CHAPTER - IV

MILITARIZATION IN THE PHILIPPINES 1972 - '86

The Land and the People

The Philippines is a rich country blessed with natural resources. The country comprises of 7107 islands and islets that are spread over more than a thousand miles from north to south, nearly seven hundred miles from east to west across some 500,000 square miles of the far western corner of the Pacific Ocean. Situated south-east of the Asian mainland, the Philippines is bounded on the north by Taiwan and Japan, on the east by the American Pacific Trust territories, on the south by Borneo and the Celebes islands, and on the west by China, Hongkong and Vietnam. The total land area of the country is 115,800 square miles. Sixty seven percent of the land area is occupied by the two largest islands Luzon and Mindanao. Politically, these two islands have been important since the time of Spanish colonization. Out of the 7,107 islands and islets, only sixty five have inhabitants.

The people's religion was substantially animism; Islam had reached only the southern islands - Sulu and Mindanao.
Philippines is the only nation in southeast Asia to have been in a tribal state of development when it came under western colonialism. This archipelago had neither a central government structure ruling over a large territory nor a traditional elite centered round a royal court. It had evaded the cultural impact of both China and India.¹ Coming under western dominance at an early stage of cultural and political development, the Philippines underwent a larger scale of conversion to western ways than any other country in Asia. Today ninety percent of the population is Christians. Muslims are concentrated only in the southern-most parts of the country.

Seventy percent of the population lives in the rural areas. The basic unit of Filipino society is the farmer, the tiller of the land, the tao. The primary unit is the barangay. except in the Muslim areas of Mindanao, there were no political units larger than the barangay.

For centuries, this "pearl of the orient seas" attracted many foreign traders, mainly because of its abundant natural wealth.

From Colonialism to Independence.

The history of colonisation of the Philippines goes back to the Sixteenth century. It caught European eyes on March 10, 1521 through Ferdinand Magellan. The island was under Spanish rule from 1565 to 1898. The country was named 'the Philippines' after Philip II of Spain. When the Spaniards came to the Philippines they brought the cross and the sword. They colonised the country in the guise of Christianisation, by sowing fear through religion and using the sword to ensure compliance. But history proved that the interest of the Spaniards was more economic than religious.²

Under the Spanish rule the people embraced christianity,³ and also the middle class grew. The Spanish regime provided them educational facilities. In 1898, the Spaniards ceded the island to the United States for $20 million and thereafter the Philippines remained under the U.S control till 1941. Japan invaded the Philippines in 1941 and ruled the country till 1945.


³ Before the establishment of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, the people's religion was mainly animism. Islam had reached only the southern island - Mindanao.
The American period (1898-1941) did little to change the basic interests of the new rulers from that of Spain. The economic interests were again foremost in the U.S agenda for the Philippines. In this period, English became the common language. A free economy in a capitalist framework emerged. The Filipino ruling classes were able to strengthen their position and wealth. These groups acquired tracts of estates in rural areas. The ownership of land remained concentrated in a few hands. It was to these Filipino elites that the U.S first transferred power. Under the terms of the Tydings - Mc Duffie Act 1934, the Philippine commonwealth was scheduled to obtain its independence in 1946. But in December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and simultaneously, struck at the Philippines, a U.S colony and military base. By April 1942, the last U.S and Filipino forces holding out against the Japanese onslaught surrendered at Battan.

Just as the U.S had done at the turn of the century, Japan was able to obtain the cooperation of the majority of the elite. Even four months before the fall of Battan,

\[4\text{Nearly fifty percent of the cultivators in the Philippines existed as landless labourers at the time of U.S colonialism. (for a detailed analysis; see Panday, op.cit., p. 10.}\]
leading Philippine politicians were organised by the Japanese into a provisional council of state. In October 1943, the Japanese established a totally subservient but nominally independent Philippine Republic with the cooperation of much of the elite.

There were many motives for the collaboration of the Filipinos. Coercion was a consideration in only a small minority of cases. Some other collaborators were attracted by Japan's slogan "Asia for the Asians," an appealing concept for colonial people though in practice it meant "Asia for the Japanese." Some claimed that they collaborated in order to protect their compatriots from the depredations of direct Japanese rule, but at the same time they facilitated the Japanese administration and pacification of the country. For most of the elites, collaboration with the new conquerors provided -- as it had with the previous conquerors four decades earlier -- way of maintaining their political and economic power.

Several mass uprisings had punctuated the long era of Spanish sovereignty over the Philippines, but none possessed

sufficient co-ordination to oust the Europeans. During the 19th century, an educated Filipino middle class emerged with strong nationalist feelings and a desire for Philippine independence. The nationalist movement against Spanish colonialism was organised mainly by three leaders, Dr. Jose Rizal, Fr. Jose Burgos and Mr. Andres Bonifacio. They formed the "Katipunan" secret society to fight against the Spaniards. The war between the U.S and Filipino revolutionaries, and also the fight against Japanese imperialism, were a continuation of the Philippine struggle against Spanish colonialism.

Though the Philippines became an independent State in 1946, there was no substantial change in the structure of the government. What the Filipinos achieved in 1946 was independence from U.S without decolonisation. As noted by Jose Ma Sison,

... the U.S granted only nominal independence to the country in 1946 but continued to exercise indirect colonial rule through unequal treaties, agreements and arrangements.

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It was these entangling treaties that became a major factor of discontent since 1946. The structure and functions of government that Philippines adopted was patterned after the American model. All the executive powers were vested in the President and the Vice-President elected for a four year term with eligibility for re-election, and legislative powers were vested in Congress composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. In total conformity within the framework of this kind of a constitution Presidents Manuel Roxas, Elipido Quirino, Ramon Magsaysay, Carlos P. Garcia and Diodado Macapagal ruled the country from 1946 to 1965. Marcos was first been elected President in 1965 and re-elected for a second term in 1969. Thereafter, he was in power till 1986 February, through unconstitutional methods.

Historical foundations for Militarization

When the U.S established its supremacy in 1899, several of the Filipinos collaborated with them and many others resisted U.S efforts for colonisation, just as a good number of Filipino patriots had opposed Japanese colonialism.

A large number of Filipinos became guerillas and many guerilla groups were formed in different parts to oppose the Japanese. These groups were supported and recognised by the
United States Armed Forces in the Far East and became known as USAFFE guerillas. They were led by U.S officers who had evaded capture or by members of the Filipino elite. The most significant autonomous guerilla war movement developed in Central Luzon, an area of peasant radicalism. Left wing labour and peasant leaders, and intellectuals established a People's Anti-Japanese Army, the Hukbalahap movement. Many of its leaders had also been leaders in the communist party and in the communist dominated peasant groups. The Huk guerillas increased their continued resistance to the Japanese and their emphasis was on a programme of welfare "for the common people". In their activities, the Huks united Filipinos without regard to political, religious or social differences. The communist sympathisers of the Huks were careful to direct their efforts along lines that would appeal to the masses and attract a large number of followers. In opposing the Japanese, the Huks were able to evoke sentiments of nationalism and patriotism among the masses.

7 This organisation conceived in December 1941, was formally established on March 29, 1942. Its official name was 'Hukbo Ng Bayang Labon Sa Hapun' means people's army to fight against Japanese imperialism.

8 The Communist Party of Philippines (CPP) was formed in 1930.
The Hukbalahap initially was merely a military force but a civilian counterpart—the United Front Movement (UFM), was soon formed as the political arm of the Huks. This organisation was a joint venture of military, political and mass groups. The military assured the force, the political group provided propaganda and the mass groups "supplied the men as well as food and money". The Huks were in continual conflict with other guerilla forces supported by the U.S Forces, (USAFFE guerillas). During the Japanese occupation, battles took place in which the Huks and the USAFFE units met. The USAFFE guerillas favoured a "lie-low" policy and concentrated on getting intelligence information for the Americans until such time as they would be aided by the return of the American forces. The Huks felt that the USAFFE guerillas did little in the way of actually fighting the Japanese. Disagreement over the "lie-low" policy was not only the cause of misunderstanding between the two groups. USAFFE units resented the encroachment of Huks into their territory; the Huks claimed that military warfare was inseparable from political warfare and was, in

fact, subordinate to it and they considered their expansion and penetration to be of a political nature.\textsuperscript{10}

While Huks, who were a well trained military, were fighting the Japanese, the United Front Movement was also active. The Huks had placed great emphasis on their socio-economic programmes. Under the guidance and protection of the Huks, peasants began to act against the rich landlords who had been exploiting the peasants. Ignoring pre-war sharecropping arrangements, the peasants kept the entire harvest of the rice fields, after supplying the Japanese as ordered by the landlords.\textsuperscript{11} The Huks instituted rigid price control regulations in the towns and barrios throughout Central Luzon and were thus able to reduce profiteering to a minimum. In all these respects, the war time activities of the Huks did much to create a political awareness in the peasants.\textsuperscript{12} Provisional governments were set up in several municipalities under the Huk-UFM control. The UFM had got the Huks to establish law and order until the UFM lost its popularity in 1945.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 76.
With the return of the American Army to the Huk provinces in 1945, many Huks offered their services as guides, informants, and behind-the-line guerillas. While some Huks were fighting side by side with American forces, others were engaged in mopping up operations, cleaning out small Japanese pockets bypassed in the main drive. In some areas the Japanese puppet soldiers had left in favour of the Huk guerillas. The Huk guerillas were prepared to take over the government of the newly liberated areas. In fact, in most of them the Americans found that the armed peasants had cleaned out the opposition and Huks were already in control of the local governments, claiming to have been elected. The Huks obviously believed that presentation of Huk control as a fait accompli might force American recognition, and acceptance by the re-established Commonwealth government. But, in fact, the Army's Philippine Civil Affairs Unit replaced most of the Huk men. This policy caused disappointment to the Huks. They realised the fact that the AFP did not recognise their loyalty and fighting potential. Later the hostility of U.S army authorities towards their organisation because of its leftist and Marxist leanings

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
became clear. The dealings of the U.S - AFP authorities antagonised the Huks and their antagonism continued to become sharper.

With the defeat of Japan, the ascendant American power saw no other potential or open external threat to Asia except from communist-led national liberation movements. General Douglas Mac Arthur, then in complete control of the Philippines and American armed forces, openly expressed his fears about the Hukbalahap Movement.

(It is) a distinct potential threat to the Commonwealth government and the future peace of the Philippines. (hence it is)... necessary to take the wing out of the sails of this organisation.  

The Philippine government and landlords conducted a reign of terror against the peasantry of Central Luzon in an attempt to restore the pre-war class relations in the countryside. The Huks and their affiliated peasant union PKM, had no intentions of trying to overthrow the government, but they were increasingly forced to take up weapons to defend themselves. President Manuel Roxas' government had passed a legislation that claimed from

guaranteed tenant farmers seventy percent of the rice crop. In reality, however, the law allowed landlords to take half of the crop, which of course, they did.\textsuperscript{16}

The response to the resultant peasant discontent was that the government organised "anti-dissident" operations, led by people who had earlier led armed men with skull and cross bones on their shirt sleeves against peasants. In 1948 March, Roxas declared the Huks and the PRM to be illegal organisations.\textsuperscript{17} This was used as a justification for further discriminations and terror against the rural population. Manuel Roxas died the next month and was succeeded by the Vice-President Elpidio Quirino. Quirino tried to negotiate an amnesty with the Huks but the efforts were deliberately sabotaged by the landlords who were powerful in his administration.

As a Philippine counter-insurgency specialist has remarked, "the amnesty offer failed because it was not accompanied by tangible efforts of the government to rid itself of graft and corruption, nor was it accompanied by


\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}
positive steps towards removing discontentment among the masses. Another cause, noted, was the inability of the government to counter the Huk accusation of bad faith on the part of the administration. Terror and corruption by the Philippine Constabulary merely increased and, at the same time, the Philippine elites continued their age old practice of using political power for personal aggrandizement. The last straw on the camel’s back came in the Philippine Presidential election of 1949... which was characterized as "a land mark of dishonesty". Official records estimated more than a fifth of the ballots to be spurious. Every device known to fraudulent elections was used... Filipinos sadly wisecracked that even the birds and bees voted in some precincts".

The Huks, finding paramilitary struggle useless, called for the overthrow of the Government. Huks gained massive support from the dissatisfied peasant community, and their strength increased with armed supporters. The very continuity of the Philippine state was in question at one stage.

