⁸

Political Struggle

Through its National Democratic Front, the CPP hopes to disarm the Aquino government politically by infiltrating the government, church, academia, and the

2. James Clad, "Provincial powerbrokering," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 30, 1987, p. 32.

3. Virgilio Galvez, "NDF Moves To Form 'Revolutionary Government,'" *Kyodo* (Tokyo), February 13, 1987, in FBIS, Asia-Pacific, February 13, 1987, p. P1.

4. Lito Mangaser, "Ramos Cites 'Alarming' Casualty Statistics," *The Manila Chronicle*, March 3, 1987, p. 1, in FBIS, Asia-Pacific, March 4, 1987, p. P6.

5. "Manila Alarmed by Surge In Urban Political Killings," *Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly*, June 29, 1987, p. 5.

6. Tom Breen, "Rebels Threaten to Kill Americans Aiding Aquino," *The Washington Times*, April 13, 1987, p. 6A.

7. Drafting Committee of the NDF Secretariat, *Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines*, NDF Publishing House, January 1, 1985.

8. Dr. John Whitehall, "OPERATION ZOMBIE, Communists Killing Communists in the Philippines," *Christian Anti-Communism Crusade*, March 1, 1987; Anthony Spaeth, "Killing Fields' Uncovered in Philippines," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 29, 1987, p. 22.

trade unions. Currently the CPP controls or strongly influences about 45 different political front organizations. Collectively, these organizations claim the allegiance of at least one million Filipinos; the NDF claims that it controls as many as 11 million of the 56 million Filipinos.

NDF influence is seen in such organizations as the May First Movement, or KMU, *Kilusang Mayo Uno*. This trade union federation is the second largest in the Philippines. The KMU tries to weaken the economy by launching strikes. KMU unions are accused of killing members of the larger noncommunist Trade Union Congress of the Philippines and in the past have coordinated urban strikes with rural NPA guerrilla attacks.

Strikes Mount. Last year, strikes increased by 50 percent over 1985 due largely to the KMU. This year, KMU unions have led so many strikes that Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos recently accused the KMU of sabotaging the economy.⁹ For several days before last week's attempted coup, the KMU led strikes to protest the government's August 14 fuel price hike. About half of the Philippines thirteen administrative regions were affected, making it the largest incident of labor unrest since Aquino took office.¹⁰

A new stage in the CPP's efforts to move into the legal political process began in August 1986 when the Party of the People (PnB, or *Partido ng Bayan*) was formed to run leftist candidates in future elections. A U.S. State Department official says that the Party of the People is controlled by the communists.¹¹ In the May congressional elections, none of the PnB Senate candidates, including some formerly detained communist leaders, won office. At least 2 PnB candidates, however, won seats in the House of Representatives. CPP-supported candidates may do even better in local elections scheduled for this November, for they will be held in areas where the CPP has greater local control. If it makes gains in the local elections, the CPP will be able to use its new legal powers to stifle the Aquino government's counterinsurgency efforts.

International Support

Since the mid-1970s, through the National Democratic Front (NDF), the CPP has created "solidarity groups" in Western democracies to gain political and material support.¹² Since 1976, the NDF's European efforts have been led by CPP Central Committee Member Luis Jalandoni. He has helped facilitate support from European trade unions, religious groups, and political groups to corresponding NDF fronts in the Philippines.

9. Cesar M. Espino, "KMU sabotaging economy-Ramos," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 7, 1987, p. 1.

10. "R.P. police, protesters clash," *The Japan Times*, August 27, 1987, p. 4.

11. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State David Lambertson, Testimony before the Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs, Foreign Affairs Committee, House of Representatives, May 19, 1987.

12. See author's "The International Anti-Aquino Network: Threat To Philippine Democracy," Asian Studies Center *Backgrounder* No. 61, May 4, 1987.

Example: the May First Movement (KMU) union federation is supported by the Irish Council of Trade Unions, Netherlands Trade Union Confederation, General Confederation of Italian Labor, and individual unions in Britain and Norway.¹³ The KMU also has received \$120,000 from the Honolulu-based Philippine Workers Support Group.¹⁴ Pro-CPP "solidarity" groups also exist in Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and Japan. So far in 1987, Jalandoni has visited Australia and New Zealand.¹⁵

Relationship with Soviets. While there is little solid evidence that the Soviet Union has been shipping arms to the CPP, it is clear that the Soviets and the CPP have developed a political relationship that could lead to arms shipments in the future. Soviet overtures began in the mid-1970s after the People's Republic of China curtailed support to the CPP.¹⁶ According to recently captured CPP Chairman Rudolfo Salas, the Soviets began making offers of direct assistance in 1984.¹⁷ Even before that, however, the National Democratic Front's European network was suspected of having been and remaining a conduit of Soviet money to the CPP.

