CHAPTER V

INCREASE OF MILITARIZATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Several factors contributed to the increase of militarization in the Philippines.

U.S Intervention in Philippine Affairs

The U.S interest in the Philippines goes back to 1898 when the Philippines became an American colony by virtue of the 'Treaty of Paris' in which the U.S bought the Philippines from Spain for $20 million. Thus began the American "benevolent assimilation" of the Philippines. In order to occupy the land and establish their supremacy, the U.S had to face bloody resistance with the Filipino nationalists. The magnitude of the resistance was such that "the first three years of American rule were marked by the slaughter of somewhere between 600,000 and a million Filipinos." ¹

America was then rising as a world power. Her technology was growing fast, and her industries were producing more than the local American market could consume.

The U.S was in need of colonies to absorb her surplus products and capital, and to supply her with raw materials. Resource rich Asia was attractive; and in America’s scheme to penetrate the continent, the Philippine was to play an important role. This was the real interest of U.S in the Philippines.

When the Americans came to the Philippines, it was in the "name of God, to civilize, christianize and educate the Filipinos". This had been the reason for American colonization in the Philippines which they propagated. But the real reason was provided by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge when he urged President McKinley to retain Philippines as a colony because Filipinos were good source of cheap labour.2 William Howard Taft, the first U.S Civil Governor of the Philippines, asked Washington to hold the Philippines as a colony in order to guarantee a stable investment climate for U.S investment in the Philippines.3

Spanish colonialism in the Philippines which lasted for three centuries prevented the full development of Philippine society. The backwardness of the Philippines

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3 Ibid.
made the country attractive for the neo-colonialist designs of the United States. Furthermore, the Philippines is geographically close to China, a country whose vast population and backward economy then could prove to be a profitable market; and the Philippines is also right at the doorstep of the Southeast Asian region. Given this situation, it was imperative for the U.S to control the Philippines in order to achieve her economic and political ends in the region.

About half a century of U.S occupation has changed the entire fabric of Philippine life. Alejandro Lichauco describes this situation as follows:

U.S. presence was felt in the highest levels of Philippine politics, bureaucracy, remotest rural areas, schools, strategic sectors of Philippine economy, social and cultural life, military establishment and it determined the Philippine foreign policy.

The U.S colonial occupation overlaid the Philippines with greater extent of American influence in each and every sector of Philippine society. This phenomenon has resulted in a pervasive colonial mentality among the Filipinos, and

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it keeps raising its ugly head in so many ways and places, destroying the spirit and integrity of the Filipino citizens.

Dependence Tactics

From a closer analysis, it is clear that U.S policies in the Philippines have been aimed at protecting two main concerns; U.S economic interests and U.S strategic interests. So great was the economic advantage the Philippines offered to the U.S that then the President McKinley gave all kinds of excuses for keeping the Philippine Islands a colony. U.S interest required that it keep the Philippines under her possession while the Filipino people were struggling to achieve independence.

In a speech made on January 9, 1900 in the U.S Senate, arguing for colonization, Senator Albert Boveridge asked: "Where shall we turn for consumers of our surplus?" His answer was: "China is our natural customer.... The Philippines will give us a base at the door of all the East."\(^5\) The U.S Congress moved quickly after colonization to

pass Tariff acts of 1901 and 1902, which lowered tariff rates on U.S exports to and imports from the Philippines. The Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909 and the Underwood-Simms Act of 1913 abolished tariffs on all goods except sugar, tobacco and rice and abolished all quotas, allowing unlimited trade between the U.S and the Philippines.

Throughout the whole colonial period, the U.S was pre-occupied with the establishment of her economic, political, cultural and military domination in the Philippines. On the economic front, the U.S passed laws to establish and protect her investments and to tie the basically agrarian economy of the Philippines to her industrial economy. On the political front, the Americans butchered Filipino revolutionaries and trained the native elite for the role of intermediaries governing the island on behalf of their American Masters. On the cultural front, the U.S established an educational system patterned after theirs, breeding colonial-minded Filipinos in the process, and encouraged the growth of the native obscurantist culture. On the military front, the U.S established military bases in the Philippines, and

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employed Filipino soldiers trained by, and under the guidance of the Americans.

The nationalist movement calling for Philippine independence developed, taking concrete form in countless militant demonstrations participated in by thousands of patriots. By this time, the American economy had already recovered from the depression and the U.S could afford to be altruistic. The U.S also wanted to show to the world that, guided by the ideals of democracy, she would grant independence to her colony. While she talked about granting Philippine independence, U.S demanded that the Philippines should enter into certain agreements with them which would place the Philippines under continued American domination and dependence.

Some of the treaties and agreements concluded by U.S with the Philippines were; The U.S-R.P Treaty of General Relations. The U.S-R.P Mutual Defence Pact, The Laural-Langley Agreement, (revised Bell Trade Act), Economic and Technical Co-operation Agreements, Agricultural Commodities Agreements, etc. These were framed to retain the economic

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7 Ibid.
and strategic interests of the United States in the Philippines and this became a trap.

U.S Economic Interests

The Philippines continued to be a very lucrative place for U.S investment. The U.S was making substantial profits from the Philippines. U.S trade in the Philippines has been a major source of income.

The U.S share of Philippine trade shot up from 11% in 1900 to 72% by 1935. In 1945, the U.S High Commissioner to the Philippines, Paul McNutt, told the U.S Congress that

when you say trade in the Philippines, you mean the national economy and I might and should say here and now that we managed it that way. We are responsible for the sole dependence of the Philippines on American market.

The passage of the Rehabilitation Acts on April 30, 1946 gives significant indicators of U.S primary interests in the Philippines. Then Senator Millard Tydings, the sponsor of the rehabilitation legislation had stated that the Philippines had been the sixth largest customer for U.S

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8 Hearings before the Committee on ways and means, House of Representatives on the Philippine Trade Act on 1945, quoted in PAHRA Report, op.cit.
goods before the war and that American jobs depended upon the rehabilitation of the Philippine economy. In this connection, Paul McNutt observed:

It was imperative for U.S business to dominate in the Pacific; that the Philippines should be the Asiatic springboard for Asiatic trade dominance; that the Philippines could not achieve stability, provide an outlet and example for U.S trade unless we did everything necessary to rehabilitate it.

American high-handed techniques were clearly evident at that time. The Rehabilitation Act which provided $620 million as compensation for war damage, provided irresistible leverage in exacting acceptance of a trade legislation with Philippines. Even after the withdrawal of the U.S from the Philippines as the ruling power, U.S economic dominance continued in the Philippines.

In 1946, the Philippines signed the Bell Trade Act which provided for the U.S to establish free trade, parity and unlimited entry of U.S capital into the Philippines. In 1946 itself, when the U.S granted final independence to the Philippines, many of the colonial economic policies remained. Just before independence, the U.S Congress

9 Quoted in Charito Planes, _op.cit._, p.5.
passed the Philippine Trade Act which provided that U.S citizens would have the same rights as Filipinos to exploit the natural resources and operate public utilities in the Philippines.

U.S economic interest in the Philippines was prospering. During the 30 years after formal independence, from 1946 to 1976, every dollar invested by U.S corporations brought in a profit of $3.58. Of this amount, $2.00 was repatriated to the U.S. This was a far greater return on investment than could be made in the industrialised world. 'Asia Monitor' reported that U.S direct investment brought in six percent more profit in the Philippines than in the developed countries between 1966-1976. One hundred and sixteen U.S multinationals among the top one thousand corporations in the Philippines in 1978 had assets totalling 13 billion pesos. In addition, by December 1980, branches of major American banks had assets totalling some P

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billion.\textsuperscript{12} This was made possible by the U.S companies because of the new policies introduced by Marcos. Taking full advantage of the open-door policy of the martial law regime, the U.S companies consolidated their hold in key areas of the economy and expanded their operations to the preferred areas. Apart from the wanton violation of human rights, economic nationalism also became a major casualty of martial law.

The U.S business community has been an ardent defender of 'peace and order' in the Philippines and was one of the strongest supporters of President Marcos' declaration of Martial Law in 1972. Among the first messages of congratulations was one from the American Chamber of Commerce and it read:

\begin{quote}
The American Chamber of Commerce wishes you every success in your endeavour to restore peace and order, business confidence, economic growth and well-being of the Filipino people and nation. We assure you of our confidence and co-operation in achieving these objectives. We are communicating the feelings of our associates and affiliates in the United States.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} Komite ng Sambayanang Filipino. \textit{In the Face of Adversity}, (Holland: KSP, 1982), p.42.