18 Ibid.
19 quoted in Ibid.
The United States was watching all these developments in the Philippines and stepped in and advised the Philippines President that "no further American aid could be considered unless and until there is tangible evidence that the Philippines has taken steps to put its house in order and that it would then need, and be in position to effectively use, additional aid". A report to the President by the National Security Council on the position of the United States said that "the Philippines are an essential part of the Asian off-shore island chain of bases on which the strategic position of the United States in the Far East depends". The report further said "the threat of further communist enchroachment in Formosa and Southeast Asia renders it imperative that the security of the Philippines be assured. The United States is committed to the external defence of the Islands and cannot permit them to be taken by aggression or internal subversion. The strategic importance of the Philippines to the United States is such as to justify the commitment of United States forces

for its protection, should circumstances require such action."\footnote{21}

The National Security Council's suggestion on method of actions stated that:

The Security interests of the United States require that the Philippines become and remain stable, anti-communist, pro-American and an example for the rest of the world of the intention of the United States to encourage the establishment of progressive and responsible Government.\footnote{22}

Joint U.S Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) considered its own primary objective to be one of insuring that the Philippines followed this internal security orientation. Accordingly, JUSMAG drew up recommendations that were accepted by Philippine officials for a thorough-going reorganisation of the antidissident campaign. On the advise of JUSMAG, the Philippine Constabulary, combined with the AFP under the office of the Secretary of National Defence, was given the task of fighting Huks. Special anti-Huks units called Battalion Combat Teams (BCT) were organised with


\footnote{22}{\textit{Ibid.}, p.109.}
artillery capability. To help the newly formed Battalion Combat Teams, U.S. military aid was speeded up and their activities continued in full-swing for this purpose.

On the strong urging of U.S. officials in the Philippines, Ramon Magsaysay was appointed as the Secretary of National Defence by President Quirino. As Secretary of National Defence, Magsaysay was able to obtain for himself a free hand in running the armed forces and to revitalise it. New methods were introduced to combat Huks. An office for psychological warfare operations was set up directly under Magsaysay. It was soon renamed the Civil Affairs Office (CAO). The CAO undertook a massive propaganda effort against the Huks. It organised anti-communist forms in universities. Psychological operations were organised to get the Huks to leave a particular area, and it became an important component of counter insurgency operations. An example of this psychological warfare tactic was the "eye of God" ploy used against Huk-influenced areas. "Psywar" teams would creep into the night and paint an eye on the house of suspected Huk sympathisers. The community would wake up to find peering eyes, enough to induce fear. Another was the

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23 Stephen R. Shalom, op. cit.
"aswang" tactic, wherein captured Huks were killed by puncturing two holes in the neck, draining their blood and their corpses were left in places where many people passed. This was aimed at preventing people from going out at night, thus minimizing their contact with Huks patrolling at night.

The most successful psychological warfare technique was the Economic Development Corps or EDCOR. Essentially, the Army took as its own the Huk slogan "Land for the landless" and promised to resettle any recanting Huks on their plots of land. But though the land settlement were "supposedly for Huk surrenderees."

In October 1950, the anti-Huk campaign made a major breakthrough when, in what a U.S Army historian called "a great stroke of luck," an informer provided information leading to the capture of the entire communist politburo (top - leadership) in Manila. JUSMAG assisted Philippine officials in preparing evidence for use in the trial and subsequent conviction of the politburo members. Magsaysay and JUSMAG used the Manila round-ups as the opportunity to get Quirino to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. When the writ was restored two years later, more than a thousand
people were being held in prison without having been charged with a crime or having received public hearings. 24

The military operations were continued. JUSMAG had recommended that the Philippines "increase ground forces as rapidly as possible." In the latter half of 1950, the Army was increased from ten to sixteen Battalion Combat Teams "upon direct JUSMAG Advice." And in the first half of 1951, ten new teams were added. The total strength of the Philippine Armed Forces rose from thirty two thousand at the start of 1951 to fifty six thousand in late 1952. In mid 1951, Washington approved an additional grant of 10 million in military aid to the Philippines to finance the growth of the AFP. 25

With considerable American assistance, the Philippine military reoriented itself from a purely external defence force to an army whose policy placed equal stress on internal defence. The CIA played a vital role in this and the armed forces underwent a streamlining.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was revived and deputed to act as a security force and watch dog in 1951

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
elections in the country. At this election, Magsaysay became the President of the Philippines. Even before the election, people had expressed their doubt about a free and fair election because of the corrupt practices at the administrative level. But AFP–CIA campaign effectively created an image that clean and fair elections were possible in the Philippines even at a time when corruption within the administration was rampant. This was a tactical move of the CIA in order to exterminate the Huk movement and create an aversion among the people against the Huks. After Magsaysay, the AFP continued to perform roles outside of its military function, ranging from typhoon assistance to rain making. To consolidate the non-military activities of the military, the AFP established its own "Socio-Economic Military Programme—SEMP in 1958, though it was only after 1966 that the vigorous implementation of such a programme was undertaken.26

It was under the rule of Ferdinand Marcos that military involvement in non-military activities was to expand qualitatively and turn the military from a mere influence to

an active participant in Philippine politics. In his first National address in 1966 Marcos stated quite explicitly. He said:

The Armed Forces of the Philippines with its manpower, material and equipment resources plus its organisational cohesiveness and discipline possesses a tremendous potential to participate in economic development, which should be exploited to the maximum. Such participation becomes imperative considering that the problem besetting the country is socio-economic rather than military, and the resources available to solve this problem are scarce and limited.

The military had started to participate and be involved in civilian-controlled development activities. These kinds of involvement provided the ground reason for the continuing involvement of the military in non-military activities.

Spread of Military ideology

The increase in the crime rate and the growing radical movements led by students and intellectuals provided justification in the 1960's to call for military expansion in the AFP. As a response to the increase in smuggling

28 Carolina G. Hernandez, op.cit., p. 207.
activities in 1967 and the growing "urban unrest", the Metropolitan Command (METROCOM), which became an affiliate unit to the Philippine Constabulary (PC), was formed. This particular unit which expanded from a mere 300 to 1,700 as a force equivalent to one P.C.Zone, played a crucial part in implementing martial law. New military educational training was introduced for the reactivation of military officials. The National Defence College of the Philippines instituted regular courses in 1966 with an aim to

... prepare and develop national defence leaders, civilian officials of the different branches of the government, and selected executives from the private sector for more effective participation in the formulation and administration of national policy, and for high command and staff duty...

Similar military educational institutions for middle level officers, like the Command and General Staff College, started offering top level courses designed not only to train selected officers for the high command but also "to enhance the officer's managerial and professional

29 Ibid.

skills...(So as) to increase his understanding of the national environments (sic) focusing on both the military and civilian roles as a military officer.  

Thus, Marcos broadened and institutionalised the plans which Magsaysay initiated. By integrating military resources with the national development plan, he went beyond the original purpose envisioned by Magsaysay and placed the military in a position where it not only had the capability of internal defence but also the capacity to administer itself and set up parallel structures which can take over and control crucial sectors outside of the military establishment. Through the declaration of martial law, military became a dominant force in Philippine society. The military was authorised to play a leading role in the creation of the “New Society”. Marcos openly expressed his satisfaction with his situation where the military’s capacity to govern, rule and exact obedience... was seen as the first new principle or manifestation in the new society, and which was to be implemented by “a breed of men capable

31 As cited, op. cit., p.155.
32 Abinales, op.cit., p. 5.
not only of ruling others but of governing themselves". Thus, discipline, restraint, centralisation of power and other aspects of traditional military ideology were to be the cornerstones of the policy for the creation of the "New Society". By and large, the people, sick and tired of unending bombings, riots, ambushes, grafts, inefficiency, and official misdeeds, felt something had to be done. They quietly accepted the assurances of the President that in resorting to the extreme remedy, he was motivated only by his desire to "save the Republic and reform society". The old society was discredited and repudiated. The so called "New Society" was born with a set of brand-new slogans and it was supposed to represent everything good - a new sense of discipline, uprightness, and love of country.

Mounting Tensions and Unrest

President Marcos was elected as President for the first time in 1965. He was widely viewed as a reformer. He instituted a programme of land reform, initiated efforts to build schools and roads, and launched a campaign to curb the

power of local landlords, politicians, etc. His presidency turned out to be a typical one in many respects: great promises and few results. During the campaign, Marcos had declared that he was opposed to sending any Philippine army units to Vietnam but no sooner had he been elected, than he urged the dispatch of a Philippine Civil Action Group to Vietnam. Social reform, particularly land reforms, made no progress under Marcos, but Marcos himself had done very well: "on a rather modest presidential salary, he became one of the largest taxpayers in the country." 

Marcos's great political skills and ability to use the public treasury to his advantage enabled him to become the first President in the Republic of Philippines to be re-elected for a second term in 1969. This election was also characterised by unprecedented violence and widespread pay-offs and mostly in favour of Marcos's party. The political trend in the Philippines took a new turn at this time. Marcos originally functioned within the framework of the "Old Society". Michael Szaz notes that in this system the checks and balances of the three co-equal branches of government, viz., the executive, legislature and the

judiciary were observed and the leaders were accountable to the people in elections held every four years.\(^{35}\) This is not completely true of the working of the Philippine political system and this did not mean that the people’s voice was heard represented at the helm of power in a real democratic sense. President Marcos tried to overcome the contradictions in the political set up by resorting to undesirable manipulations in elections and other political processes. This was more evident in the 1969 Presidential elections. According to Peter Khan,

...the 1969 Presidential election was extraordinarily dishonest even for a country in which blatant vote buying and political shoot outs were fairly common place. It left the country politically exhausted, the economy in chaos, the political opposition deeply embittered and the public more cynical than ever before.\(^{36}\)

The reports of a representative group of citizens devoted to the cause of truth, justice and freedom observed:

...the presidential contest of 1969, going far beyond all previous elections in terms of what was


described by responsible newsmen as the "three g's"--guns, goons and gold--brought to the fore the question of whether the system was so vicious and hopeless that it should be cast overboard.37

Late sixtees and early seventees saw a revitalisation of the movement for a genuine democracy in the Philippines. Growing awareness among the people of the need to fight against the authoritarian tendencies of Marcos' regime also spread widely. In this connection, Lester Edwin Ruiz points out that:

... in the late 1960s, Filipinos began to experience a growing sense of collective national agitation not felt before, at least in its depth and magnitude, in the history of the Republic... This collective national agitation was due, in large measure, to the fundamental contradictions in Philippine society arising from its experience of colonial and neo-colonial domination.38

Workers, peasants, students, religious men and women, intellectuals, etc. seem to have found a common cause during this period. When the Filipinos were organising themselves in a big way against Marcos, he was becoming more power

37 A message of hope to Filipinos who care. (Monograph), A Representative group of citizens devoted to the cause of Truth, Justice and Liberty (Philippines),1977, p. 7. [Here after a representative group document]

38 Lester Edwin J. Ruiz, "Philippine Politics as a People's Quest for Authentic Political Subjecthood."
Alternative (Guildford), Vol. 11. No. 4, October 1986, p. 506.
hungry and was trying to cling on to power in whichever way possible. The Philippine Constitution restricted the President to two terms in office, and thus by 1972 Marcos could see the impending twilight of his political career. For someone as committed to self-aggrandizement as Marcos, this presented a serious crisis. Three separate crises converged at the end of 1972; a crisis for Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos, a crisis for the Philippine supporters of the status quo, and a crisis for Washington.

The period of the Marcos presidency, which was due to expire at the end of 1973, saw an increase and intensification of protest. The mounting unrest in different parts of the country became a serious problem. Corruption was rampant. Ten percent of the people enjoyed ownership of ninety percent of the wealth. The land reform law which was passed in the senate went largely unimplemented for lack of organised ideological conviction behind it. All other problems -- the crime rate, law and order, violent dissidence -- were ultimately to be traced to social imbalance. There was also a political imbalance. The two major political parties were protected exclusively by statute at the counting of the ballots and the system had
degenerated into a monopoly of one party with two factions, both controlled by economic power blocs.

The year 1972 turned out to be the year of a profound crisis. In June 1972 Marcos convened a Constitutional Convention. President Marcos controlled the convention with the aim of stopping the move for key electoral reform that would revolutionize the party system, and allow the peaceful rise of new ideological forces which might later prove to be his antagonists. During the convention, the whole nation was shocked by the revelations of a convention delegate, Edvardo Quintero, a former Ambassador, who stood on the floor and denounced the distribution of money in envelopes to a number of delegates. Raul S. Manglapus, a former Foreign Secretary and leader of the progressives in the then Constitutional Convention pointed out:

The first evident objective of President Marcos in the convention was to get it to change the presidential to the parliamentary system so that he might continue in power as Prime Minister, since he could no longer run for President. The second was to defeat a resolution filed by members of our group that would ban past and incumbent Presidents and their spouses from running for any office under the new Constitution.39

A series of mysterious bombings took place in the greater Manila area during August and the first three weeks of September, 1972. Raul S. Manglapus described it as follows:

...a kind of crisis, suspiciously artificial, had begun to irk the population of the Manila area. It was a sort of ready-made, instant "mess". Bombs were being exploded in the oddest places. Only one person was killed—a shopper in a department store. Some of the bombs were planted in toilets including the lavatory of the Constitutional Convention on the eighteenth floor of the Quezon City Hall. This led a distinguished retired Justice of the Supreme Court to remark in a speech on Law Day that he could not accept the official explanation that this was all part of communist conspiracy...  