The NDF now admits contact with Soviets and Vietnamese. Just last April, NDF leader Jalandoni attended a conference in Libya on Pacific-area national liberation movements.¹⁸ In a secret letter recently released by a competing Philippine trade union, the First Secretary in the Soviet Union's Manila Embassy stated, "Our dealings with the [communist-controlled] KMU persuade us they are...worthy recipients of increased support from the Soviet government and other peaceloving anti-imperialist nations."¹⁹ Massive Soviet and Vietnamese military assistance could be a decisive factor in a final CPP offensive against the government.

AQUINO'S STRATEGY

During its first year, the Aquino government hoped to thwart the CPP and its insurgency by promoting economic growth and political reconciliation. This failed. The CPP clearly does not want peace. This February, Aquino switched tactics and repeatedly has called on the military to attack the rebels. She recently signed a decree, once again branding the CPP an illegal organization.

13. *KMU International Bulletin*, May 1985, p. 6.

14. *Philippine Labor Alert*, November 1986-January 1987, p. 7.

15. "Gaddafi emissary tours NZ," *New Zealand Tablet*, June 24, 1987, p. 7.

16. Leif Rosenberger, "Moscow's Hidden Hand," *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 1987.

17. "Interview With Jailed Former CPP Leader Salas," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, January 15, 1987, p. 4.

18. "Filipino communist leader at Libyan conference," *News Weekly*, May 3, 1987, p. 4.

19. "USSR to give KMU more aid," *Manila Bulletin*, July 15, 1987, p. 1.

Negotiations Fail

Soon after her initial election victory in February 1986, Aquino ordered the release from prison of nearly 400 communists detained by the Marcos regime. She also ordered the military to curtail offensive operations against the rebels. Aquino even agreed to negotiate a temporary cease-fire agreement with the CPP's National Democratic Front, despite her preference to negotiate directly with the CPP leadership.²⁰ This was done as part of a strategy of reconciliation.

This strategy failed. CPP spokesmen used their new freedoms to gain unprecedented access to the Philippine media and used the cease-fire negotiating process to enhance their political legitimacy. After difficult negotiations, a 60-day cease-fire began on December 10, 1986. In subsequent talks, CPP demands were designed not to achieve peace, but to enhance their power. These demands included: forcing the Aquino government to enter into an unelected coalition with National Democratic Front; cessation of military attacks against the CPP's New People's Army; and economic reforms on CPP terms. The communists broke off the negotiations on February 7.²¹

The CPP has blocked Aquino's attempts to entice rebels to give up their fight. When Aquino this February 28 announced a \$250 million rebel amnesty program, National Democratic Front Chairman Antonio Zumel immediately rejected the proposal, calling it a "sheer farce of surrender."²² Still, the Aquino government states that it is willing to resume negotiations with the rebels.

Military Reform

Before 1986 the Armed Forces of the Philippines was losing the battle against the CPP. Politically, it suffered because of poor leadership. Marcos had been promoting incompetent cronies to top military posts. In rural areas, ill-equipped, underpaid and ill-led soldiers would abuse villagers who then would view the CPP as their champions.

The Philippine military resurrected their reputation almost overnight with the February 1986 anti-Marcos putsch led by Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and General Fidel Ramos that put Aquino in power. She appointed Enrile Minister of Defense and made Ramos Chief of Staff. By the end of March 1986, there was nearly a complete turnover in the military's service and regional commands. In May a special board to investigate graft and corruption was created and scores of cases have been investigated so far.

20. "Aquino Says She Will Soon Call for a Formal Truce With Rebels," *The New York Times*, April 21, 1987, p. A10.

21. Tom Breen, "Aquino Puts Troops on Full Alert as Rebels Refuse Talks, Truce Ends," *The Washington Times*, February 9, 1987, p. 6A.

22. *Kyodo*, February 28, 1987, in FBIS, Asia-Pacific, March 2, 1987, p. P1; AFP, Hong Kong, March 2, 1987, in FBIS, Asia-Pacific, March 2, 1987, p. P2.

Streamlined Armed Forces. The Armed Forces of the Philippines has taken steps to increase its capability against the CPP. Forces concentrated in the Manila area were moved into the countryside; brigade and division headquarters have been moved out of cities. To economize, obsolete F-8 Crusader fighter aircraft have been eliminated from inventory and the Navy has cut its fleet in half. The Army has initiated a new and much needed unit training-cycle program, and pay for enlisted men and officers has been increased. In addition, the command structure has been streamlined by consolidating some of the smaller regional commands into area commands.