\textsuperscript{13} quoted in PAHRA Report, \textit{op.cit.}, p.10.
Frank Zingaro, Vice President of Caltex, the largest U.S multinational operation in the Philippines, stated, more bluntly that "martial law has significantly improved the business climate." 14

Martial law was effected to bring about the stability required by American interests. Just four months after martial law was declared, a New York Times article, noting the trends in American international investment, commented that 'the Philippines has become eminently attractive to foreign investors'. 15 The paper quoted one diplomat in Manila as saying:

There is a new receptiveness to foreign investment and to the participation of foreigners in business here. President Marcos is making more positive sounds and overtures to foreign investment than any of his predecessors. 16

American investment, crucial to the Philippine economy as it was structured, accelerated its rate of entrance into the Philippines fifteen-fold between 1970 and 1974. According to a Central Bank Report, seventy percent of the

14 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
U.S direct investment in the first six years of the 1870's had come to the Philippines\(^\text{17}\) after authoritarian stability with its accompanying investment incentives were established. The new climate under martial law and the New Society's plan for industrialisation relied almost totally on the transnational corporations. TNC's were growing fast and enjoying the attractive new infrastructural set-up.

The countryside became even more of a haven for foreign capitalists through their connections with agribusiness corporations and agricultural exports. Of the 3.2 billion pesos in Philippine government expenditures allotted to the agricultural sector, over 3 billion pesos directly facilitated this increasing foreign encroachment through infrastructure projects alongside programmes to expand commercial production of crops destined for both export and the urban food markets.\(^\text{18}\)

The result has been that more and more land was devoted to cash crops for export at the expense of stable food


crops. Every year Philippines had to import more rice for internal consumption.

The countryside was ablaze with activity as land consolidation continued. The government allotted land to TNC's and they produced export crops. The government's Inter-agency Committee on Bananas "allowed banana plantations to increase their holdings, usurping land that once grew coconut, corn and rice for the local market and subsistence sector.\textsuperscript{19} With the expansion in agribusiness, the food processing sector grew to employ one-third of the total labour force in manufacturing. Authoritarianism had brought with it feudalism again. The political system supported by the military aided and abetted landgrabbing by transnationals, evictions by landlords, and profiteering by foreign industrialists. As a result of this, peasants were uprooted and became jobless. Martial law and the militarization process catered to the needs of foreign industrialists. The military was always in the forefront to ban strikes and suppress the striking labourers.

When the military was helping the TNC's, the Philippine economy was passing through a crisis. Foreign capitalists and

\textsuperscript{19} Robin Broad, \textit{op.cit.}, p.58.
their domestic partners have brought the Philippine economy to an inflation rate of 40 percent in 1977, the second highest in Asia, and a rural unemployment rate of over 30 percent. As a result of these, inequality was spreading widely in Philippine society. The richest 5 percent was receiving 25 percent of total family income, while the poorest 50 percent was receiving less than 18 percent.

The Philippine economy was really experiencing serious difficulties. From the point of view of the Filipino people, the unfortunate economic consequence of U.S-Philippine relations was that the country's economy was more than ever before dominated and exploited by U.S capital. The military was deputed to create and maintain a favourable climate for TNC's. TNC's were coming to engage in manufacturing or in the exploitation of natural resources, obviously to profit by the inducements offered by the martial law regime: Cheap labour, low wages, no strikes or protest, impotent unions, etc.

20 ILO Report, quoted in Robin Broad, op.cit., p.61.

IMF and World Bank Policies

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are not as autonomous as to be above the national interests of specific donor states. By manipulating the role of the IMF and the World Bank, the U.S transformed the Philippines through their impact influence and stake in the economy before and after martial law. Continued support for the Marcos administration by these international agencies after the martial law declaration intensified the growth of authoritarian repressive rule.

The IMF and the World Bank continued to serve as the U.S instruments for retaining the feudal structure of Philippine society as suppliers of cheap labour and agricultural and other raw materials. By and large, the IMF-WB standard prescriptions for financially ailing economies have been the dutiful re-alignment of the latter's fundamental structures to conform to market requirements of developed economies. The U.S had effectively utilised aid flows as a leverage to force compliance to dictated economic and financial objectives that, more often than not, served the common cause of advanced capitalist nations rather than
the nation these funds were intended to benefit. U.S long-term strategic and political objectives, which include the maintenance of a suitable and stable business climate in the Philippines, most conducive to the promotion of U.S investments and the protection of its capital are thereby served.

Recapitulated, the IMF-WB strategy during the Marcos era was: massive lending for rural development with emphasis on agricultural production, utilisation of labour-intensive industries with strong participation of foreign capital, a continuing drive to open up the economy by abolishing import restrictions and freeing foreign exchange to market forces, etc. Rural development and agricultural expansion do not simply mean more farmers tilling the land and producing more for their local consumption. The World Bank continued to encourage individual projects providing rural and urban infrastructure and agricultural credit. Everything was designed according to the needs of the United States or its close friends in the Philippines like the landlords or higher officials.

23 Ibid.
The IMF, World Bank, U.S Economic Aid institutions, etc., worked within the framework to fund projects that exaggerated even further the distortions of the Philippine developmental process. The U.S military aid insured domestic police and military forces capable of catering to the needs of U.S capitalists to reap profits from their domination of major sectors of Philippines economy. These international agencies were in favour of an authoritarian government which, they thought, would promote the interests of U.S companies rather than Filipino interests. Through its domination of multilateral and bilateral aid institutions, the U.S imposed its will on the Philippine system, constraining both the economic and the social development.²⁴

When IMF and World Bank were granting more money to the Philippines, this money was neither utilised for the development of the underdeveloped area nor for the upliftment of the marginalised sector in the society. The authorities were interested in the city oriented projects and money was spent lavishly for this. Numerous cases were reported from rural as well as urban areas on the plight of the people due to the so called 'development' strategy of

²⁴ Robin Broad, op.cit., p. 62.
The Tondo Foreshore Project in Metro-Manila was a typical example of the repressive measures taken by the martial law government. The squatters in Tondo had inhabited a strip of land since World War II. When the World Bank realised the commercial value of their land, it suggested the construction of an industrial-commercial-port complex in that particular area. It funded the construction as well as that of a resettlement area for the squatters in another place. The latter was planned to avoid any obstruction from the squatters. In order to avoid the organised protest of the people, the rulers used different tactics. When the World Bank mission came to the Philippines to discuss this Project, one of the most vocal leaders, Trinida Herrera, was silenced by arrest and torture.

In reality, through various types of financial assistance the international agencies continued to support authoritarianism and repression in the Philippines. As a result of this, repressive measures of the Marcos regime and the human rights situation worsened.

Exposure to different rural and urban areas and interview with local people revealed these facts and the researcher is personally convinced of this.
As a U.S Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported in 1973:

We found few, if any, Americans who took the position that the demise of individual rights and democratic institutions would adversely affect U.S interests. In the first place, these democratic institutions were considered to be severely deficient. In the second place, whatever U.S interests were— or are—they apparently are not thought to be related to the preservation of democratic processes. Even in the Philippines, our own colonial step-child and "showcase of democracy" in Asia, the United States appears to have adopted a new pragmatism, perhaps because there was no other choice, turning away from the evangelical hopes and assumptions with which it has tended to look at political evolution. ²⁶

Over the past four decades, the Philippine economy has become so intimately integrated with the international institutions under the guise of U.S interests. The country's economy was dominated and exploited by U.S capital. International monetary agencies were financing more debt and development programmes catering to the interests of U.S. All this created nothing but a neo-colonial dependence.

In his study on International Actors and their Role in Developing Authoritarianism in the Philippines, Robin Broad stated:

The Philippines' fate is that of a semi-colonial feudal economy supplying raw materials to the United States through American transnational corporations backed by international actors who continue, with an ever stronger grip, to lend support and credibility to social and political stability.27

Strategic Interests

The Philippines signed two defence related agreements with the U.S in 1947. The first was Military Bases Agreement signed with U.S for a 99 year term. The second agreement facilitated the training and equipment of the Philippine armed forces by the U.S. Alejandro Lichauco, noted Filipino economist, criticises these agreements in this way:

Imperialism reduced our military establishment to a virtual adjunct of the armed forces of the U.S. The composition, capability and schedule of development of the armed forces of the Philippines is under the effective control of the U.S government.28

From the very beginning of U.S connection with the Philippines, U.S policy has been framed in such a way as to maintain a pro-American attitude among the Filipinos.