As Felix Roxano and Richard Hensman put it: "to satisfy our foreign creditors, to seek to continue in power and to prevent criticism becoming lethal, one has to be in control of what is said and done."  

Yet, the threats, harassment, imprisonment and assassination of dissenters by the government’s agencies were helping to create a united opposition. The protesting intellectuals groups were organised comparatively better in this period. The Communist Party, which had been reorganised

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40 Ibid.  
41 Felix Roxano & Hensman Richard, op. cit., p. 25
on Marxist Leninist lines in 1968, and its armed wing called New People’s Army which had come into being in 1969, gained momentum and people’s support. Members of the Armed Forces had protested against what they regarded as unpatriotic moves and started going over to join revolutionary groups. In Mindanao, the southern part of Philippines, armed revolt broke out and spread. The Philippine Constabulary started the process of terrorising the Muslim areas and killing people. But they could not suppress the revolt and Muslim “secessionist” groups gained more strength during the early part of the seventies.

Another crisis which erupted concerned unfavourable attitudes towards the U.S supremacy in the Philippines. On 17 August, 1972, the Philippine Supreme Court gave its decision in a case which involved the rights of American citizens. Through this judgement it ruled that the preferential rights enjoyed by U.S citizens under the “Parity” arrangement were unconstitutional. The Americans acquired land in different parts of the Philippines under this agreement. It was estimated that the value of these was about U.S $ 700 millions in 1972. The Supreme Court decision demanded their confiscation or made them subject to forced sale by 1974. This affected not only all land
acquired by U.S citizens since 1946 but terminated timber licenses, petroleum leases, public service franchises and other contracts with validity beyond 1974. Earlier, there had been other Supreme Court decisions showing the practices of oil companies to be illegal, and in effect curtailing special U.S privileges in oil exploitation and so on. Such judicial decisions, challenging the illegal activities and acquisitions of U.S corporations, were widely acclaimed by nationalist and anti-imperialist forces in the country. It was a sign of the changing times that from conservative quarters there had come a challenge to the Philippine state to reveal its true functions. Even in the neo-colonial situation there was a choice between observing the law of the land and enabling foreign interests to defy it.43 Given the mood of the country, the bipartisan support for U.S interests in the factions of the ruling class could not be counted upon to ensure that, whoever was elected, the status-quo would be maintained. There was no imminent danger to the government, but the existence of civil liberties was allowing - perhaps for the first time in Philippine history - a broad based challenge to the status -

42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
quo to grow. The beneficiaries of the deeply inequitable social order saw a long-term threat to their positions and wealth.

It was in this setting of anarchy, public confusion, terror and despair, occurring just one year before the end of his unextendable second term, that President Ferdinand Marcos proclaimed martial law. The proclamation was dated September 21, 1972, the day when Congress was scheduled to adjourn for the year. But Congress did not finish its task on that date, and the public release of the proclamation had to be deferred. The immediate cause of the martial law declaration as officially announced, was an attempt on the life of the Secretary of National Defence on the night of September 22, 1972. A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate by two members of its staff sent to the Philippines to investigate the situation in November, 1972, reported:

The fact of the matter is that the attempt against the Secretary of Defence occurred on the evening of September 22, the day before the declaration of martial law was announced but, as it turned out, the day after the declaration had been signed. 44

On 23 September, 1972, the President announced through the television that he had signed proclamation No. 1081, as of September 21, 1972 placing the Philippines under martial law allegedly "to save the Republic and reform society".

Institutionalisation of Martial law

The day following the signing of the declaration of martial law, prominent personalities, all of whom had been critical of the Marcos administration were put under arrest. In the following days a series of arrests continued. Scores of Constitutional Convention delegates, student leaders, intellectuals, priests, peasant leaders, etc., were taken to the stockade. After arresting so many delegates of the Constitutional Convention, President Marcos allowed the Convention to continue its sessions. The reason for this became evident immediately. Marcos was going to use the Convention to legitimise his power-grab and constitutionalise his future dictatorship. He promulgated through the Convention a transitory provision providing for an interim National Assembly composed of the members of Congress and the Convention delegates who voted "yes" to the proposal. It also made the President Marcos the interim dictator. This was the heart of the conspiracy. This kind of a provision ratified all the activities of President
Marcos under martial law regardless of whether or not these acts were legitimately within his rights under the 1935 Constitution. Raul S. Manglapus has observed:

It vests all powers of governments in him and leaves it to him to decide when to call the interim national assembly to session. Since it is this assembly that is empowered to call the first regular elections under the new Constitution, he can simply desist from convening it and stay in absolute power indefinitely.\(^45\)

The new Constitution was supposed to establish a parliamentary form of government, and the transitory provision, was to provide the bridge between the old and the new. On November 30, 1972 the entire proposed constitution, with the transitory provision was signed by most of the delegates, hoping they would dominate the law-making body which was supposed to exist “immediately” upon the ratification of the new Charter.

With remarkable speed, the President decreed that a national plebiscite on the new Constitution would be held on January 15, 1973. This kind of a call itself was illicit since it was the Congress or, as some authors would claim, Convention itself that can fix the time for a

\(^45\) Raul S. Manglapus, op.cit., p. 9.
plebiscite. Under the old Constitution, Congress was supposed to convene on January 22, 1973, but the ratification of the new Constitution would mean the outright abolition of Congress - the political branch that could, if it had the will, challenge the indefinite imposition of one-man rule. Most of the Congressmen were called to the palace. They agreed to dissolve themselves, hoping they would be reconstituted as members of parliament.46

The holding of the plebiscite was promptly questioned by various groups in the Supreme Court, on two grounds: lack of freedom of choice under martial law, and lack of sufficient time for discussion and debate.47 Sensing adverse public reaction to the idea of a plebiscite without public discussion, President Marcos issued a directive on December 21, 1972, ordering the suspension of the implementation of martial law, to allow "free and open debates". He also announced he was studying a proposal to postpone the plebiscite to a later date.

It was during the limited period of free public debate on the new Constitution that tremendous opposition to the

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46 A Representative group document, op. cit., p. 12.
47 Ibid.
martial law regime surfaced. It was as if a bewildered, confused people, in a brief period of freedom and reflection, saw through the whole charade.\textsuperscript{48} Placed under scrutiny during these debates were the convenient and easy assumptions that democracy, western style, does not fit the Philippine situation, that the civil and political rights guaranteed by the Constitution are of little value to people concerned with the problem of daily survival, and that martial law, Philippine style, would reform the sick society.

Again, the Staff Report for the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate stated:

President Marcos signed proclamation 1081, placing the Philippines under martial law, on September 21 and announced it on Sept 23. In his public statement at the time martial law was proclaimed, he said that the nation was "imperilled by the danger of a violent overthrow, insurrection and rebellion" justifying the imposition of martial law under Article VII of the constitution. He went on to say that there is no doubt in anybody's mind that a "state of rebellion exists in the Philippines" and referred to the Supreme Court decision of December 11, 1971 in which such a finding had been made.

Proclamation 1081 began by referring to the threat from "lawless elements who are moved by a

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p.13.
common or similar ideological conviction, design, strategy and goal, and enjoying the active moral and material support of a foreign power... and (who) are actually staging undertaking and waging an armed insurrection and rebellion... (to) supplant our existing political, social, economic and legal order with an entirely new one whose form of government... and whose political, social, economic, legal and moral precepts are based on the Marxist -Leninist-Maoist teachings and beliefs...

Since declaring martial law, President Marcos has put less emphasis on the threat from insurgent groups (which he claimed had led to his action) and on the measures to control that threat and more emphasis on the reforms necessary to build what he calls "the New Society", a phrase that is thrust into public consciousness by the government through all available media...

It is generally accepted in the Philippines that the few hundred wealthy families, referred to as the oligarchs, have dominated the economy and politics of the islands since the colonial period and that here-to-fore and Philippine Congress, bureaucracy and press have been dominated by them and operated primarily for their benefit.

The Committee came to the conclusion that Marcos, his family and his friends enriched themselves upon the proclamation of martial law.

There were several other factors and sectors which influenced the Presidential decision to impose martial law.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, the student, labour,

49 A Report for U. S Senate Committee, op.cit.
urban poor and nationalist sectors, local and international business sectors, the United States, etc., had played key role in the President's decision to impose martial law as well as in the institutionalisation of it. The AFP had played a major role in the planning and execution of martial law. When Marcos took the decision as early as several months before it was imposed, he realised the need to get the full support and backing of the AFP. The President revealed his plans to the various heads of services first, individually, making each of them feel that they were the only ones held in the President's confidence, and then as a group, a few weeks before it was finally implemented. Such an approach was quite successful, at least in getting the loyalty of the AFP.

There is another argument that the imposition of martial law was largely a reaction to the First Quarter Storm (FQS) of 1970 or what it represented.50 This was the series of massive demonstrations, rallies and strikes spearheaded by the student movement in alliance with other sectors such as the labour movements, workers, peasants,

50 The FQS refers in particular to the demonstrations held in MetroManila and other cities in 1970 January 26, Jan: 30 & 31, February 12, Feb: 18 and Public meetings and People's march held on Feb. 26, March 17, etc.
etc. Some of those demonstrations and rallies resulted in death and violence.

General Romeo Espino, then Chief of Staff of the AFP said, a month after martial law was imposed:

Protest demonstrations, spearheaded mainly by student and labour groups began erupting periodically, increasing in frequency and intensity, as issues indiscriminately multiplied, and passions heightened. A bitter round of transportation strikes and fuel price disputes precipitated by external factors, also disrupted life in various parts of the country, most especially in Metropolitan Manila.51

Marcos observed the cases of violence that ensued from the series of massive uprising that ushered in the FQS, and he came to the conclusion that the problem was "the inexperience in riot and mob control of the police and military authorities, and the designs of the leftists and nihilist radicals in the demonstrations". He asserted that the ranks of these student demonstrators were repeatedly infiltrated by radical leftists who were to sow violence and thus provoke violent reaction from the police and military authorities. For Marcos, these marked the "beginnings of a

revolutionary confrontation stage - managed by a determined minority."52

President Marcos declared that he imposed martial law in order to attain two fundamental objectives; namely, (1) save the Republic and (2) reform society. In a Presidential statement broadcast on National Radio and Television on September 22, 1972 he said:

I am utilising this power... to save the Republic and reform our society... We will eliminate the threat of a violent overthrow of our Republic. But, at the same time, we must now reform the social, economic and political institutions in our country.53

President Marcos specially invoked article VII, section 10 of the 1935 Constitution which provided the following:

The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of all Armed Forces of the Philippines and whenever it becomes necessary, he may call out such armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violence, invasion, insurrection or rebellion. In case of invasion, insurrection, or rebellion or imminent danger there of, when the public safety requires it, he may suspend the privilege of the writ of

52 Ibid.

53 "Presidential Speeches Vol. IV, 1978 p. 13, as quoted in Alex Bello Brillianta Jr., op.cit., p. 66."
habeas corpus, or place the Philippines or any part there of under martial law.54

One of the first acts of Marcos upon declaring martial law was to assume dictatorial powers. General Order No. 1, which Marcos issued on September 22, 1972 conferred upon himself vast powers to "govern the nation and direct the operation of the entire government." The relevant portion of the General Order stated as follows:

Now, therefore, I Ferdinand E. Marcos... do hereby proclaim that I shall govern the nation and direct the operation of the entire Government, including all its agencies and instrumentalities, in my capacity and shall exercise all the powers and prerogatives appurtenant and incident to my position as Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces of the Philippines.55

Thus, under martial law, Marcos was the ultimate authority. Political and governmental powers were concentrated in his hands. He imposed overwhelming controls on the affairs of state in the Philippines, including the administration of justice. In a system he had termed "constitutional authoritarianism", Marcos had taken significant steps to place himself, and the military

54 Ibid.
55 General Order No. 1, (September 22, 1972)
structure that supported him, above the law. The result has been a gradual, and increasingly serious, erosion of respect for government institutions and the rule of law. The process began immediately after martial law was declared, when President Marcos suspended Congress of the Philippines and vested all of its powers in the presidency. The President ordered the AFP to "enforce obedience to all the laws and decrees, orders and regulations promulgated by me personally or upon my direction." By an executive order issued the next day, President Marcos proclaimed that he would "govern the nation and direct the operation of the entire government including all its agencies and instruments."