Yet serious deficiencies remain. Lack of spare parts and maintenance capability reduces the availability of helicopters and truck transport. This is a key cause of the military's losses to the CPP's New People's Army guerrillas. By one estimate, the military's maintenance backlog could consume \$1 billion in spare parts and supplies. An inefficient logistics system keeps personal and medical supplies from reaching troops in the field. As a consequence, only 20,000 to 30,000 of the estimated 150,000 members of the armed forces are combat-ready. In addition, the military's intelligence capabilities cannot provide adequate information on communist activities at the local level.

These problems undermine soldier morale and willingness to fight for the government. In a speech two weeks before he participated in last week's coup attempt, Philippine General Edgardo Abenina complained bitterly that, while the government spends \$250 million to rehabilitate enemy rebels, no support program exists for the widows of fallen soldiers who then turn to prostitution.²³

Political Friction

Material deficiencies are further compounded by lingering distrust between military and civilian leaders. Some civilian advisors to Aquino, such as Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo, deeply distrust the military. For them, Ramos and Enrile were remnants of the hated Marcos regime. The civilian distrust is fueled by the spectacle of factionalism within the military and the three main coup attempts against Aquino.

On the other hand, many military leaders distrust some of Aquino's civilian advisors. Particularly, officers are dissatisfied with the Aquino government's attitude toward the insurgency. They viewed the reconciliation effort as a waste of time that only legitimized the rebels. They criticized Aquino's Presidential Commission on Human Rights for only looking at military abuses and not communist abuses.

Last week's coup attempt was the most serious to date. It was carefully concealed from the government, was well planned, involved over 1,000 troops, and very important, has sparked widespread sympathy in military units outside Manila. But unlike previous coup attempts, Aquino moved quickly to suppress the revolt and has promised to punish those involved. But the danger of future revolts remain if

23. Mark Fineman, "Philippine Troops Short of Weapons--and Medals," *The Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1987, p. 1.

the Aquino government fails to solve policy concerns of the military leadership and the material condition of the troops.

Vigilantes

The failure to provide adequate security is most critical at the local level, where poverty and ineffective local government leave a vacuum, which is being exploited by the CPP. A provision in the new Philippine Constitution calls for disbanding the militia, or Civilian Home Defense Force, and places in doubt the military's current control over the local police. The resulting insecurity has led many communities to form civilian self-defense organizations (CVSO), or "vigilantes." Some groups are very effective.

Community Action. What has happened in Davao is instructive. In 1983 the CPP targeted Davao, the Philippines' third largest city, for urban insurrection. By mid-1985, five to ten Filipinos a day were dying in the guerrilla conflict. Aquino's victory emboldened Davao slum dwellers to fight the CPP. By late 1986, with the help of a local military commander, a group called *Alsa Massa* (Masses against Communism) was formed to provide information and organize communities against the CPP. By early this year, the CPP had nearly been run out of town. Armed CVSOs like *Alsa Massa* are not the rule. Other groups such as the NAKASAKA are intentionally unarmed, relying instead on education and community organization.

After much debate, the Aquino government has endorsed nonviolent CVSOs. Rather than condemn them as "death squads," as the communists would want, the government realized their utility to mobilize local communities against the CPP and has issued guidelines for their conduct. Their strongest supporter, the recently assassinated Minister for Local Government Jamie Ferrer, even ordered appointed local officials to emulate the example of nonviolent CVSOs such as the NAKASAKA. CVSOs, however, are not a replacement for militia or police forces. The danger remains that, in the future, they could be misused by corrupt local officials.

U.S. Concern

In March 1987, Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard L. Armitage criticized the Aquino government's handling of the communist insurgency. He complained that military advice was often ignored; distrust and apathy pervaded civil-military relations; communication between civilian and military counterparts was poor; and no comprehensive counterinsurgency plan had been developed integrating military, political, economic, and social programs. Armitage also criticized the armed forces for political factionalism and complained that certain elements within the Armed Forces of the Philippines had sought to destabilize the Aquino government.²⁴

24. Richard L. Armitage, Statement of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, March 16, 1987, p. 9.

Aquino reacted sharply to this criticism and has chided the U.S. for its slow delivery of military equipment.²⁵ Yet the U.S. complaints remain valid.

U.S. STRATEGY: HOW TO HELP AQUINO WIN

The U.S. has a continued interest in helping Filipinos preserve their freedoms against a serious communist threat. The goal of U.S. assistance should be to enable the Philippine government to defeat this threat in a way defined by Filipinos.

Victory over the CPP will not be easy or come soon. It is dependent upon economic recovery as well as political and military gains against the CPP. The Aquino government can reclaim the 20 percent of the countryside that the CPP controls only by providing an appealing alternative for rural Filipinos. This can best be accomplished when local governments are supported by their citizens, cooperate with the military, and are benefiting from economic growth.