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27 Robin Broad, op.cit., p.84.
Political stability under a pro-American President in Manila has been perceived by the U.S as a pre-requisite to the smooth and uninterrupted maintenance of its military bases in the Philippines. 29

U.S interest was always to install a pro-American President in the Philippines, and the Washington lobby was powerful in Manila before Presidential elections. In 1953 U.S openly supported the candidature and campaign of Ramon Magsaysay. This shows that the U.S was able to infiltrate into the social and political affairs of the Philippines even after decolonization.

The Philippines' strategic location serves to make it a military outpost to protect, preserve, as well as promote interests in the Pacific. Of the 25 military bases that the U.S operates in the Philippines, Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base have figured prominently during the Korean and Vietnam wars. 30 The Philippines forms an indispensible part of the chain of the U.S strategic bases embracing the Alentian midway, which was a Japanese mandated island in


30 Lichauco, op.cit., p.83.
Okinawa. This provides the U.S 'the most advanced and vital point' in the Pacific Ocean area.\textsuperscript{31}

**U.S Military Bases**

The U.S operates 25 military bases in the Philippines on 180,000 acres of land leased for 99 years. Clark Air Base, north of Manila, is one of the largest air bases in the world servicing F-4 Phantom bombers and B-57 squadrons. Subic Bay Naval Base, further north of Manila is the largest naval base in Asia with nuclear submarine facilities. It is the headquarters and supply base of the Pacific 7th Fleet and aircraft carriers Kitty Hawk, Saratoga, and Coral Sea. The other 23 bases are comparatively small, with facilities devoted to military communications, anti-submarine warfare and air combat training. The two major base complex is staffed by 15,400 military and defence department personnel, supplemented by 9,000 Seventh Fleet sailors in port at any given time.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31} Mahapatra, \textit{op.cit.}, p.604.

One of the conditions imposed by the U.S when it granted formal independence to the Philippines was the signing and approval of the Treaty of General Relations between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America on July 4, 1946. This treaty was to establish the legal basis for the continued existence of U.S bases in the Philippines and thereby the total nullification of Philippine independence. The U.S political and military elite saw the need for a global system of U.S military bases to back up what they anticipated as a post-war world-wide expansion of U.S economic and political influence. Hence, the U.S government insisted that the Philippines grant the U.S military and naval bases as the price of independence, and the Philippines conceded this in the US-RP Bases Agreement of 1947. D.B. Schirmer has observed:

...at the time of conquest and at the time of independence the U.S military intervened against armed Filipino nationalists, first by direct, then by indirect means, before using the Philippines as a base for military intervention elsewhere.

If the U.S military presence in the RP played a role in U.S support for repression in the Philippines at the turn of

34 Schirmer, op.cit., p.3.
the century and at the time of the Huks, it also underlay U.S support for martial law in 1972. The U.S government showed its support for the martial law dictatorship by heavily increasing U.S economic and military aid to the Philippines after its imposition. A staff Report prepared for the use of the U.S Senate Committee on Foreign Relations asserted that 'key officials' recognised that 'military' bases and a familiar government are more important than the preservation of democratic institutions.35

From the very beginning, U.S bases in the Philippines have been important to the U.S high command as starting points for U.S military intervention in Asia. The Marcos dictatorship gave its assent to Pentagon's plans to use Philippine bases for military intervention in the Middle-East. The Pentagon finds Philippines bases important for another reason even more threatening to the sovereignty and well-being of the Philippine people. Marcos allowed the U.S to bring nuclear armed ships and planes into the Philippines and to store nuclear weapons there, without telling the Philippine people. One of the first moves of Marcos after

35 U.S Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, (1973), op. cit.
declaring martial law was to send a military aide to the U.S embassy with the message that he would not use his 36 martial law powers to interfere with the bases. On the contrary, for a decade, nationalist Filipinos had opposed the presence of nuclear weapons in the Philippines, claiming this tended to make their country a target for nuclear reprisal.

The Pentagon has projected the possibility of limited nuclear war for three areas in the world: Europe, the Korean Peninsula and the Middle East. The U.S bases in the Philippines provide a means to project limited nuclear war to two of these areas: the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula. There is a great probability that such a limited nuclear war would escalate to full-fledged nuclear war between the U.S and U.S.S.R. The Philippines, as the warehouse of these nuclear installations and carriers would inevitably be a primary target of a nuclear retaliation.

The U.S government used the maintenance of the U.S bases in the Philippines as a justification for funnelling hundreds of millions of dollars in military and other forms

of aid to the repressive Marcos dictatorship. This aid was used to thwart the human rights and legitimate aspirations for democracy and self-determination of the Filipino people.

The U.S kept increasing such aid for fourteen years, even as the popular opposition to the dictatorship grew and became more intense. In the sixties and early seventies, the U.S government was using Philippine bases as the chief source of supply for the war in Vietnam, while at the same time Philippine demonstrations against the war and the bases' role in that war were growing.\(^{37}\) In these circumstances, a repressive Philippine government suited the needs of Washington and it made no mistake in its reliance on Marcos.

It is really true that nowhere else can Americans exploit such a huge work-force for a mere pittance. Filipino workers in the bases are paid far less than the American workers and the U.S bases here are a paymaster's dream. Much is often made of the fact that the bases employ at least 40,000 Filipinos, which is less than one percent of the Philippine non-agricultural labour force, and that the

bases pump some $260 million annually into the local economy. 38

Under Marocs the bases prospered, but not the people of the Philippines. By the mid 1970's seven out of every ten Filipinos were worseoff economically as a result of martial law. Opposition to the dictatorship increased. Communist-led guerilla organisation was growing in rural and urban areas. Anti-bases voices and protests were on the increase. Despite all this opposition against the U.S, Washington had supported the dictator Marcos for all these years because he had seemed capable of protecting the status quo in the Philippines. D.B.Shirmer makes it clear in this way:

As it became evident, after the Aquino assassination, that this was no longer the case, important segments of the Reagan Administration began to make connections with the elite opposition in Philippine politics and the military, leaving the President and the White House to hang on to the Philippine dictator to the very last minute. 39

Though nuclear war and wars of intervention may seem a rather distant menace, U.S military bases affect the sovereignty and well-being of the Philippine in a very

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immediate and brutally palpable way: they keep in power a dictatorship that thwarts and obstructs the free national development of the Philippines—in the interests of a foreign power. The Marcos dictatorship was an onerous burden on the whole of Philippine society, and it is U.S economic and military support that has played a large part in keeping Marcos in power.

The bases serve not only to project American nuclear might globally they have also been used as launching pads for U.S intervention in the internal affairs of the Philippines. U.S forces operating out of the bases have traditionally performed “civic action” operations in Philippine rural areas. Even more disturbing have been the instances of concrete military support provided by the bases for anti-guerilla operations conducted by the Philippine Armed Forces. One of the most destructive interventions performed by the bases were their vital role in propping up the Marcos regime, which widely regarded as one of the world’s worst human rights violators.

40 Ibid., p. 13.
In January 1979, Marcos and President Jimmy Carter signed an Executive Agreement amending the Military Bases Agreement of 1947. In return for the unhampered use of the bases', the U.S agreed to provide the Philippine dictator with more than $500 million in military and military-related aid between 1979 and 1984 - this, at a time when the people of the United States were demanding cuts in an already inflated arms budget. This weaponry, consisting mainly of weapons for internal use, like OV-10 anti guerilla planes, have been used for the repression of the Filipino people. The killing, beating and rape of Filipinos by U.S servicemen was a common occurrence. The crimes and abuses committed by U.S servicemen against Filipino civilians were not within the reach of judicial proceedings -- which had always been the case since 1947. Non-assumption of Philippine jurisdiction over crimes and human rights abuses attested to the fact that the U.S base commands still distrusted the criminal justice system of the country when applied to their erring military personnel.

Over the years, popular movements forced the Philippine government to negotiate with U.S to terminate the

41 Ibid., p.19.
42 Anti-Bases coalition document, op.cit., p.9.
agreements, but the Philippine rulers used this opportunity to ask for more financial assistance. As a result of this, new adjustments took place and these always helped to cater the needs of the new strategic plans of the U.S.

**U.S Military Assistance**

The Philippines has been a recipient of the U.S Military Assistance Programme (MAP) since 1947. After the imposition of martial law the military aid to the Philippines increased immensely. During the period of 1973-76 the amount totalled $166.3 million. This was 106 percent more than the total assistance of $80.8 million in the preceding four year period (1969-72). The total military assistance programme for the Philippines in 1973 was not only more than double that for 1972 but also sixty percent above the request originally cited at Congressional hearings.