Marcos further consolidated his powers by forcing a new Constitution through the Constitutional Convention in January 1973 using highly irregular procedures in doing so. Pursuant to the transitory provisions of that Constitution, all decrees, orders, institutions and other acts promulgated by the "incumbent President" became the law of the land. Actions taken under these transitory provisions were to

remain valid and legally binding even after the lifting of martial law. To give his dictatorial rule the cover of legitimacy, Marcos sponsored various referenda. In January 1973, he convened people's assemblies in every village to vote on a new Constitution and approve martial law. As all observers noted, many of the claimed 35,000 assemblies never met at all and the 'voting' was easily made to declare the people's overwhelming support for his regime. In July 1973, the assemblies were convened again and they approved Marcos's remaining in office until he could complete his "reforms" - that is, indefinitely. According to Philippine military authorities, even 58 percent of the prisoners in military detention centres voted 'yes'.

The new Constitution, on which President Marcos anchored the legality of his holding on to the Presidency after December 30, 1973, and of his other acts, was not validly ratified by the Filipino people. Three years later President Marcos took a further step to extend his

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58 The Second Presidential term of Marcos would have expired on December 30, 1973, had there been no declaration of martial law.
extraordinary powers on to the post-martial law era. He obtained adoption of the highly controversial "Amendment Six" to the Constitution, which provides that, even after the lifting of martial law, "whenever in the judgement of the President... there exists a grave emergency or a threat or imminence there of, or whenever the (interim or regular) National Assembly fails or is unable to act adequately on any matter for any reason that in his judgement requires immediate action, he may... issue the necessary decrees, orders or letters of introduction, which shall form part of the law of the land." 59

Between 1976 and 1980, Marcos topped off the structures and modified it. On the top he created a National Legislative Council that advised him to proceed with the constitutional amendments he proposed, secure approval of the amendments in a referendum, and call elections to select members of the new kind of interim assembly the amendments provided for. Meanwhile Marcos created a political party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement), or KBL, to identify candidates and conduct the campaign, and reorganised military and police structures so as to parallel more closely the hierarchy of political ones.

"Amendment Six" provided the powers for President Marcos to transfer important judicial functions to himself, thereby rendering the courts, including the Supreme Court of the Republic, weak and often powerless to control abuses of power by the executive branch and the AFP. A series of Presidential Decrees were introduced and Marcos exercised his own authority to order detention without trial. These Presidential Decrees have been, and continue to be, the basis for widespread arbitrary arrests by Philippine military authorities, often accompanied by torture and other physical abuse, and indefinite detention, without recourse to judicial authorities, but merely by labelling those arrested as "subversives".

Under the 1973 Constitution which Marcos pushed through shortly after the declaration of martial law, the civilian judiciary lost most of its powers and traditional autonomy. The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the setting up of military courts signalled the decline of civilian control of the judiciary. Almost all the cases related to "National Security" issues were handled by military courts and tribunals, the decisions of which became final only with Presidential approval. Control of the courts, centralised by the constitutional amendment, allowed
Marcos to replace judges to suit his interests. He was enabled by the new Constitution to arbitrarily replace members of the judiciary simply by naming their successors. These powers encompass all areas of government under article XVII, section 9 of the new Constitution which states:

All officials and employees in the existing Government of the Republic of the Philippines shall continue in office until otherwise provided by law or decreed by the incumbent President of the Philippines, but all officials whose appointments are by this constitution vested in the Prime Minister shall vacate their respective offices upon the appointment and qualification of their successors.60

The declaration of martial law thus, gave unprecedented powers to the President over the entire governmental structure. He described the constitutional change as the "institutionalisation of the Philippines". He also wrote that there was an inseparable link between martial law and the new Constitution. Martial law enabled the constituent body to draft a charter attuned to the demands for revolutionary change.61

61 Ibid., p. 166.
The new Constitution gave the President all powers, both as President and Prime Minister, to enforce the Constitution selectively until the end of martial law over all aspects of the government. Section 3, number 2 of the same article provides for the continuation of "all proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions, and acts promulgated, issued or done by incumbent President" as part of the "law of the land" unless nullified by Marcos himself or by the regular National Assembly. In other words all proclamations, orders, decrees, instructions, and acts promulgated by Marcos under martial law will remain in force until either he, or the National Assembly takes action to remove them. Since Marcos has the power to disband the interim National Assembly, there is little chance that any civilian check on his and the military's power will be possible until martial law is lifted. The referendum in 1976 concerning to the 'Sixth Amendment' of the new Constitution vested with more powers for Marcos to use it over the governmental structure by allowing him to

62 Ibid., p. 224.

Jim Zwick has observed that constitutional change in the Philippines has led to the militarization of traditional autonomous civilian governmental structures "through the centralisation and heirarchization of control". There is no allowance for civilian opposition to Marcos, or the military's actions and policies, since these could lead either to charges of subversion or prompt removal from office through the naming of a successor. By allowing the continuation of Marcos' decrees and orders beyond the ending of martial law, the 1973 Constitution ensures that any moves to reorder the government along more democratic and less repressive lines will involve a long and arduous legal process in the National Assembly. The "institutionalisation of the revolution" that Marcos wrote of represents, in fact, the institutionalisation of militarization in the country.64

Authoritarianism and Politico-economic Crisis

When constitutional authoritarianism replaced democracy as the effective governmental form from 1972, President

64 Ibid.
Marcos continued to enjoy the support of the military, and the military became a chief partner in the management of the country. As Clark Nehur describes it, politics in the Philippines became "clientalist", in which political life centres on relationships that are largely person to person; informal, hierarchicaical and reciprocal.\(^\text{65}\) This clientalist relationship supplanted political parties, legislature and other formal institutions of the government under the long authoritarian rule of Marcos.\(^\text{66}\) With the imposition of martial law, Marcos claimed he had launched the "New Society Party", which was intended to supplant the old elite and civilian administration with army officers as the key decision makers. With the launching of the "New Society Party", but in fact, Marcos was trying to put up a facade of a new social order in the Philippines, so that he could make people believe that he was a "benevolent dictator".

In the first year of martial law, the mass media announced that tremendous gains have been achieved by the New Society. The President himself was quoted as saying:


There has been a big leap in the economy; speculative and growth investments were recorded at new levels, tourist traffic and export rose, domestic production increased, foreign loans and economic assistance became easier to negotiate, the international reserves stood at a new peak, and for the first time, we saw our people convinced of the existence of real opportunities.  

Land reformes considered an outstanding success as big landed estates, in excess of hundred hectres, were broken up and distributed to some 144,000 tenants and land transfer certificates were issued to them. But in 1974 the World Bank noted that the implementation of land reform programme was becoming "extremely difficult" and that the plans of the government to issue land certificates down to the 24 hectre land "have faltered". A top American expert on land reform, analysing the figures published by the government, and conducting studies in the rural areas, observed that "land reform is less than one percent complete". In this connection it is illuminating to quote William Overholt’s comments:

Philippine [agrarian] reform programs [were] tied neither to any integrated view of the national economy and its principal trends (eg.

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industrialization, urbanization, rising population), nor to any explicit vision of the national political future. 70

Another team of experts began doubting the genuineness and depth of the commitment of the leadership to land reform, and wondered whether the whole programme was merely a convenient plan disguised to put off agrarian unrest and provide window-dressing for one-man rule. 71 So it was proved that the 'New Society's claims about land reform were a dismal failure.

In the economic scene, crisis was deepening. The boom in the world market for Philippine exports was gone, oil prices were shooting up, imports were eating up the dollar reserves, unemployment was mounting everyday, and the local stock market was slipping into a long and deep slump. The frightening rate of inflation - between 40% to 44% in mid 1974, according to the official reports of the Central Bank


71 Dennis Shoesmith, "Land Reform in the Philippines: Emancipating or Emaciating Tenants", quoted in A representative group document..., op. cit., p.23.
was bringing enormous suffering to the Filipino masses. The IMF report for 1974 showed that among the developing countries in Asia, the Philippines had the second highest rate of inflation - mainly the result of a development strategy which put undue emphasis on exports of raw materials, rendering the country vulnerable to the fluctuations in the world market, and on the increasing control of Philippine economy by foreign investors, particularly the giant multinationals.\(^{72}\)

At the same time, the most disturbing aspect of the 'New Society' was the prevalence of extravagance and corruption in high places. This is undoubtedly the prime factor that eroded the credibility of the martial law regime. Key public officials and their relatives were unblushingly displaying their wealth in a country where over one million people were totally without work and half of the children were suffering from malnutrition. People began to realise that while the business enterprises of the "oligarchs" of the old society had been taken away from them, these same firms are now controlled by an oligarchy close to the very center of power.\(^{73}\)

\(^{72}\) A Representative group document, op.cit., p. 23.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
Though the 'New Society' condemned graft and extravagance in the first days of martial law, the propensity of the 'New Society was' to spend the money of the country on frivolous and unproductive projects. In 1974, the foreign media reported that a total of $60 million was spent to finance the holding of the Miss Universe contest in Manila. A $10 million worth Cultural and Trade Centre was opened in New York's Fifth Avenue. Then a press despatch datelined Cairo and published in the local press, confirmed the report that the first lady had donated $1 million to the Egyptian government for the benefit of its museums. 74

The central problem of the Philippines prior to the declaration of martial law was the undue concentration of wealth in the hands of rich families. After September 1972, Marcos moved to dismantle the "oligarchical fiefdoms" and to take control of their resources either through state monopolies or private corporations dominated by his cronies. But both the state and the new oligarchy have made major errors, and have not used resources effectively. Wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of persons who either

74 Ibid., p. 24.
exercise martial law authority, or are their relatives, associates, cronies or patrons. As a result of this, the economy of the Philippines has undergone serious structural problems culminating in the worst fiscal crisis of any of the non-communist nations in modern history.\(^7\) This sort of a crisis was created by Marcos and he could monopolise the political power.

The open-door policy of Marcos made the country one among the most lucrative countries for investments. Taking full advantage of the open-door policy of the martial law regime towards foreign investments, U.S and Japanese business firms consolidated their hold in key areas of the economy under their domination and expanded their operations to the preferred areas. According to the figures released by the Board of Investments, foreign capital accounted for 28% of the total investment in 1968. But by the first quarter of 1975, foreign capital accounted for more than 58%\(^7\) Another remarkable feature of martial law was that Philippine banks, admittedly too many and under-capitalised, were required to increase their paid-up capital

\(^7\) Clark D. Neher, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

to at least 100 million pesos. Because of the regime's bias in favour of foreign investments, the immediate result was that instead of Filipino banks, most of them dominated by a few families, merging and combining their assets, the biggest names in international finance and banking came almost at one fell swoop and became part owners and financing institutions—something most countries of the world would neither encourage nor permit.

In order to show his regime's grandiose schemes for development, Marcos relied on the talents of corps of technocrats who had their training mostly from American institutions, or had experience in planning or managing economic enterprises. The programme that they put together for the "modernisation" of the country entailed huge investments in buildings, hotels, roads, highways, bridges, power plants, housing schemes and other infrastructures far beyond the capacity of the domestic economy to absorb. These were also not only urgent needs of the vast majority of Filipinos who live in the rural areas. The only way to finance these big schemes was through considerable foreign borrowings from international financial institutions. The "orgy of borrowings" averaged $2.5 billion annually for a
twelve-year period starting in 1972. By 1984, the country's foreign debt had reached a staggering $26 billion, too much out of proportion to the resources of an economically underdeveloped Third World country.

Analysts following the pattern of the Philippine external debt contend that it was during the martial law period that the Marcos administration "deliberately launched a fiscal policy of deficit financing... which was an indispensable component of the development programmes formulated with the assistance and advice of the World Bank. With the huge amounts brought in by the loans, a frenetic pace of economic activity began and pretentious programmes flourished in the Metro Manila area. This was purposely done by the government to give an illusion of progress or "instant industrialization". State enterprises to take charge of the regime's numerous programmes and business activities grew by the hundreds.


79 Belinda A. Aquino, op.cit., p. 28.
The management and control of several of these corporations were placed in the hands of Marcos's relatives or cronies.

All these issues showed that a new oligarchy-apparently more powerful than the old-assumed control of a growing, seemingly endless list of corporation and business firms. The objective, obviously, was maximum control with minimum investment.