Early Help. In 1986 there was a bipartisan consensus in the U.S. to help Aquino's new government. In 1986 the Philippines received \$150 million in economic and military aid, in addition to \$400 million previously appropriated. For Fiscal 1987, \$200 million was added to the Administration's \$233 million aid request. For FY 1988, which begins this October 1, the Reagan Administration has requested \$148 million in economic aid and \$110 in military aid. In addition, last September Reagan promised \$10 million in emergency medical supplies for the armed forces, most of which has by now been delivered. A special shipment of 10 UH-1 transport helicopters arrived on July 1.

Since the Reagan Administration in 1984 began pushing the Marcos government to take the CPP threat more seriously, U.S. military assistance has focused upon upgrading transport, communications, and logistics capabilities. The FY 1988 aid request continues this by providing additional helicopters, trucks, spare parts, and basic supplies such as fuel, boots, and uniforms. The U.S. also has used small two to three-member Mobile Training Teams of instructors to help the army's field maintenance capability and has contracted a private U.S. firm to create a truck repair depot. Thus far, military "advisors" have not been sent to the Philippines. For the first time, the FY 1988 request earmarks \$15 million from Economic Support Funds to purchase construction equipment to enable the armed forces to undertake such civilian projects as rural road and water-well construction.

U.S. Aid Halved. These U.S. measures are not enough, given the continued strength of the CPP threat, the continued weakness in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the possibility of increased future Soviet support. Overall levels of U.S. aid, in fact, have declined to about half those of 1986.

The U.S. must increase the amount of military aid to the Philippines, and it must enhance its quality. Further, the U.S. should avoid the mistake of seeking military hardware solutions to a political conflict. U.S. aid should stress the supply

25. Seth Mydans, "Aquino Demands Military Victory over Insurgents," *The New York Times*, March 23, 1987, p. 1.

of spare parts, improvement of logistics, and maintenance capability, rather than provision of expensive helicopters. Just as important, the Reagan Administration must continue to stress to the Aquino government the need for its dedicated efforts to destroy the CPP and to raise the material condition of the Armed Forces. Specifically, the U.S. should:

- ◆◆ **Continue to urge the Aquino government** to formulate a national counterinsurgency plan that integrates political, economic, and military dimensions. Such a plan should combine rural economic development and security in a way to undercut CPP control in the countryside.
- ◆◆ **Increase the FY 1988 military air request** from \$110 million to \$200 million.
- ◆◆ **Use \$30 million of this increase to purchase** construction equipment for Army engineering brigades that carry out civilian projects.
- ◆◆ **Give congressional approval to the Administration's FY 1988 \$148 million economic aid request.**
- ◆◆ **Offer assistance to upgrade** the capability of territorial forces, such as the police and constabulary, as the U.S. recently has done very successfully in El Salvador.
- ◆◆ **Offer to provide training** to upgrade the intelligence capability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.
- ◆◆ **Undertake immediately measures to identify** and monitor Soviet bloc and other international support of the CPP.
- ◆◆ **Urge the Aquino government to identify** publicly CPP fronts in foreign countries and other groups in Western countries supporting the CPP. This will prevent these groups from soliciting funds overseas under false pretenses. Many foreign donors apparently have no idea that they are contributing to anti-Aquino groups.
- ◆◆ **Urge such allies as Japan** to increase their economic aid to the Philippines and urge Australia to increase its military aid.
- ◆◆ **Make greater use of private U.S. contractors** to upgrade military repair capabilities for helicopters and trucks. This avoids the politically contentious use of U.S. "advisors."
- ◆◆ **Urge Aquino to campaign openly against** CPP efforts to covertly run its own, or intimidate other, candidates in local elections scheduled for November.

CONCLUSION

The Communist Party of the Philippines continues to present the most serious political-military challenge to Philippine democracy. Despite Corazon Aquino's attempt last year to reach a peaceful settlement, the CPP has resumed, and in some ways, escalated its war. Yet, though the Philippine people have clearly registered their preference for democracy, the Aquino government has not begun to challenge the CPP in rural areas where it is strong.

Danger of Future Revolts. Conflict between civilian and military leaders, and material shortages prevent a national approach to an attack on CPP rural strength. They also fuel resentments in the military that in part lead to such attempted uprisings as that of last week. If Aquino does not address the policy concerns of the military and upgrade the material condition of the troops, there remains a danger of future revolts, which will only further polarize the government and neutralize the military as a bulwark against the CPP.

While the U.S. must condemn such coup attempts, the U.S. also must increase the amount and quality of military assistance to better enable the Aquino government to tackle the communist threat. Such U.S. assistance should include improvement of police forces, upgrading intelligence capabilities, and stopping international support to the CPP.

But Washington also must strongly urge its Philippine ally to develop a coordinated civil-military counterinsurgency plan. At risk is democracy and the freedom of 56 million Filipinos.

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