Each and every year, the authoritarian regime required a greater shot of military aid, and each year, the U.S was only too willing to oblige. These jumps, moved the Philippines from spot number 16 in the list of the 62

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nations receiving U.S military assistance to a high place at number 9 in 1972. With the imposition of martial law, the Philippines somehow became one of the "allied and friendly countries" eligible for the Foreign Military Sales credit, and simultaneously acquired the distinction of being one of four countries relying on FMS alongside MAP, the latter programme supposed to have been terminated by 1978. The Philippines was to be an exception with MAP appropriations increasing to 18.1 million in 1979.

Accompanying this externally supported militarization of the Philippine society, was a revamping of priorities for the internal distribution of government expenditures. The defence expenditure allocation boomed, from 14 percent before 1972 to 20 percent in the 1973-75 period, while the share of government expenditure allocated to social services plummeted. The "New Society", paradoxically as it appears, did not need a healthy, educated constituency to bolster its power. But it did need the military.

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Robin Broad, op. cit., p. 52.
A study on Human Rights and the U.S Foreign Assistance Programme in East Asia revealed that...

...there have been huge and unprecedented increases in money and man power for the Philippine military and paramilitary forces. While the population has increased 10%, the size of all armed forces has increased 94%. The military budget has risen more than two and one half times faster than the gross national product, and a staggering eight times faster than the GNP on a per capita basis.47

Following a pattern the U.S had set beginning in the days of the Huks, the military assistance programmes were geared for counter-insurgency operations. Section 606 of the Foreign Assistance Act prohibited aid for police training, and Washington acknowledged that no external threat faced the Philippines. Yet in 1979 alone, $700,000 was budgeted for training the AFP, a military that shared personnel, facilitates and duties with the Philippine Constabulary, the official police force.48

Massive U.S intervention and influence in internal affairs of Philippines occurred throughout the authoritarian rule of Marcos. U.S spent a huge amount of money for


48 Robin Broad, op.cit., p.53.
International Military Training Programme in the Philippines. The amount increased from $700,000 to $1.3 million. Training under this programme included techniques of torture uniformly used by Third World Military personnel.

In a policy statement made public in the spring of 1985, the U.S State Department said: "the U.S does not want to remove Marcos from power or to destabilize the government of the Philippines". This happened despite Marcos's continued repressive measures and institutionalised human rights violations through the AFP. The U.S Government was continuously arming the AFP. President Reagan had asked the American Congress to 'increase U.S military aid to Marcos in 1986 by 150% to assist in defeating the ongoing insurgency' in the Philippines.

While criticising the U.S intervention in the Philippines, Charito Planes, an advocate of nationalist policies and an ex-political detainee, condemning the U.S policies says:

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49 Charitto Planes, op.cit., p.28.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
The policymakers of the U.S have never learned from past mistakes. In China, they supported Chiang Kai Shek with all the arms and money that he needed and he lost. In Vietnam, the U.S experimented with its latest weaponry and spent billions of dollars and it lost. In Iran, the U.S provided the Shah with the most sophisticated weaponry and he did not even have the chance to use it. Like Duvalier and Marcos after him, had to flee from an enraged people. 52

The U.S strategies of influencing certain countries in the world have ranged from overt and covert activities that have included economic linkages or leverages, diplomatic pressurers, direct military and economic assistance, military intervention, aiding counter-insurgency operations, and pressures exerted through international monetary agencies, etc. As a result of this authoritarianism was growing.

The U.S interest and concern in the case of the Philippines is neither the defence of Philippines and wellbeing of the Filipinos nor the protection of democratic principles. Ultimately, U.S wanted to ensure the continued existence of military bases, the protection of American strategic and economic interest in the area, protection of

52 Ibid.
U.S investments and exploitation of the vast natural resources of the Philippines.

Insurgency Problem

The problem of insurgency is not at all a new phenomenon in the history of Philippine politics. But in the last two decades, insurgency has been a real threat and political problem in the Philippine society.

(a) The CPP-NPA insurgency

Communism came into the Philippines in the 1920s, the most active period of Soviet propaganda activity, from its first Asian footholds in China and the then Netherlands East Indies. On August 26, 1930, the Partidong Komunista ng Filipinas (PKP) - Communist Party of Philippines (CPP) was formally organised. The main aim was to unite all Filipino workers and peasants, work to improve their living and working conditions, overthrow the American colonial government and set up an independent Philippines.

In 1932 the Supreme Court of the Philippines declared the PKP an illegal organization and exiled its leaders to various outlying provinces. A few years later the party was restored to legality and since then the PKP has supported
strikes and fanned workers unrest. In 1938 the PKP merged with the Socialist Party, a peasant-based party that had been founded in 1932 in Pampanga Province. Having the highest tenancy rate in the country, Pampanga became the hotbed of agrarian unrest in the rice plain of Central Luzon.

During the Japanese occupation, the merged PKP founded a guerilla force—Hukbo ng Bayan Laban Sa Hapon or Hukbalahap—which fought not only the Japanese but also the region's landlords and their private armies.

The PKP was gradually growing and its position vastly improved. There was a split in the PKP in 1967, on ideological grounds, at the height of the Sino soviet dispute. On December 26, 1968—Mao's 75th birth anniversary—a group of radicals founded the Communist Party of the Philippines in a 'Congress of Re-establishment', held in a village in Pangasinan Province in Central Luzon. To differentiate it from the PKP, the CPP added to the new party's name the three sources of its corporate ideology,

‘Marxism, Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought’. Jose Ma Sison was the founding leader and other founding members were largely University students, teachers and professionals. Early the next year, they linked up with a small band of Huk strugglers headed by Bernabe Buscayno.54

On March 29, 1969—the anniversary of the original Huk Army—the CPP founded its ‘New People’s Army’ and began its protracted war against the state. The CPP-NPA started an experiment in urban-guerilla warfare. It also began setting up front organisations while stepping up the infiltration of student, worker, peasant groupings. Eventually, the CPP managed to infiltrate or establish and control nine major labour organisations into CPP fronts.55

54 During the martial law Jose Ma-Sisan and Bernabo Buscayano were in prison. When Cory Aquino came to power they were released as part of the release of political prisoners. They were freely moving in the country for a short period between March and December 1986. Military arrested again Buscayano in December 1986 and Jose Ma-Sison escaped from the country. This researcher had an interview with both Jose Ma-Sison and Buscayano when they came to attend a session at KMP International Conference held at Antipolo, Luzon in November, 1986.

Initially conceived as a propaganda apparatus, the NPA on its founding in 1969 engaged in political work among the peasants in Central Luzon, where most of its first guerilla regulars came from. When the AFP discovered the NPA camps in Tarlac province, AFP started operations against the rebels. AFP operations drove the insurgents to Isabela province in the Cagayan Valley of Northeast Luzon. There the mountainous terrain, the regions relative isolation and active popular support made it seem an ideal site for a guerilla base. Working feverishly, the guerilla setup operational bases throughout the Cagayan Valley. Eventually, their influence spread to other provinces such as Isabela, Kalinga-Apayo, Quirino, Ifugao, Mountain province and Nueva Vizcaya.

The NPA was speeding up its recruitment and transforming the NPA units into fighting units. Martial law in September 1972 found the insurgents sufficiently prepared. The official document claimed that ‘a powerful AFP counter-insurgency drive during the 1973-76 broke the back of the CPP/NPA’.

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
In 1974, the CPP leadership decided that the country's geographic conditions made impossible the setting up of any single large, 'liberated area'. As the CPP chairman, Amado Guierrro, wrote then: "In a small, fragmented country like the Philippines, it would be foolhardy for the central leadership to ensconce itself in the area...and consequently invite the enemy to concentrate his own forces there".\footnote{58 \textit{quoted in White Paper on Communist Insurgency, \textit{op.cit.}, p.14.}}

Guierrro called this recourse forced on the CPP-NPA, the strategy of 'centralized leadership decentralized operations'. The CPP-NPA defined a "guerilla front" as an area which had its own party organisation, its network of mass organisations, and an NPA unit that could function more or less independently over a long period of time. A front encompassed several adjacent towns and barrios, each territorial unit being called a guerilla zone. Guerilla forces in the fronts were normally organised into full-time guerillas, who engaged in purely military work; armed political workers, whose primary task was to organise local organs of political power; the so-called Sparrow Units, which were responsible for assassinations and similar violence; Unarmed political workers, who did preliminary
surveys of barrios prior to CPP-NPA expansion work; and militia units that protected CPP-NPA influenced barangays and aided, regular NPA forces in military operations.