The Report of the Representative Group of Citizens picturesquely described this thus:

What the architects of the new society have constructed is a taller pyramid, with reserved associates - and the foreign investors whose interests they safeguard and defend - at the very top. Under martial law, instant wealth is easy to come by for the few who know the levers and uses of power.80

The monopolisation of power became evident with the release of the results of the February 1975 referendum. The people "overwhelmingly" gave the President blanket authority to retain, remove or replace local officials whose terms were to expire at the end of 1975. Thus every big or small official in the government knew that he holds his office at the pleasure of the President -- a President who, in his

own words, had "launched a peaceful, democratic revolution." 81

Despite of all claims about achievements of 'New Society', the whole situation continued to be very disturbing. The Secretary of National Defence, Juan Ponce Enrile, in a speech at the National Defence College made the candid admission that;

...the nation still faces the same threats as it did since the imposition of martial law... We still face the spectre of internal subversion amidst the present economic crisis, adopting a united front strategy with a decentralised leadership... There is the threat of domestic criminality, aggravated by an incipient erosion of moral values in our society. We are still plagued by corruption and abuses among some sectors of the public service... 82

In the year of 1975 there were signs of shifts in the regime's internal balance of power. Imelda Marcos was named Mayor of Metro Manila. There was a massive purge of government bureaucrats, including Defence Secretary Enrile's Under Secretary. The regime's chief technocrat Alejandra Melchor was reported to have clashed with Mrs. Marcos as

81 Ibid.
well as Enrile and he was ousted. Not surprisingly, these developments produced both protest and pessimism. Lela Garner Noble commented on this in the following way:

The protest was primarily of two kinds: that of lawyers and church leaders who challenged the legality or ethics of the existence and policies of the martial law regime; and that of ethnic groups, agricultural labourers, urban workers, squatters, and their sympathisers, who opposed the regime through armed rebellion (in Manila and other cities). The Muslim separatist Movement, fuelled by centuries of alienation, specific grievances resulting from recent Christian migration and outside support from Muslim states and organisations, was successful in mobilising about thirty thousand armed combatants and dominating much of central and southwestern Mindanao and the sulu Archipelago. In, so doing it justified, at least from the regime's perspective, the military build-up and the continuation of martial law, but it also resulted in progress and bounties from which at least some Muslims benefited.

Other forms of protest had less success. the Supreme Court consistently ruled in favour of Marcos, though sometimes with mixed votes and ambiguous rulings. Although many of those detained were subsequently released, prominent leaders like Benigno Aquino and two members of the Lopez and Osmeña families remained in jail. Reports of torture of

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prisoners persisted, raids of church premises continued, the press remained controlled, and the nature of restrictions shifted from direct censorship to self-monitoring by selected owners who supported martial law. Pessimism resulted from growing evidence that it had been easier to change governmental structures and personnel than to create a New Society. Many of the problems of the old society had simply taken on new manifestations; corruption, patronage, extravagance, and abuse of authority continued sometimes with different beneficiaries and victims. Party switching was replaced by defections; policy making, once subject to executive legislative statement, was now hampered by bureaucratic political factions but between military ones. A political cycle that had once depended on elections now depended on executive initiatives.

Marcos continued to serve as President and Prime Minister, and maintained his extraordinary powers, including the right to approve any bills introduced and to veto any he disliked and to dissolve the Assembly if he thought it was not doing its job properly or if he decided there was a national emergency.

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84 Ibid., p. 96.
The regimes initiatives towards appeasing the Muslims in the South received considerable attention during the late eighties. Two KBL dominated 'autonomous' governments had been constituted in the two regions, with the commission on Islamic affairs headed by Admiral Romulo Espaladon established to oversee government programmes towards Muslims. Funds were provided to support the re-entry into civilian life of those rebels who decided to return to the main fold of the land. At the same time military and economic policies had destroyed several of the NPA's old bases and the army managed to arrest some of its top leaders. Inspite of these, the NPA continued to grow and spread. Consequently, army units were deployed to occupy new areas where the NPA started functioning. The military appeared loyal to the regime, though undisciplined at lower levels and fraught with factional rivalries at the top. In many areas the military constituted a governing structure paralleling and dominating the civilian, and retired generals filled posts in government agencies. At the same time, the technocrats, the regime's main agents for the development programmes, seemed increasingly isolated. They opposed several of the new projects proposed by Mrs. Marcos as unnecessary and undesirable extravagances.
On the other hand, broader efforts took place to consolidate opposition. But there were disagreements over leadership, differences of opinion on issues such as U.S bases, tactics in the elections, etc. However, in August 1980, representatives of eight opposition groups issued a National Covenant of Freedom. The covenant denounced the Marcos government, and proposed the liberation of the Philippines "from all forms of foreign domination in all aspects of national life."

Different church groups also came forward to oppose the martial law regimes. Most marked during the period was the sharpness and comprehensiveness of the critique of martial law levelled by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines under the leadership of Jaime Cardinal Sin. Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines responded to a series of development -- a wave of arrests of priests, nuns and lay people involved in church -- sponsored social action programme, an increased government tendency to discredit the left as subversive, military abuses against civilians, fraud, deceit, and connivance in the 1978 elections, and the government's ineffectiveness in bettering socio-economic conditions for the masses. Pastoral letters and statements, whether issued individually or collectively,
moved from the identification and condemnation of specific acts, and policies to a call for the end of martial law. Meanwhile, the Task Force of Detainees set up by the Association of Major Religious Superiors, continued to monitor human rights violations, Catholic media provided an alternative to government-controlled sources and church workers helped to organise and defend the poor or persecuted. 85

Despite the deteriorating economic situation, and the increased scope and organisation of the anti-governmental organisations and the opposition, the regime was sufficiently confident of its strength to make further moves towards normalization of the situation. On January 17, 1981, President Marcos announced the ending of eight years of martial law. The writ of habeas corpus was restored, except in two regions of Mindanao military trials and military detention of civilian offenders were phased out; some prisoners were released; and legislative powers were formally transferred to the interim National Assembly. Marcos retained, however, the right to issue decrees, and all decrees issued under martial law remained in force.

85 Ibid., p.106.
After a short period, Marcos declared the need for a constitutional amendment that would establish a French-style Presidential Parliamentary System.

As submitted to the Assembly, the amendments provided for a President at least fifty years old, elected for a six year renewable term and empowered to appoint and remove a Prime Minister and a fourteen-member Executive Committee. The Assembly approved the amendments, which were thus submitted to a plebiscite in April, and the Presidential election followed in June 1981. Marcos regime campaigned hard, and not entirely fairly, both in the plebiscite and the Presidential contest. Marcos was re-elected and proceeded to appoint Cesar Virata Prime Minister, reorganise the Cabinet and Cabinet-level offices, constitute an Executive Committee, and name new leadership for government controlled financial institutions and the military. The U.S administration also whole-heartedly supported this kind of a move. U.S Secretary of State Haig, who was in Manila for an ASEAN meeting congratulated Marcos for a "wonderful victory" and vice-president Bush, who attended the inauguration of the New Republic, praised his adherence to democratic principles and to the democratic process. Marcos and Reagan reportedly had a cordial meeting at the Cancum (Mexico).
North-South Conference, during which Reagan invited the Marcoses for a state visit, eventually scheduled for September 1982, the visit produced a few agreements, including millions of dollars from the U.S Export-Import Bank for the Battan nuclear power plant project and a commitment to renegotiate the terms for U.S bases in the Philippines no later than December 1983. 86

Between 1981 and 1983, while Marcos appeared to have total control of political initiatives, he had considerably less success with economic factors that affected the regime’s political base and stability. In 1981 January the Asian Wall Street Journal published a summary of a World Bank study of poverty in the Philippines. 87 Economic figures for 1981 and 1982 did not alleviate the Bank’s concerns or those of other lenders. Growth rates decreased, exports declined in value, imports increased, and debt servicing costs escalated. Whereas the conconut, banana, sugar and copper industries were all affected by marked decline in prices or demands, the coconut industry, on which one-third of the population and two-thirds of those in

86 Ibid., p.108.
87 Ibid., p.109.
certain areas of Mindanao, were dependent, was particularly hard hit. Unemployed rates for urban workers reached 25 percent or more in Manila and other cities, even with an estimated 500,000 Filipinos working overseas. The growing authoritarianism of Marcos and the miseries faced by the people in all walks of life gave more impetus to popular discontent and this support base shrank to a limited number of cronies.

A less obvious beneficiary of the economic crisis was the military, whose power grew as additional forces were required to cope with dissent. General Ver, particularly, was given increased status. The Military became so powerful that sometimes they went out of control. Marcos continued to enjoy the support of the military in different ways even after lifting the martial law. Benigno Aquino, the long-time political opponent of Marcos, and the man who everybody thought would become the next president of the country, was assassinated by Marcos' men on 21st August 1983 at the Manila International Airport while he was returning home from the United States.

After the declaration of Martial Law, Aquino was under military detention and was accused of a variety of crimes, including responsibility for a political killing. Later,
released from jail through the intervention of the Carter administration to undergo heart surgery in the U.S. Aquino quickly displaced less charismatic figures to become the principal leader of the exiled opposition. In 1981, while Aquino was still abroad, Marcos held Presidential election, but not before amending the constitution to raise the minimum Presidential age to fifty, thereby excluding the forty-eight-year old Aquino. By 1983, taunted by Marcos' spokesmen for his failure to return home to jail as he had promised, impatient with the new American administration's Philippine policy, and worried by reports of Marcos's uncertain health, Aquino decided to return to the Philippines in the hope of persuading the President to arrange for a peaceful transfer of power to the opposition, or failing that, to assume leadership of that opposition himself. He had been previously warned by Mrs. Marcos and others that his life might be endangered by such a return. 88

Aquino's assassination triggered widespread public demands for President Marcos's resignation. That event provided the fillip for the surfacing of people's long-felt

anguish and grievances in the form of open protestations against the regime. Several hundreds of thousand people who attended the funeral procession turned their grief into anger and protest aimed at President Marcos, his wife Imelda, and the military, whom they held responsible for the murder. According to Williams Overholt:

...after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, the government’s base of support became still narrower. The crowds at Aquino’s funeral were the largest in modern Philippine’s history, exceeding those at Pope’s visit, McArthur’s sentimental return and Magsaysay’s funeral.

Many writers see Aquino’s assassination as the pace-setter for the downfall of Marcos. Walden Bello remarked:

Surprising ironies of history that Benigno Aquino accomplished in his death the downfall of Marcos’s dictatorship. The murder immortalises the murdered and destroys the murderer.

A political crisis erupted spectacularly after the assassination of former Philippine senator Aquino. In this connection Carl H. Lande observed:


It set off a rapid decline in business confidence, leading to a massive flight of capital and to the inability of the Philippines government to service its foreign debt. It stimulated an outburst of organization activity by the democratic opposition and an expansion of the scale of military and political action by the revolutionary opposition. For President Marcos, it brought a precipitous decline in legitimacy and authority, and in his ability to shape the course of events. It led also to efforts on the part of important friends, both domestic and foreign, to distance themselves from the Marcos regime.

More and more Filipinos were convinced of the fact that there was no alternative committed by Marcos regime. The regime's corruption, failure of its economic policies, its repressiveness and military abuses, and its support from the U.S, etc. virtually caused violent popular discontent. One of the major causes of discontent was the militarization of the Philippine society over the years. The Catholic Church became more outspoken, urging Marcos to resign because he had lost the respect and support of the people. They criticised the role of U.S bases in the Philippine, in supporting the Marcos regime. The CBCP denounced the regimes abuses of human rights.

The U.S administration also seemed less enthusiastic about the regime after these developments, an opinion in

line with that of U.S. Congress and the House of Representatives. U.S intelligence agencies apparently shared the World Bank's view that the situation was "precarious", and they had little hope that the regime had sufficient insight or will to recover. An aide to Secretary of State, George Shultz, reportedly stated that "The Marcos regime is entering its twilight zone and we don't want to find ourselves in the same position as we did in Iran when the Shah was overthrown." 82

Continued decline in Philippine economy, the unrelenting growth of the communist insurgency, and increased American pressure for reforms had led Marcos to call a "Snap" presidential election for February 7, 1986. In this election, momentous events changed the Philippine political landscape. The murdered Benigno Aquino achieved a victory denied him in life: his widow Corazon Aquino became President of the Philippines, while her rival, Ferdinand Marcos, took refuge in disgrace in the United States. Mrs. Aquino received wide support from all walks of life. Among them were large numbers of men and women of the middle and upper classes who had been politicized by the

Aquino assassination. It was reported that about 40,000 people worked on election day as volunteers in the nominally non-partisan but clearly pro-opposition NAMFREL. They were successful in guarding the ballotting process against massive pro-Marcos fraud. NAMFREL won widespread domestic and foreign recognition for the accuracy of its count and for the detailed nature of its reports of fraud. The Catholic Church also played a significant role as an ill-disguised ally of the opposition candidates. It was Cardinal Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, himself who persuaded Corazon Aquino to join forces with Salvador Laurel and also persuaded Laurel to accept the Vice-President candidature on their joint ticket. Catholic Church members, including priests and nuns, provided the bulk of NAMFREL'S volunteers and leaders. It was the church's radio station Veritas and the Bishops' pastoral letters, read in all Philippine Catholic churches, that broke the government's monopoly of mass communication. Finally, it was Cardinal Sin who mobilized "people power" - the human barrier that protected the military insurgents from the superior firepower of the President's loyalist armed forces.