Guerilla fronts existed in various parts of the country, generally in the less-accessible and more mountainous regions on the borders between provinces. Mindanao region offered the insurgents the largest Philippine landmass away from the centre of government. Development of the guerilla fronts was sharpening the distinction between regular guerillas and political cadres.

From the beginning of 1981 to August of 1984, 2320 military men and 2802 civilians were killed by the CPP-NPA insurgents. In 1984 alone the NPA killed over a hundred local officials, including ten Municipal mayors, for resisting their efforts to impose their clandestine government on local populations.58

Despite a huge and costly military buildup, the dictatorial regime of Marcos had failed to destroy the CPP and NPA. The escalation of terror and fear served only to rouse the broad masses of the people to armed resistance and

58 Ibid., p.17.
to strengthen the organised revolutionary forces. Increasing 
U.S military assistance was encouraging the dictatorship to 
be intransigent in its belief that it could always terrorize 
the people and impose on them its tyranny. At the same 
time, the people and their army led by the CPP had grown 
stronger and acquired more experience in the conduct of 
people's war. The increased strength of the NPA revealed 
the fact that 'correct application of the theory of people's 
war had repeatedly inflicted defeat on U.S imperialism and 
caused its general decline'. The NPA had moved from one 
level of strength to a higher one against an enemy that had 
a big headstart in military personnel, logistics and 
training. Over the years the gap between the NPA and AFP 
strength had been reduced.

Originally, the NPA had on March 28, 1969 only 20 
automatic rifles and 15 handguns in the second district of 
Tarlac, one town in Pampanga and another town in Zambalas. 
At that time AFP personnel numbered 50,000. The ratio then 
between NPA riflemen and AFP personnel was 1:25000.

60 Patnubay Liwanag, "The Losing Course of the Armed 
(Mimeographed).

61 Ibid.
Gradually, NPA's support and base increased. In this connection Patnubay Liwanag points out that

Certainly, the justness of the revolutionary cause, the people's all-round support and correct strategy and tactics more than made up for the dearth of arms on the side of the NPA. Otherwise, it would have been destroyed at that period.62

At the inception of martial law regime in 1972, the NPA had only some 350 guerilla fighters armed with high-powered rifles against 100,000 AFP regular military personnel. The ratio was 1:285. The NPA existed only in a few provinces, chiefly in Northern Luzon and Central Luzon. But in 1984 the NPA was known to have a military strength of 10 to 20,000 armed regulars, and operating in some 62 out of 73 provinces in the country.63 The Marcos dictatorship had made the ground more fertile for armed revolution throughout the country. The military strength of the NPA did not consist only of the guerilla fighters who were armed with high-powered rifles and who were mainly responsible for tactical offensives. There were armed propaganda teams and the armed city partisans who were irregularly armed with a mixture of rifles and handguns.

62 Ibid.
63 U.S Senate Staff Report to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, The Philippines: A Situation Report, November 1, 1985, pp. 1-8.
There was the militia which was several times larger than the full-time guerilla force of the NPA. The militia personnel had firearms as well as common weapons. They were the local police force of the revolutionary movement and the trained reserved force of the NPA. In their areas of operation, the NPA guerillas strengthened the organs of democratic power (committees of self government, working committees in various fields, education, health, economy arbitration, etc.) and mass organizations for workers, peasants, women, youth, children, etc., in order to bring into full play the people's support for the armed revolution.64

Because of the people's support, the NPA was very successful in mastering the working and location of a small enemy unit for the purpose of a raid as well as in getting to know enemy movements and in luring small enemy units for the purpose of an ambush. AFP operations against NPA became a vain effort because the people did not support them and with people's co-operation, the NPA could easily pinpoint AFP intelligence agents and informers. So, in sheer frustration the AFP vented their ire on the people and

64 Interview with NPA Commander in Mindanao
resorted to arbitrary arrests, torture, massacre, bombing, extortion, looting, arson, forced mass evacuation and fake mass surrenders.

The NPA became a major force and reached an advanced stage of strategic defensive capability in its people's war. Several hundreds of battle-tested NPA units were capable of launching tactical offensives with short rest periods, in accordance with flexible campaign plans issued by the front. The majority of the 1,500 towns and provincial capitals in the country were already within the scope of NPA offensive capabilities in 1986. The rifle strength of the NPA created a strategic stalemate.

Although the AFP appeared to be strong, it became an antipeople organisation. AFP was blinded by anticommunist indoctrination, and violently opposed the national and democratic interests of the people as these interests were misrepresented to its components as communist-inspired, by the U.S and local reactionaries. The abuses and atrocities continuously committed by the AFP goaded the people to wage armed resistance and bring about the downfall of the dictatorship of Marcos. The ever increasing cases of arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, assassination,
massacre, extortion, rape, arson, forced mass evacuation, reconcentration, etc., became fuel for armed revolution.

The AFP could not succeed in devising a strategy and tactics to quell the people's armed resistance effectively. Patnubay Liwang observes:

No amount of hired military personnel, modern equipment and training can ever defeat a people's war. The AFP can only expect defeat by perpetrating vicious acts of terrorism against the people and pretending to care for them in press releases and superficial projects of "civic action" which are, in fact, a way of sharpening their butcher knives. 65

The entire country and its countryside had become a wide area of manoeuvres by the armed revolutionary forces. And more importantly as broad masses of the people supported them.

MNLF - BMA insurgency

Mindanao was regarded as the region of the greatest dissent, carrying on the Moro People's history of unbroken resistance to foreign domination. Although the Moro people comprised less than thirty percent of the Mindanao

65 Patnubay, op.cit., p.2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Region</th>
<th>Strength of NPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I   Ilocos including - Pangasinan</td>
<td>969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II  Cagayan Valley</td>
<td>1,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Central Luzon</td>
<td>1,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV  Southern Tagalog</td>
<td>791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V   Bicol</td>
<td>1,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI  Western Visayas</td>
<td>3,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Central Visayas</td>
<td>1,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Eastern Visayas</td>
<td>2,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX  South Western Mindanao</td>
<td>1,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X   Northern Mindanao</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI  Davao, South Cotabato, - Surigo del Sur</td>
<td>3,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII Central Mindanao</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,994</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table - 4
GROWTH OF NPA STRENGTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Guerilla fighters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>10000 to 20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>22994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from different documents published by Ministry of National Defence (Philippines), U.S State Department, and NPA/CPP.

population, their warring spirit had seemingly infected all the islands of this southern most region of Philippines. They had historically maintained their independence from all colonizers in the Philippines - Spanish, American, and Japanese invaders. In their fight for existence as an
integral community, they had persevered in defending their ancestral territory and their cultural institutions. The Muslims were never entirely subdued during three centuries of Spanish domination and the 76 years of American hegemony despite several vicious massacres inflicted upon them.

In the early decades of the century, the U.S conducted punitive expeditions and committed barbarous massacres. The Americans made it a point to use Christian Filipinos in a systematic attempt to isolate and exterminate the Muslims. During the neo-colonial period following sham independence in 1946, the tactics changed from one of using Christian Filipinos to take up arms against their brother Muslims into one of arming the former with legal documents to infiltrate Muslim lands. Many of these settlers were the tenants of powerful absentee landlords who lived in Manila.

The Huks, or peasant insurgents, in the fifties and sixties surrendered to the government only to discover that the government had no intention of making any fundamental changes in their lives. These peasants were made to infiltrate what was left of the virgin lands, making it easier for U.S and other foreign corporate interests to increase their agro-industrial empires and for the non-
Before martial law was imposed in 1972, massive landgrabbing occurred in Mindanao under the Marcos administration, exacerbating the mistrust of the Muslims for the Central government, sharpening the class struggle, and intensifying the Muslims' resolve to combat their exploitation.

Over eighty percent of the Muslims were landless farmers or tenants. These people were exploited by landlords and foreign trans-national corporations engaged in agribusiness. The landlords colluded with corrupt government officials and military officers in manipulating the political and legal institutions to oppress the Muslims. Besides the Muslims, there are other equally or more oppressed groups struggling for fundamental democratic rights. They constitute about five percent of the diverse population of Mindanao.

Fifty five percent of the settlers in Mindanao were Christians, many of whom were as poor and wretched as the Muslims whose lands they used to encircle. But as the martial law regime continued to aggravate their living conditions and subjected them to various forms of injustice

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66 Felix Razon and Richard Hensman, op. cit., p. 44.
and persecution, they began to realize that the alleged contradiction between Muslim and Christian was a totally false one, contrived by their rulers to keep the oppressed from uniting together to repudiate their collective slavery. Muslim and Christian leaders, who were to meet the Pope during the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Philippines, circulated a statement of unity in order to clarify their position on communal harmony. They stressed that the war in the south was not a religious conflict but one that was caused by powerful economic and political interests, which took advantage of social and cultural differences between Muslims and Christians.

The insurgency in Mindanao was regarded as consisting of two movements, one Christian, the other non-Christian. The two groups moving in parallel directions gave the impression of a concerted attack against the regime, whether there was much deliberate collaboration between the two groups or not.

67 Ibid.
The armed struggle being led by the Moro National Liberation Front, and its armed wing Bangsa Moro (BMA), however, was being pursued with the end goal of seceding from the Philippine republic and establishing an Islamic state in Mindanao-Sulu-Palawan. This state which aimed to unite the 13 distinct Islamized ethnocentric groups of Mindanao was to be called the Bangsa Moro Republic (Moro Nation), carrying with it a concept of nationalism and nationhood borne out of a need to assert ethnic identity and cultivate ethnic consciousness outside the frame work of nationalist Filipino identity and consciousness.70 There was, however, no quarrel between the Moros and the nationalist Filipinos. The MNLF and National Democratic Front found their strength in a unified struggle. The nationalist Filipinos and the secessionist Moros pooled their efforts against the U.S-Marcos dictatorship. The most advanced minority groups were clearly taking the path of open armed resistance and revolt, and there was an

69 The term Moro originated in the 16th century from the Spaniards who saw a similarity between the religions of the Moors of South Africa and the Muslims of the Philippines.

upsurge in the number of minorities joining revolutionary, class-based and anti-imperialist movements. In this they differed from the MNLF in that they were articulating their demands within the framework of national demands.

Foremost of these demands were self determination and ethnic identity. More than three centuries of Spanish colonization created a gap between the Hispanized-Christianized developed 'majority' and the free and Islamised or tribal 'minority' who clung to their indigenous ways. American colonization completed the process started by the Spaniards. By military force and deceit, they crushed resistance in the whole archipelago. More than 200,000 Muslims and Christians died resisting the invasion. Biassed land laws paved the way for the massive land-grabbing of the minorities' ancestral lands. Government policies facilitated the establishment of foreign corporate investments in frontier areas.

In this situation, the Moro people were not isolated for while their ultimate goal was to assert a separate identity, they had the same mission as the Filipino nationalists - to

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71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
dismantle the U.S-Marcos dictatorship. "The enemy of my friend is also my enemy," was the oft-repeated quote during a dialogue between the MNLF and the NDF. One foresaw a more intensive collaboration among the different armed groups. In 1974, the MNLF declared the establishment of a revolutionary Bangsa Moro Republic. Politically, Muslims were conscious of being a distinct group, with a specific sense of nationhood. To them the civic community and the religious community were one. Their concept of ownership and their use of ancestral land differed from the economic structures of the lowland Filipino.

The authoritarian regime had increased its resistance to the popular movement through heavy military operations against the insurgents in Mindanao. The military had to face considerable difficulty from Muslim rebels. Fired up by the expose of massacre of Muslim trainees and driven to arms by intensifying terror perpetrated by fanatic Christian sects armed as paramilitary units by the army, the MNLF launched an offensive against the regime from early 1973 up to 1974. Seventeen towns were captured by MNLF forces in Catabato in March 1973, while in February 1974,

73 Ibid.
between 1,500 to 2,000 insurgents 'liberated' the major city of Jolo and held it for three days. 74

The military was continuously fighting against the Muslim insurgents. At the same time, support and aid from sympathetic Arab states helped the MNLF both economically and morally to fight against the military operations. By the end of 1975, the Muslim war in Mindanao led to a military stalemate, with the military unable to completely eradicate MNLF. But the latter was forced to shift to more unconventional forms of warfare. By this time, the military had to commit 85 percent of its forces to Mindanao at a cost of $137,000 a day. All in all, 20,000 government troopers lost their lives in seven years of fighting. 75

The most blatant incident of military overkill was the levelling of the city of Jolo, the historic centre of Philippine Muslim Culture and former headquarters of the Sultanate of Sulu. The military had fielded different strategies to stamp out the MNLF.

The massive naval shelling ... severely damaged both the Muslim Mosque and the Catholic


Cathedral and was mainly responsible for the fires that gutted the whole city. Evoking the parallel with Hue in 1968, one correspondent concluded that 'the government helped destroy a city in order to save it.'

The military operations in the Mindanao against Muslim insurgents had done immense damages. The army had put to the torch 535 mosques, 200,000 houses, and 35 towns and cities. In addition military overkill had created a refugee problem of massive proportions. By the bombardment of Jolo in 1974, 60,000 people were estimated to have been rendered homeless. The neighbouring state of Sabha (Malaysia) is reported to have received 30,000 Filipino refugees.

All these incidents made the Moros very angry against the Philippine government, and the Bangso Moro Army began an all-out war against Philippine domination over their homelands. In 1985, Gabriella Women's Coalition stated:

Had the people of Mindanao passively allowed the TNC's to exploit their resources, had they willingly accepted government policies that make such exploitation possible, and had they been contented to keep on retreating while 'economic development' drives them from their lands, the

76 Bello and Severaina, (eds.), op. cit., p.39.
77 Ibid.
Military presence in Mindanao, the Land of Promise, was so overwhelming that it came to be considered as the most militarized region not only in the Philippines but in the whole ASEAN region. According to a study by the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), there was roughly one soldier for every 100 inhabitants in Mindanao. This 1:100 soldier-to-civilian ratio outstripped the national ratio of 1:250. Spread across the island's 22 provinces were over 200,000 military forces. Of this, 50,000 belonged to the various para-military forces. In addition, there were 12,000 police personnel under the Integrated National Police and some 80,000 ICHDF. Beefing up further the number of armed personnel deployed in Mindanao were the various government-sponsored or supported fanatic groups.

As in most parts of the country, militarization in Mindanao was based on two objectives: to suppress the escalating people's resistance and to facilitate the entry

78 Gabriella Coalition Report, *op. cit.*, p.43.


and growth of TNCs so that militarization was most widespread in areas where the people's resistance was strongest and in areas where the incursion of big business interests were most intense.

Indigenous People's Struggle

About fifty recognised national minority groups in the Philippines comprised six to seven million people, or a slightly reduced average of 14 percent. As a result of the government's commercial, industrial and development projects, they were deprived of their basic rights to live and develop within their cultural tradition. They were not consulted nor was their agreement obtained in the planning and implementing of projects which affected their territory. Different indigenous Filipino groups strongly opposed, even violently, the occupation of their land, since land was held to be common property. The settlers, plantation owners, and logging firms laid private claims to the ancestral property of the indigenous people in different parts of the country. The indigenous groups offered strong resistance to any kind of encroachments. The Tinggians in Abra were confronted with the denudation and erosion of their ancestral land by the Cellophil Resource Corporation. The situation was the same with the tribal people in Bontoc and
Kalinga: the government's energy development plans involving the construction of hydro-electric plants, threatened the ancestral homelands and subsistence of some half a million tribals. The Mandayas, Bukidnan and Hanibos had lost their land to agri-business and multinational fruit companies, and had to settle for an impoverished life as agricultural workers.

The Igorots tribes, concentrated in four mountain provinces of the Philippines, had been dislocated from their land due to the encroachment of U.S companies. U.S mining, logging, real estate, plantation interests, with their unscrupulous Filipino junior partners, had begun large-scale expropriation of the Igorots land. Of the 17 largest mining firms in Benguet province, home of the Benguet tribe, the leading companies were largely owned by Americans, Canadians and Japanese citizens. Directly plundering the gold and mineral resources of the Igorots was the Benguet Consolidated Inc. 97% of whose stocks were owned by U.S citizens and foreign nationals.

When Marcos decreed in 1975 that only the mining companies could sell gold, Igorots were thus prohibited from panning for gold to support their IDOC.

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meagre farm income. Their privations were compounded by the 50% inflation and at least 35% unemployment which afflicted the whole country. The minorities suffered two or three times more than the Christian majority.82

In January 1974, Bontok peasants in the mountains of Mainit rose to fight against the Benguet Consolidated Inc. They protested the eventual pollution of their rivers, the destruction of their virgin forests, the killing of all fish and other food resources, and the loss of irrigation for their rice fields. Unheeded by government officials, they set up walls and barricades on the roads to block the mining personnel. Then, after several rebuffs, they attacked the company's camp, with the women taking the initiative, driving the speculators off their lands.