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93 Carl H Lande, op.cit., p.143.
The military so favoured by Marcos, proved in the end to be undependable. The growing rift within the armed forces between defenders of the regime and protectors of the nation came to be the President's undoing. Marcos' post-election move to arrest members of the reform movement - including their patrons - Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and General Fidel Ramos - provoked a preemptive and successful revolt. Marcos' loyalists, faced with a choice between crushing the barrier of "people power" and defying the orders of their Chief, chose not to move. Within four days, Marcos' military defenses had crumbled and he was on his way to Guam.

Role of the AFP in martial law and after

When the United States set up the Philippine army in 1936, it created, not surprisingly, a force very much in the image of its own army; it was small, professional and committed, above all, to the notion of civilian supremacy. For many years after the granting of independence in 1946, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) remained the very model of a western army. It had not been obliged to fight for independence, and its successful operations against the Huk guerillas in Luzon notwithstanding, had not to contend with a nationwide insurgency.
Most senior officers had served in the U.S army - President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the induction of all Philippine servicemen into the U.S army on the eve of Pearl Harbour –, attended U.S military institutions and generally had a high regard for the American approach. The most popular hero figure for not Filipino officers was not, as in other newly independent states, a local patriot but an American – Gen. Douglas Mac Arthur.

In the year after World War II it was understood that the army's role encompassed the defence of the state and no more. Over the succeeding decades, however, changes had taken place in the AFP. The most obvious of this had been the dramatic increase in the size of the military establishment. Since the declaration of martial law in September 1972, the AFP had seen its ranks swollen threefold, largely on account of the bitter war against Muslim seperates in Mindanao and the continuing war against the guerillas of the New People's Army (NPA), the military wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines. When martial law was declared, AFP was a force of 58,000 men. In 1982, after ten years later, it was around 146,000 with 60,000 in the Army (plus a reserve of 90,000), 16,000 in the Air Force, 28,000 in the Navy (including 9 to 10
thousand marines) and 42,000 in the Paramilitary Philippine Constabulary (PC). And though the Philippines spends a considerably lower percentage of its gross national product on defence than any other ASEAN nation, its defence budget ballooned from U.S $1 billion in 1981. This is a higher rate of expansion than in any other country.

The rapid expansion of the AFP created problems of organisation and discipline. One problem centred on so-called overstaying Generals. Marcos kept senior men in place well beyond the usual rotation period causing morale problems. Another problem centred on lack of discipline and poor morale both of which were exacerbated by the bitter fighting in Mindanao and other places. Standards fell as a large number of younger officers were inducted into the army and thrown into action against the Muslims. Inter-service rivalry was also a problem and poor morale in army and PC units led at times to shoot-outs between groups of opposing soldiers stationed in the South. In the early years of martial law, there were incidents of wide abuse of power, suppression of human rights and torture. Troops were accused of looting, raping and "salvaging", a euphemism

94 David Jenkins, "All the President's Men", Far Eastern Economic Review, (Hong Kong), March 10, 1983, p.15.
employed by army men to describe the murder of civilian suspects. The army had created an image that "they are gun-happy".

With the declaration of martial law, the AFP was not only given an expanded role in the counter-insurgency field but also a greatly expanded bankroll. After 1972, Philippine society as a whole came under much greater military control. Retired military personnel were placed in key government positions and the armed forces were reorganised under a unified command structure which stripped the individual service headquarters of their power.

The proclamation of martial law gave the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) extensive new powers. Proclamation No. 1081 reads:

Now, therefore, I, Ferdinand E. Marcos, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested upon me by Article VII, section 10, paragraph (2) of the Constitution, do hereby command the Armed Forces of the Philippines to maintain law and order throughout the Philippines, to prevent or suppress all forms of lawless violence as well as any act of insurrection or rebellion and to enforce obedience to all laws and decrees, orders and regulations promulgated by me personally or upon my direction.95

95 Proclamation No. 1081, (September 21, 1971)
Subsequent general orders issued by the President authorised the armed forces to arrest people suspected of specified offences, including those relating to public order. The Chief of Staff of the AFP was empowered to establish special military tribunals to try cases of people charged with these offences. Their detention under the terms of martial law was to be administered by the AFP. The lifting of martial law has led to a reduction of the role of the armed forces only in so far as new cases were removed from the jurisdiction of military tribunals. Earlier, on Armed Forces Day, President Marcos told the troops that when martial law had been lifted the armed forces should "stay in place, continue with your operations and attain your objectives."

While judicial authority had suffered from President Marcos' institutionalisation of martial law, the military had become an increasingly powerful force in the government.

When martial law was declared, President Marcos had called on the armed forces to "present or suppress all forms of lawless violence, as well as any act of insurrection or

In lifting martial law he noted that although the communist insurgency had been "substantially contained", the public safety "continue to require a degree of capability to deal adequately with elements who persist in endeavouring to overthrow the government by violent means..." Accordingly, he proclaimed that "the call to the Armed Forces of the Philippines to prevent or suppress lawless violence, insurrection, rebellion and subversion" was to remain in force. As a result of this Filipinos continued to live under the effect of extended military rule.

Over the 13 years from 1972 the AFP grew to include more than 200,000 active soldiers, with more than 70,000 additional armed soldiers under its control through a civilian militia known as the Civilian Home Defence Force (CHDF). The growth was attributable to several factors, including the increased strength of a guerilla movement, the New People's Army (NPA), and internal pressures for expansion generated by corrupt and inefficient military commanders. The dramatic growth of the AFP had occurred during a period when there has been no threat of external

97 Proclamation No. 1081 (September 21, 1972)
98 Proclamation No. 2045 (January 17, 1985)
99 Ibid.
aggression and the crisis was home-grown and self-imposed. The U.S intelligence reports also affirmed the fact that the NPA received no material support from outside countries or forces, such as the Soviet Union, China, Libya the Palestine Liberation Organisation or Vietnam. Though the Philippine Armed Forces have swelled in large part in response to the NPA threat, they had often served to fuel the insurgents' growth, rather than stem it. In many parts of the Philippines, a substantial military presence had come to be synonymous with pervasive military abuse. Though charged, in President Marcos's words, to "suppress lawless violence", the armed forces have been responsible for thousands of arbitrary arrests of political opponents of the government. These arrests were often accompanied by torture and other forms of ill-treatment, as well as long periods of incommunicado detention without formal charge or trial.

The phenomenon of "militarization" was increasing in each and every field and its consequences were deplored by influential leaders in the Philippines, including senior church officials, jurists and lawyers, etc., as well as by

100 As quoted in The Lawyers' Committee Report - 1985, op. cit., p.23.
international human rights organisations. Jaimes Cardinal Sin, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila observed:

Daily we experience the increasing militarization of our lives: the pervasive surveillance of citizens who express dissent democratically by military intelligence; the lack of mercy and prudence shown by special military units against suspected criminals; The use of torture to extract information; the unexpected wealth of many military officers.

The military was responsible for a large number of cases of military abuses. Despite official guidelines and directives given to the military men, human rights violations were carried out by government agents.

In August 1979, the Minister of National Defence, Juan Ponce Enrile, approved the recommendation of the Barbero Commission after its hearing in Davao city, requiring the Chief of Staff of the AFP and the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary

...to remind all subordinate military/police units to observe at all times the human rights of individuals in the conduct of their operation even as against enemies of the state; that persons who are arrested/captured in operations must be treated

with dignity and in accordance with the traditions of the noble profession of arms and that any violation thereof will be a ground for dismissal from the service of the offending personnel without prejudice to their criminal prosecution as the evidence may warrant. 102

In April 1981 the Chief of the Philippine Constabulary, General Fidel V. Ramos, was reported to have issued guidelines to law enforcement officials on self-defence in response to widespread reports of arbitrary killings by such officials. A summary of these guidelines reads:

1. The only justification for law enforces to kill criminals is selfdefence which can only be resorted to when the risk of subduing them peacefully will result in the death of law enforces or citizens;

2. The primary duty under the criminal justice system is to arrest offenders and initiate court action against them... The Philippine Constabulary will not tolerate lawmen becoming prosecutors, judges and executors of offenders;

3. All cases of encounters with criminals being arrested or escaping prisoners as a matter of standard operating procedure, shall be covered by autopsy and investigation reports. 103


103 Ibid.
Despite such official guidelines and directives, militarization was increasing. Human rights violations such as summary executions, massacres and "disappearances" where the victims are believed to be dead, all allegedly carried out by military personnel. The role of the armed forces in what had traditionally been civilian matters was expanded with the proclamation of martial law.

Structure of the AFP

The AFP consist of four major services: the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Philippine Constabulary. A large civilian militia, known as the Civilian Home Defence Force also operated under the ostensible command of the AFP. All of these forces were integrated under the Ministry of Defence, and all were involved in combat operations against the New People's Army, Muslim insurgents, and other groups in the country opposing authoritarian regime of Marcos.

(a) The Philippines Constabulary (PC)

The PC, originally named the Insular Police Force was founded by the U.S colonial authorities in 1901 as a law enforcement agency to maintain peace and order throughout the Philippines. As such, it rather than the local police, over which the PC then had supervisory powers, undertook all
STRUCTURE OF ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES: 1984

Source: Philippine Action Support Groups
but routine law enforcement duties including the suppression of dissident movements. Although charged with civilian responsibilities and under the control of the Department of the interior, it was organised along military lines and its members subject to military discipline.

Between 1935 and 1950, the PC underwent several phases of separation from and integration with police and military establishments. In July 1950, it was fully merged with the AFP and placed under the control of the Department of National Defence, a status which it had retained ever since. In 1975, by Presidential Decree (PD) No. 765, the Integrated National Police (INP) was established, comprising the PC as its nucleus and the integrated police forces as components, to function directly under the Department of National Defence. Although the INP was not part of the AFP, PD No. 765 provided that the PC would remain a major service of the AFP. The duties of the PC under martial law were officially defined as comprising "general police duties"; "miscellaneous police duties" as assigned by explicit provision of law, by direction of the President, by deputation and by request which include enforcement of the Anti-Subversion law; "special duties", including general supervision of the police forces; "national defence
duties", including providing "rear area security and damage control during war" and building up its Reserve Force during peacetime”; and "martial law duties:, consisting of the "enforcement and implementation of Presidential Decrees, General orders and letters of instruction".104 In the 13 years period since martial law was declared, the PC had been deeply involved in intelligence and security duties; combat duties in suppressing movements aiming at the armed overthrow of the government; the administration of detainees arrested by members of the armed forces, the police and officials designed to make arrests under the martial law provisions; Supervision of the Integrated Civilian Home Defence Force (ICHDF), the civilian militia which had greatly expanded since 1972 to assist the AFP in its law enforcement role; and the integration of municipal and local forces. The wide-ranging powers of the PC since the proclamation of martial law therefore spanned military, intelligence and policing roles ostensibly directed at suppressing the insurrection which occasioned martial law.

In areas where the armed forces were engaged in relatively high levels of combat with the NPA or the MNLF,

they were organised into special military commands: In addition special units were active which although sometimes acting in co-operation with regular provincial commands, were directly accountable to regional rather than provincial commanders or directly to central authorities in Manila. These units were: Intelligence Units; Special Combat Units, such as the Long Range Patrol of the PC and Airborne Units of the army; and Task Forces comprising PC and army personnel.