The Marcos dictatorship had planned to construct several dams along the Chico and Agno Rivers flowing through the Kalinga-Apayo, home of the Bontok and Kalinga tribes. This was designed to benefit the multinational corporations - for further commercial development of the area by plantation, mining, manufacturing and other capitalist

interests. The Tribals realised from past experiences that Marcos brand of capitalist development really served the greedy profit-making interests of U.S and other foreign corporations.

On several occasions, the government teams were confronted by the indigenous people armed with their traditional spears, shields and bolo knives. The different indigenous groups united against their common enemy: the U.S-Marcos dictatorship. After temporary suspension of its activities, the regime resorted to outright deception and intimidation, threats, bribery and eventually state violence. Faced with the grave threat to their survival, the tribal groups vowed to fight to protect their land. They had no alternative but armed resistance. The tribespeople had a distinct advantage over their enemy because they were on home terrain, the densely forested and rugged mountains that served as ideal sanctuary for guerilla operations.83

Anti-authoritarian revolt of militant tribesfolk inflicted severe punishment on the Marcos dictatorship. The government helicopters and jets straffed and bombed the

woodcarvers camps in Mount Polis and Mount Amujao in Ifugao Province, believing them to be guerilla bivouacs. This indiscriminate bombing, revealing to them the cowardice of the military stirred the revolutionary consciousness of the Igorots to face the guerillas on the ground. The government transformed the common border of the Igorot provinces into a 'free fire zones', Vietnam style, as it waged an encirclement campaign against suspected units of the NPA. This seriously disrupted the livelihood of the Igorots who had to flee to lowland areas hundreds of miles away.  

The tribal situation in the Philippines had direct links to the American neo-colonial policies to preserve and promote hegemonial gains. American interests over the country displaced thousands of native tribal villagers and inured them to a life of misery and fear. Occupying some 84,449 hectares of land and water, the U.S bases in the Philippines used to be the hunting and fishing grounds and, therefore, ancestral lands, of the nomadic Negrito Aetas. Dislocated without being resettled, nor being compensated,  

84 Ibid.  
these tribal folks now tried to make out a living by foraging at the bases' dumpsite amid a climate of noise and deprivation at the bases perimeter fences. Fear and terror also constantly gripped the Negrito Filipinos in the apprehension of being shot and killed by the U.S servicemen who had a habit of target-shooting scavengers at the dumpsite on the flimsy excuse of mistaking the latter for wild bears.  

Ancestral domain continued to be a sore and central issue in the struggle for self-determination of the indigenous Filipinos. Militarization which had resulted in innumerable cases of human rights violations on the indigenous people, remained throughout the dictatorship. The continuing streak of human rights abuses against the tribals through militarization was considered evidence of the government's adoption of the U.S inspired strategy of 'total war' policy against the insurgency. In Illocose Norte, entire tribal communities have been displaced because of military operations against the NPA, when AFP declared as  

86 Ibid.  
87 Ibid.
'no-mans land' vast tracts of the ancestral domain of tribal communities.\textsuperscript{88}

Many government projects designed to facilitate foreign corporations and often financed by the World Bank also functioned as camouflaged military counter-insurgency programmes to contain the people's resistance and the growth of the revolutionary movement. For example, in tribal minority areas, the government agency which facilitated the implementation of the development of government infrastructure projects was Presidential Assistance for National Minorities - PANAHIN. One of PANAMINs main programme was a national security and information campaign which was aimed to counteract the subversive operations and to ensure the security of tribal areas from the rebels. PANAMIN militia forces have been used to force recalcitrant tribal Filipinos into reservations in various places. And also these PANAMIN militia force helped the regular military forces in their counter-insurgency operations in tribal minority areas.

\textsuperscript{88} Revealed the fact when this researcher visited Illocas Norte and had an interview with tribal leaders in September, 1986.
All these incidents reveal the fact that the conditions of the indigenous people depicted above is part of the saga of the continuing struggle of a people weighed down by the great burden of colonial and neo-colonial, authoritarian oppression and exploitation.

Counter-insurgency Operations

The government viewed the insurgency problem as part of the whole spectrum of threats to national security. Because of this, government response consisted of all facets of services addressed to the entire gamut of threats which had to be undertaken as an integrated effort by both military and civilian government agencies in concert with the people. The programme of the government revolved around the scenario where the principal task of the military was to provide security for the civil government agencies which in turn provided the essential services to the people to achieve development. Their roles were interfaced, dependent and mutually reinforcing. 89

In the Philippines, Counter-insurgency is designed as a government effort aimed at eradicating the NPA and MNLF

threat through a comprehensive programme which had civic and military component.

In military parlance, counter-insurgency involved a form of warfare different from a conventional exchange of gunfire between two enemy forces. It involved the use of non-traditional forms of warfare such as 'strategic hamletting' or forced relocation of civilians, psychological operations, 'selective terror' campaigns, 'base denial' operations, etc. It encompassed 'all those political, economic and military efforts' undertaken to defeat revolutionary guerillas in their preferred (usually tropical) environment. 

Philippine Experience

In the Philippines counter-insurgency goes back to the days when the first group of Filipino natives were enlisted into the US Army during the Filipino-American war. The Filipino American war was characterised by a 'scorched earth' policy - experiments on reconcentration, torture, massacres, burning of villages, spoiling of food supplies.

The anti-Huk campaign in the 1950 was the classic example of the right-hand-left-hand strategy.

Psychological warfare became an important component of counter-insurgency. Within a month after Raman Magsaysay assumed the post of National Defence Secretary in 1950, Washington sent CIA psywar expert, Col. Edward Lansdale, to assist in the counter-insurgency programme. Lansdale created the Civil Affairs Office to improve the AFP's image to the people. Batallion Combat Teams (BCT) consisting of 1,197 men with artillery capacities were formed for large-scale operations. Each BCT was assigned a psywar team. An example of psywar teams would creep into the night and paint eye on the houses of suspected Huk sympathizers. The community would wake up to find peering eyes, enough to induce fear. Another was the 'aswang' tactics wherein captured Huks were killed by puncturing two holes in the neck, draining their blood and left along places people passed. This was aimed at preventing people to go out at night, thus minimizing contact with Huks patrolling at

91 Primer on Militarization, EMJP (Philippines), 1988, p.11.
night. To preempt the Huks call of 'land for the landless', the EDCOR (Economic Development Corps) Resettlement programme was also initiated.

**Oplan Katatagan**

During the Marcos regime, a counter-insurgency programme was launched, code named Oplan Katatagan (operation plan stability). It was designed as a campaign of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the people. It came to be publicly known in early 1983 when the government announced its renewed drive against the NPA. It started with the formation of Regional Unified Commands (RUC's) to integrate all major military services like the Army, Constabulary, Navy and Air Force into one operational command.

Oplan Katatagan, according to available informations, is a four point counter-insurgency programme aimed at breaking the political infrastructure of the NPA and winning over the population to the side of the government. The four point strategic phases, namely (a) Clearing operations designed to destroy the political infrastructure of the

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local insurgency (b) **Hold operations** which involve the elimination of the CPP-NPA cells and the establishment of a local defence network composed of the ICHDF; (c) **Consolidation operations** intended to deliver essential services and livelihood programmes, and (d) **Development operations** where long term community programmes are conducted in preparation for the withdrawal of the regular military units.

The concept of Oplan Katatagan was very similar to a major military programme conducted by American military advisers during the height of the Vietnam war. Called ‘Operation Phoenix’, this programme was also conceived as a way to break the backbone of insurgency in South Vietnam. Phoenix was successful only in terms of eliminating hundreds of thousands of civilians suspected of having links with the underground.

During clearing operations, the military conducted raids and zoning operations in villages and communities suspected to be dissident-influenced. These were usually done at weekly intervals, often culminating in dialogues and visits by local civilian and military officials. This phase was perhaps the most important since here was where the military attempted to eradicate dissident influence on a
community using a combination of psychological tactics and firepower.\textsuperscript{94}

The behaviour of combat troops during these operations were markedly brutal. Cases of rape, manhandling and summary executions were common. Lootings were common whenever soldiers conducted searches. Burning of houses, and even whole villages, had been reported in many areas in Mindanao and in Samar.\textsuperscript{95} Clearing operations included permanent or temporary relocation of civilians in order to isolate anti-government forces and thus weaken their support. This used to be done not by convincing families to evacuate but by threats and harassments, and in many instances, killings.