Over the years PC had come to be regarded as one of the abusive partners of AFP. Testimonies from victims of human rights violations from all over the country, share the PC figured prominently in accounts of brutality and official violence, often in the context of counter-insurgency operations.\textsuperscript{105}

(b) Intelligence Units

Since the declaration of martial law, there had been a proliferation of intelligence and security units empowered to arrest and detain people suspected of offences relating to national security. The main co-ordinating body of this

\textsuperscript{105}The researcher had obtained first hand information from different people, in this connection.
department was the National Intelligence and Security Authority (NISA); Its Director-General was the then Chief of Staff of the AFP, General Fabian. When Fabian was the Director General of NISA, throughout the period of his trial in connection with the Aquino murder case he was officially on leave and reportedly continued to exert considerable influence over day-to-day affairs in NISA. Presidential Directive No. 1498, described NISA as "the focal point for direction, co-ordination and integration of government activities involving national intelligence and security". In addition to its co-ordinating function, NISA has its own agents in the field who arrest, detain and interrogate alleged political offenders. NISA was formally responsible to the National Security Council of the Philippines and its Chairman, President Marcos.

Under NISA there are the AFP intelligence units and the Civil Intelligence Security Authority (CISA) - comprising vast intelligence complexes in themselves. These were made up of the intelligence complexes in themselves.

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106 Lawyers' Committee Report, op.cit., p.28.
107 P.D.No.1498, (National Security Code)
108 Ibid.
These were made up of the Intelligence Services of the AFP (ISAFFP) with all its field units, and the Military Intelligence Groups (MIG), under the watchful eyes of JUSHAG.

The Philippine Constabulary also has its intelligence network-CSUS (Constabulary Security Units), CIS (Criminal Investigation Service), SOGS (Special Operations Groups), CANU (Constabulary Anti-Narcotics Units) COSAC (Constabulary Off-Share Anti-Crime Units), etc. The army, navy and airforce all have their own additional networks and field units. Responsible for the very life of the President himself is the PSU - Presidential Security Unit.

The intelligence Services were co-ordianted by NISA, which had been most frequently reported were to have arrested detained and interrogated suspects engaged in political activities. In 1985 the U.S based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights declared that they had received reports of human rights violations committed by a number of other intelligence units that operate under the co-ordiantion of NISA, which included the Intelligence Service of the AFP, whose operating units are known as Military Intelligence Groups (MIGS); the PC’s & Intelligence Service (C2), whose operating units called Regional Security Units.
(RSUS or R25), include the PC's Metro Manila Command Metrocom Intelligence and Security Grasp (MISG); other PC units, including its Criminal Investigation Service (CIS); and Army Intelligence Units referred to as G2, whose operating groups are called Military Security Units (MSUs).\textsuperscript{109}

All of these forces are empowered to arrest and detain persons suspected of involvement in national security offences. It is in the context of such cases that a large number of violations occurred, particularly in the initial period after arrest when so-called "tactical interrogation" is conducted. In a number of instances, people have disappeared after being abducted by intelligence forces, later to reappear in the custody of military authorities.

(c) Special Combat Units.

Amnesty International Mission to the Philippines from 11 to 28 November 1981 learned of the existence of a number of Special Combat Units only loosely incorporated into the regular chair of command whose activities had given ground

\textsuperscript{109} Lawyers' Committee Report, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 29.
for concern. These included the PC, the Philippines Army (PA) and Composite Task Forces assigned to provincial, regional or Special Commands, whose units often appeared to be accountable only to their commanders. Other groups such as Task Force Kanlaon, Task Force Lorro, the Philippines Army Task Force Agusan, First Composit Infantry Battalion, etc. also were functioning from different areas and intensifying the process of militarization.

(d) The Integrated Civilian Home Defence Force (ICHDF)

The ICHDF operated as a civilian militia throughout the country under the supervision of the office of the Integrated Civilian Home Defence Force of the Philippines Constabulary. The members of the ICHDF were recruited mostly from criminals and the personal bodyguards of locally powerful people. Another source of recruitment was from the members of irregular quasi-military, political, religious or criminal groups. There were disturbing allegations about the nature of ICHDF recruits and their lack of trainings and inadequate disciplinary measures exacerbated the problem. Once recruited, ICHDF members were given arms and were essentially let loose to operate as a front-line.

fighting and intelligence force. ICHDF members were mostly local residents in areas where the insurgency was strong. They were often used as informants to identify "subversives". Because the ICHDF is an "integrated" force, however, its units may be transferred from one area to another. When complaints against a particular unit started to mount, that unit was often simply transferred to another area.111

The ICHDF was modelled after the Civilian Guards used by the Philippine military to suppress the "Huk" rebellion in the 1950's. In the early years of these counter-insurgency effort the Civilian Guards were known for their brutal treatment of the civilian population. The ICHDF again started during the martial law period, had grown immensely and operated throughout the country. On a national level there was an office of the ICHDF within the constabulary. At the local level ICHDF generally operated under the direct command of the local PC detachment commander. Often ICHDF units work closely with other military forces, including the regular army. There are also reports that ICHDF units collaborated with some other

111 Lawyers' Committee Report, op.cit., p.32.
governmental offices, such as the office of the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN). PANAMIN established tribal settlements in areas throughout the country, particularly where the NPA insurgency was strong.\textsuperscript{112}

In some cases ICHDF members committed random violence in response to violence committed by New People's Army. On numerous occasions ICHDF in search of suspected subversives had left non-combatant civilians dead in their wake. But the military officials justified the action of the ICHDF as "self-defence".

A group of opposition members of the Philippine National Assembly (Batasang Pambansa) filed a resolution on April 27, 1985 calling for the dissolution of the ICHDF. Citing what they termed "grave acts of injustice", the resolution charged:

The ICHDFs, organised by various units of the AFP have caused untold miseries to the civilian population by their abuses and continuing acts of injustice.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., p.38.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Malaya}, (Manila), April 28, 1985
As a result of the opposition move the Defence Minister Enrile had ordered next day a "top-level committee" to reassess the overall concept of ICHDF activities. The committee, headed by the then Deputy Defence Minister Jose Crisol, is to examine the recruitment, training, discipline, operational utilization and control of the ICHDF programme. Crisol a specialist in counter-insurgency operations, had described the creation of the ICHDF as "very sound". 114

On the same day, President Marcos delivered a speech attacking the proposal to abolish the ICHDF and he warned opposition leaders that he viewed the proposal as "an indication that the New people's Army, the military arm of the CPP, was going to be used in the coming elections. 115 President Marcos did not respond to criticisms of ICHDF abuses, nor did he express any concern about the need to improve recruitment or training of these forces.

There were tremendous public outcry over the inhuman activities of ICHDF and responsible human rights organisations charged that the ICHDF became "instruments of

114 Bulletin Today, (Manila), April 29, 1985
115 Ibid.
terror rather than peace", they proposed that the ICHDF be abolished.

(e) Irregular Paramilitary Fanatic groups

Certain religious fanatic groups were allegedly acting with official approval of AFP. The Army was arming, motivating and supporting religious fanatic groups for counter-insurgency purposes. Despite strong protest against integrating notorious groups into the paramilitary forces and arming irregular armed groups by the military, the practice continued in the countryside. Many of the groups have figured in some significant cases of killings and massacres and had notorious records of mutilation of dead bodies. The Ilagas (Rats), a fanatic group armed and trained by the military against the MNLF in mid 70's were reportedly active again in many parts of Cotabato and Zamboanga del Sur. The People's Liberation Organisation (PLO) was a group of former MNLF rebels who surrendered to the government and its members were allowed again to carry arms and operate as a group. Unlike other religious fanatic groups, the PLO was a paramilitary group armed and sponsored by the military. 116

Similar to the PLO is the 'Lost Command', a notorious paramilitary force which operated as a counter-insurgency team. This 'Lost Command' figured in an international controversy when it was employed by a British-funded agribusiness venture (the NDC - Guthrie Corporation) in 1983 as its security unit. The 'Lost Command' had been engaged in extortion activities, killings of trade unionists and rebel sympathisers, etc.

Some of the fanatical religious groups supported by the military were identified as IIaga (Rats), Four Ks, Patiks of Bukiduon, Rural Reformist Movement, Rock Christ, Philippines Benevelent Missionaries Association, Bagong Jerusalem, Piniling Nasud (chosen people), Patany Buhi (Pie and Live), Alpha Omega, Likus-Likos, Katyaan, Santa Lana, Doce Pares (12 pairs), Pcing yapalk (Barefooted PC), etc. These groups were reported to be religious political or criminal in character and in some cases exhibited a combination of these characteristics. They operated with the sanction of government.

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117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
Philippines: a National Security State

Security can be understood either as the capacity of a state to confront internal and external threats to its order or as "protecting the peoples from threat". The first places the accent on the security of the state and the second on the security of individuals. From the Philippine experience we can clearly come to the conclusion that President Marcos imposed martial law and propagated the national security issues mainly to justify his actions. In order to suppress widespread opposition to growing authoritarianism, corruption, the presence of U.S. bases, increasing foreign control of the economy and other forms of opposition, Marcos used the military. Martial law, and the massive military campaigns which followed, were justified largely because the government perceived the Communist Party of the Philippines, its military wing New People's Army (NPA) and the Muslim secessionist group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), as prime threat to national security, even though they represented only a very small proportion of the opposition. During the period between the declaration of martial law and its "lifting" in 1981, more

than 600,000 Filipino citizens were arrested and imprisoned without trial or charges - usually only on suspicion of subversive activities - a widely interpreted notion, commonly connected with "National Security Theory."

Marcos justified his calling on the military to maintain law and order throughout the Philippines, to prevent and suppress all forms of lawless violence as well as any act of insurrection or rebellion, and to enforce obedience to all the laws, decrees, orders and regulations, promulgated by him. To carry these out, a programme of rapid expansion of the AFP was initiated, the greater proportion of funds for which came from U.S military assistance. Under the U.S - R.P Military Assistance Agreement (MAA) 1947, the U.S furnishes:

...military assistance to the government of the Republic of the Philippines in the training and development of the armed forces and in the performance of other services essential to the fulfillment of these obligations which may devolve upon the Republic of the Philippines under its international agreements including commitments

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assumed under the U.N. and to the maintenance of peace and security of the Philippines. 121

The provisions specify the procurement of arms and ammunition and other supplies of various kinds, training and instruction of selected students in the U.S., and disclosure and exchanges of classified military equipment and information of security classifications. The Military Assistance Agreement also governed the operations of JUSMAG, the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group which extended strategic staff direction, logistics, training and intelligence co-ordination to the Armed Forces of the Philippines - thereby ensuring control over the AFP... 122

At the time of the 1972 expansion programme, U.S. Military assistance stood at U.S. $20 million. It jumped seven times since then to U.S. $140.1 million in 1982. 123

Prior to 1972 there were approximately 32,000 men active in the AFP. The regular forces, including the Philippine Constabulary and the Integrated National Police (INP) numbered 230,000 in 1977. The expansion represented


122 Roland Simbulan, Ibid., p.82.

123 Ibid., p.232.
an approximate 700 percent increase from pre-martial law strength. In addition, there are 124,000 Reserve Forces of the army, navy and airforce. The paramilitary, Integrated Civilian Home Defence Force (ICHDF) was 75,499 and youths who had undergone or who were undergoing basic and advanced military training courses and barangay brigade seminars, numbered 392,400. 124

Defence minister Juan Ponce Enrile made it more clear that "...it now costs the government P 5 per bullet fired by a soldier, P 15,000 per hour for gasoline to send one plane on a mission, and P 300,000 million to buy one fighter plane..." 125 Put it another way, the Philippines was spending on defence U.S $17 per citizen per year or 14 percent of the governments total budget. The appropriation for the military was P 8.3 billion in 1983. 126 That was additional to U.S military assistance, and complementary logistical military support from Australia and some other European governments.

124 Ibid., pp.245-246.


126 Simbulan, op.cit., p.248.
The AFP was further supported by Philippine security agencies under the umbrella of the Federation of Industrial Security Organisations of the Philippines. And also there were the intelligence forces. The U.S involvement in Philippine intelligence operations had been extensive.

Post-martial law cases of direct and indirect interference have been regular since 1972. Special Forces (Green Berets) have conducted mission in dissident areas. CIA agents, veterans of the Indo-China campaign, had been assigned to the Philippines as USAID provincial advisers. U.S Forces stationed in the U.S Bases have also been used in counter-insurgency programmes disguised as 'Civil Action Programmes' (CAP) and 'Professional Development Programmes' (PDP) - co-ordinating closely with Philippine intelligence and AFP.127 The National Security Code (NSC) was signed in 1978 and its supplement, the Public Order Act (POA) in 1980, but neither were publically announced until the 'lifting' of martial law, on 17 January, 1981.128 The Jurisdiction of these laws was far-reaching. Under the NSC, anything

127 ACFOA document, op.cit., p.5.

critical of and inimical to the national interest, from rumour - mongering to subversion as subjectively perceived or defined by the President, was considered a crime against national security and public order. In practice, the dealing with such crimes included preventive detention, tactical interrogation (a euphemism for torture) in a 'safehouse' and 'salvaging'. The National Security Code provided the intelligence forces with immunity from law suits.

General Fabian Ver, was entrusted with the responsibility and he was appointed as the Director-General of National Intelligence and Security Authority. NISA was the focal point of the direction, co-ordination and integration of all the intelligence forces, under the watchful eye of JUSHAG. Under NISA, there were the AFP intelligence units and the Civil Intelligence Security Authority (CISA) - comprising vast intelligence complexes in themselves. These were made up of the Intelligence Services of the AFP (ISAFP) with all its field units, and the Military Intelligence Groups (MIG).

129 ACFOA document, op.cit., p.5.
About the Military officer entrusted with such formidable authority one writer has commented,

Even during the day of his power, Hitler was not able to centralise and put under one control, as Marcos has done in the case of ver, all of Germany’s intelligence and security agencies like the SA, the SS, the Gestapo, the ABWEHR and Admiral Canaris’ espionage..." In all local and national government offices, in all schools, in all critical sectors of Philippine society, in the barangays, this secret army has its penetration agents, operatives and informants, virtually serving as the eyes and ears of the dictator... they have enveloped our hapless and in an atmosphere of terror, a climate of fear, cowing our people into a state of abject submission...

Groups such as the infamous ‘Lost Command’, comprised of ex-criminals and demoted army officers, carried out liquidation campaigns or ‘special missions’ with which the AFP would prefer not to be publicly connected. The Lost Command unleashed a reign of terror in the Mindanao province of Agusan del sur. It assisted the incursion of agribusiness (the NDC/Guthrie Palm-oil plantation) forcibly pushing farmers off their land and providing ‘security’ for the plantation management.  

130 quoted in Ibid.
131 Ibid., p. 7.
the real locus of decision making power in local areas. There was a trend towards high ranking officers, close to the President, assuming influential advisory roles in the Philippine’s political and economic areas. Even the smallest unit of Philippine society - the barangay - had features of military involvement in civilian affairs.

In the judicial field, PD 39 created 20 military tribunals all over the country. In addition, 48 Provost courts were established. The military tribunals had jurisdiction in cases which the government deemed to be related to subversion, rebellion and other matters affecting ‘national security’. Very clearly, more than one decade of the Marcos era had seen the emergence of a national security state in the Philippines.

Manifestations of Militarization.

The martial law period, President Marcos claimed, significantly diffused the threats of subversion, sedition and rebellion. Yet he continued to justify the massive

military build up, citing the problem of insurgency. The NPA known to have a military strength of ten to twenty thousand armed regulars and operating in some 62 out of 73 provinces in the Philippines; and the BMA, numbering some six to ten thousand armed regulars concentrated mainly in Muslim-dominated areas in Mindanao, were the factors cited by the Marcos administration for the increase in AFP personnel from 60,000 in 1972 to 300,000 in 1983, including some 221,000 men composed of paramilitary units, intelligence groups and armed religious fanatics directly and or indirectly supported by the military.

sixty percent of the armed forces was deployed in Mindanao, where less than one fourth of the population was residing. Mindanao became the most highly militarized region not only in the country but in the whole ASEAN region as well. Mindanao had one soldier for 100 persons during the Marcos era. The national ratio was one to 250 while the


ASEAN ratio was one to 345. So Philippine military budget had grown to 10,500 million pesos in 1986.

Under martial law the AFP have acquired a dominant role in the state. Both army and the constabulary became the prime Police agencies in the country, with local Police activity having virtually disappeared in insurgency zones and playing a secondary role elsewhere. Political intelligence and security functions have been centralized to a degree unparalleled in Philippine history, with the military-dominated National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) forming the apex of a structure of interlocking army and constabulary agencies. All levels of the criminal justice system, particularly in the area of "political crisis", were effectively dominated by the military. Suspects are apprehended by military security agencies, imprisoned and tortured at military camps, prosecuted by military lawyers and judged by military commissions. In the words of Amnesty International:

136 Primer on Militarization, op. cit., p. 3.
### Table - 2

**Armed Forces of the Philippines: Man Power and Military Expenditures (1972 - 1986)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Man Power (in Thousands)</th>
<th>Military Expenditure (Million dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>63,000</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,20,000</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>1,40,000</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,55,000</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1,56,000</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1,56,000</td>
<td>739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,55,000</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1,56,000</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1,57,000</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>1,57,000</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,57,000</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,57,000</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1,61,000</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There has been... a massive shift of jurisdiction from civil courts to military commissions, particularly for offences which are political in nature. The only appeal for judgements of military commissions is through the secretary of National Defence to the President. Thus, the Supreme Court's theoretical ability to provide a constitutional check on arbitrary executive action has been drastically reduced.

In sum, stripped of its jurisdiction and its independence, the judiciary of the Philippines has become totally ineffective in preventing violations of human rights... The rule of law is authoritarian presidential - military rule, unchecked by constitutional guarantees or limitations.139

In addition to assuming enormous police and judicial functions, the military had also been delegated administrative authority at the municipal, provincial, and national levels of government. In accordance with Marcos's model of "constitutional authoritarianism", provincial governors and town majors have been deprived of any independent legal base of authority. "Provincial military commands of ten times have the final say in the running of local affairs, making the governor a mere figure-head of the non-existent "civilian authority".140 In addition, since


the military is the only organised power base of the Marcos regime, it has de facto been transformed into the nation's only legitimate political party. The military command had become the arena of political conflict between different groups backing the regime.

The combination of economic and political power would inevitably breed corruption. Military personnel have been allowed to take over the rackets of members of Congress and the protection rackets run by local policemen at soaring rates of interests. Lower level military groups, "unable to share in the graft of their commanders, engage themselves in syndicated kidnapping for ransom, arson, murder, carnapping and robbery holdup". The military personnel had been accused of grabbing land from the tribes-folk. Corruption extended to the battlefield itself. The gun, political power and economic privilege were an explosive combination. So the military were able to spin a web of corruption, repression and human rights violations all over the country.

The militarization process which evolved during the early years of martial law years was itself the logical

141 Walden Bello and Severina Rivera, op. cit., p.42.
142 Ibid., p.43.
result of the active effort to stamp out the political opposition through a speedy military action. The military campaigns managed to break the armed resistance, both in the cities and the countryside, but only temporarily. By 1975, the national democratic movement had weathered the impact of the declaration and started to rebuild its crippled organisations, beginnings of an elaborate underground system were taking form among workers, urban poor and students, while new guerilla fronts were opened by the NPA in Northern Luzon, the Visayas and Southern Mindanao.

Meanwhile, in Mindanao, the tension between the regime and MNLF forced the government to seek negotiations for a solution to the Muslim problem. With the initiative of the Islamic conference, the government and MNLF opened negotiation in 1976 leading to a cease-fire agreement. This agreement provided for a cease-fire together with mutual moves by both sides to establish political autonomy in the Muslim areas. The agreement broke down after the


144 Ibid., pp.6-7.
MNLF accused Marcos of duplicity and by mid-1977 war, albeit on a lesser scale, broke out once more. The MNLF was factionalised and demoralised, partly due to Marcos's astute political manoeuvring during the mid-seventies and partly due to the massive military campaigns of the AFP, killing thousands and thousands of Muslims. But they regained power and became more active in open confrontation. MNLF was able to show occasional flashes of its logistical capability and the NPA was conducting a series of ambushes more frequently than ever.

The early years of the authoritarian rule of Marcos were responsible for militarization through arrests, detention and different kinds of military operations in the countryside. As a result of this, human rights violations were increasing. Localities suspected of being 'sympathetic' to the 'rebels' became targets for intensified military activity. The kinds of tactics employed by the government military forces in attempts to contain the growing support for the rebels cause, range from the declaration of 'free-fire zones' to establishing 'strategic

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146 Ibid.
hamlets' to 'salvaging' - (the arbitrary execution of individuals suspected of subversion).

The 'Free - Fire zone' tactic was intended to isolate popularly supported guerillas from the peasantry, and is one of the most brutal and indiscriminate tactics devised in modern warfare. This technic involved the forced evacuation of people from their ancestral property and the conversion of the affected area into a zone where anything that moves is fair game for the military.

It was reported that after the declaration of martial law in 1972, 50,000 peasants were forcibly ejected from approximately 150 villages in Isabella province in a manoeuvre to isolate the NPA guerillas from the people.\textsuperscript{147} This kind of relocation has been carried out in different parts of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao regions.\textsuperscript{148} As many as ten families crammed into a room in the temporary shanties was a common scene in most of these places. This was really adding to the already desperate food shortage, and to the prevalent diseases such as dysentery, pneumonia and

\textsuperscript{147} Philippines Repression and Resistance, \textit{op.cit.}, p.120.

\textsuperscript{148} The Philippines is divided into three regions from North to South as Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
bronchitis. Those who refused to leave their homes and farms faced harassment and intimidation from the military by way of extortion, the burning of huts and crops, the confiscation and killing of animals, rape, illegal detention, torture and economic blockades. This kind of massive 'search and destroy' campaign by the military against suspected dissidents followed the introduction of martial law. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, a human rights organisation, reported that complaints against the military average 54,000 every year. 149 General Ramos himself has been forced to admit that complaints about military abuse poured in at the rate of 150 per day. 150

Systematic pattern of militarization operations has characterised AFP campaigns in Mindanao, particularly in the Muslim areas. As a result of these operations in Lebak of Cotabato province, 500 civilians were killed from February to June 1973. It was estimated that by the end of 1979 around 90,000 innocent Muslim civilians had died due to militarization process, while no less than 250,000 houses

and thousands of Mosques were burned. These figures indicate that the murder of civilians was in genocidal proportions. As early as 1974, the Philippines government admitted to having created more than one million refugees as a result of its military activity aimed at wiping out the MNLF opposition. The repressive measures used by the military have taken on new disturbing dimensions.

'Strategic hamletting' tactic used by the armies of U.S and South Vietnam against the Vietnamese people during the Indochinese war was implemented in the Philippines as a relocation strategy. It has been estimated that 300,000 civilians have been affected in 11 provinces of Mindanao in at least 225 hamlet centres since the implementation of this tactic. Local human rights organisations claimed that random killings, torture, harassment and destruction of properties have been an integral part of militarization process in various ways.

151 Philippines Repression and Resistance, op.cit., p.58.
152 Horacio V. Paredes, op.cit., p.8.
153 The strategic hamlets of Mindanao, (Mindanao : Mindanao Documentation Committee for Refugees, 1982), Monograph.
Amnesty International Mission to the Philippines (1981) observed that:

...the Security Forces of the Philippines have systematically engaged in practices which violate fundamental human rights, including the right to life, the right to security of person, and the rights against arbitrary arrest and detention.154

The AFP was involved in massive counter insurgency operations with the support of U.S military strategists. The largest counter-insurgency programme ever undertaken in the Philippines was launched in early 1983 - entitled 'Oplan Katatagan'. This was designed to "win the hearts and minds of the people through military operations and civil relations". But the AFP did not gain any support from the eighty percent impoverished Filipinos, because the AFP was instrumental in crushing striking workers who refused to work 16-24 hour shifts, fixing on picket lines of those in desperate need of better wages, shooting at 3,000 hungry coconut farmers protesting a tax of pesos 60 per 100 Kg of Copra, the massacre of 45 men, woman and children, indiscriminately firing on boycott marchers, or murdering a respected tribal leader who helps his people resist a

The escalation of militarization in the Philippines under President Marcos was primarily a response to political threats to the unpopular authoritarian regime. (The deployment of armed forces in areas where popular opposition is represented by the armed groups of the NPA and MNLF, and the subsequent, systematic militarization, abuse of civilian populations reaching genocidal proportions, etc are the manifestations of repression and human rights violations in a military dominated civilian rule.) The dominating presence of the military everywhere became an integral part of Philippine politics. There was, more importantly, a conscious policy to instill military values among the people as part of the effort to create, a new culture under the new political order.

The principal legacy of the martial law period and the period after the lifting of martial law was the massive increase in the size and role of the Armed Forces and the consequent militarization of the Philippine society. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) has estimated

155 ACFOA document, op.cit., p.5.
156 Abinalas, op.cit., p.18.
that, since martial law the rights of nearly a million Filipinos had been violated directly. The violations took various forms. The pattern of military abuses thus began to take shape under the catch-all phrase "national security", whole range of activities, from looting to arrest, torture and murder was given effective sanction. Most victims of human rights violations, about 70 to 80 percent, were farmers. Other victims were workers, students, human rights activists, etc. Under the Marcos regime militarization became rampant and human rights violations were gross and systematic.