This strategy started with a prototype military campaign called Oplan Cadena de Amor launched in May 1982.\textsuperscript{96} This counter-insurgency operation involved civil and

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{94}] Human Rights situation and Militarization in the Philippines: Trends and Analysis 1984, (Document prepared by thirteen human rights organisations in the Philippines: This is the revised version of a document submitted to the UN Human Rights Commission in 1982), p.2.
\item[\textsuperscript{95}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{96}] "The New Counter-insurgency Thrust: Gearing for a Large Scale War", Katarungan, (Manila), January-February, 1983.
\end{itemize}
military campaigns in the Quezon province-Bicol region border, considered by the government as a major NPA guerilla centre. It deployed 5,700 combat and support personnel which performed continuous operations, and at the same time promoted several government sponsored livelihood projects. But, six months later, a national daily newspaper quoted ranking military officers as admitting that 70% of the barangays in the area were still under the influence of NPA.

The government sponsored development projects did little to assuage the situation since the peoples’ major grievances were anchored in the age-old problem of land and the feudal system. So, the military operation only helped to increase human rights violations.

The military used the Oplan Katatagan strategy in five other ‘pilot areas’ aside from the Quezon-Bicol zone. These were the Cordillera provinces in Northern Luzon, Samar-Leyte and Negros-Panay in the Visayan region, and Bukidhon-Surigao and Davao provinces in Mindanao. However, almost all

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97 Daily Express, (Manila), July 4, 1983.
these areas still remained as major NPA guerilla fronts. 99

Due to the military operations villagers were evacuated from their property and, often times, the area is declared as free-fire zone where the military pursues enemy forces. But the latter easily made themselves scarce, avoiding frontal clashes and leaving governmental forces at a loss to know where to find them. Visibly affected by this situation were the farmers and civilians; their abandoned crops were left to the mercy of wild animals, their homes were destroyed, their belongings looted by military raiding teams and their livelihood drastically affected. They were forced to settle in places where they had virtually no access to their property and no means of livelihood. Thus they were reduced to being mere refugees.

Hold operations were conducted to pre-empt dissident influence on a community. This involved installing local leaders who were supportive of military presence, and elimination of people opposed to government policies, including those suspected of sympathising with the dissidents. Many Victims of extrajudicial killing were

99 This researcher visited all these six areas in 1986-'87. Even the military personnel admitted the presence of NPA guerillas in these areas.
those who were suspected of having links with the NPA and those active in organizing barrio residents around issues critical of the authoritarian regime.

Clearing and hold operations preceded the implementation of government development projects meant to promote the life situation of the people. The government used to propagate the idea that Oplan Katatagan aims to deliver essential services to the people in order to win back their support and thus solve the problem of insurgency. Civic operations by the military as part of Oplan Katatagan were liberally publicised in the government controlled media network perhaps in an effort to downplay the programme’s military component. Oplan Katatagan, however, was a failure. Grounded in terrorism, the hearts and minds campaign became a systematic campaign of human rights violations by military and paramilitary troops. At the same time, the rebels kept expanding their influence in society.

Human Rights organisations, however, have documented the heinous manner in which the military aspect of the programme was conducted. This included strategic hamletting

100 Militarization and Human Rights situation, op. cit., p.2.
or forced evacuation, salvaging or extrajudical execution, massacre, forced civilian 'surrender' torture, arrest and detention, bombings and harassments of civilians and even burning of whole villages. These types of human rights violations were very prevalent in insurgency-affected areas where government soldiers hardly discriminated between real insurgents and innocent people.

Strategic Hamletting

Strategic hamletting is a military practice of grouping together village residents for the purpose of isolating the insurgents and depriving them the support of the population. By persuasion or coercion, families were made to live inside village clusters which were closely monitored by the military.

Strategic hamletting was a policy widely employed by American military advisers in Vietnam. In the end, it was a proven failure because it was not able to deter the growth of insurgency in South Vietnam. As a failed strategy, it was again applied in the Philippine counter-insurgency effort even as military and government authorities continued to deny it.
In Vietnam, a strategic hamlet was a virtual military camp. It was fenced in and guarded by armed civilians to discourage infiltration. But, the insurgents somehow managed to penetrate the hamlets and mingle with the population. 101

In the Philippines, hamletting was done through threats and coercion, and the population was subjected to atrocities and many forms of harassments. Evacuations were usually preceded by ‘dialogues’ where the population was warned against giving support to the NPA. These were often followed by military operations ranging from zoning to outright artillery bombing. Terrorized, the people were forced to flee.

As early as 1972, after martial law was declared, Isabella and other areas in Northern Luzon became testing ground for hamlets - 'Filipino style'. Thousands of peasants were driven away by the PC from their homes and fields, and resettled in refugee camps. In Isabella alone, provincial officials estimated that 50,000 barrio folk were forced to abandon their meagre belongings, crops and work animals and were turned into refugees and nomads. 102

101 Primer on Militarization, op.cit., p.9.
Areas preferred for forced relocation were areas of NPA-MNLF activities. According to the Department of Social Welfare Annual Report for 1973-74, there were 1.9 million 'evacuees' as a result of government operations. A large number of refugees were Muslim Filipinos. In 1975, MNLF estimated that as many as 500,000 Muslims had been forced out of their lands and homes.103

The area known as Laac in the rugged, rolling hills of the northernmost region of Davao Province in the island of Mindanao had become the testing ground for a new military strategy of 'total pacification' being used by the AFP against NPA. The name that the AFP had given this strategy was 'grouping' but, in reality, it was the very same 'strategy hamlet' strategy which was developed and utilized by the armies of the U.S and South Vietnam against the people of that country during the Indochina war.104 The military had started a steady buildup of forces in several places to check inroads by the NPA.

In San Vicente, a rugged municipality in Davao del Norte province, people caught outside of the enclaves, which

103 In the Face of Adversity, op.cit., p.18.
104 Ibid.
became no man's land, risked being shot at sight. Able bodied men were told to train as militiamen in the ICHDF units. Check points were set up. And there were reports of torture and salvaging.105

Following local and international protest against hamletting, Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile issued a memorandum in March 1982 ordering the dismantling of the hamlets. In the memorandum to Chief of staff, AFP and Director General, Integrated National Police, Enrile stated:

... all military and police units and personnel shall desist from participating in any manner or giving assistance in the setting up of such 'hamlets' even should the same be authorised by local ordinances.106

The order was obviously disregarded, and hamletting soon tripled to include almost all provinces in Mindanao, spreading even to Cagayan valley and Abra provinces in the North and the Samar in the Visayas. No one could answer for the forcible uprooting of thousands of families from their homes and the death of several hundred children.107


106 Memorandum to Chief of Staff, AFP and Director General, INP, from Juan Ponce Enrile, Dtd. March 2, 1982.

Role of CIA and U.S Counter-insurgency strategy in the Philippines

Since the Vietnam war, the U.S has refined and restructured the counter-insurgency procedures for general application wherever needed throughout the Third World. They designed new methods of protecting U.S interests through the use of surrogate forces, obviating the need for U.S troops to directly fight people struggling for freedom from U.S domination. Rather than urge social equality, U.S policy concerned only for the benefit of U.S financial interests, supported the total inequities of foreign elitist systems and used their police and military forces to violently suppress the aspirations of the peoples of Third World countries. Counter-insurgency employed a comprehensive and all-inclusive strategy capable of use by all relevant U.S government entities such as the armed forces, the agency for International Development, the United States Information Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency.

The CIA's role in Counter-insurgency, based on its efforts in Vietnam and earlier in the Philippines, had included a wide range of police projects. The CIA

continuously attempted through agent and audio operations to penetrate the leadership of the leftist opposition to America's financial interests. In the Philippines, this would include the NPA, its front groups and sympathizers, organizations opposing U.S military bases and economic domination, human rights groups, etc. The CIA devoted large amounts of time and effort to this task, with mixed results. Most CIA penetration operations would be conducted jointly with the various Philippine intelligence and police services, while the agency will run unilateral efforts directly out of its station and bases.

In 1972, the Philippines became the regional headquarters of CIA communications in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{109} The former U.S Ambassador in the Philippines, William Sullivan, who was formerly the U.S Ambassador to Laos, where he set up and coordinated the three-pronged counter-insurgency programme of secret bombing, made more effective contacts with the CIA to help in Philippine affairs. The CIA's local support network had traditionally been more established and influential in the Philippines than in most other countries. This favourable climate in the Philippines helped the CIA in many ways.

\textsuperscript{109} Bello and Rivera, The Logistics..., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34.
Another two major reasons for CIA's effective functioning in the Philippines have been suggested for CIA's strong base in the Philippines. First, a number of people connected with the Landsdale-Magsaysay counter-insurgency effort in the early fifties had since risen to national political and cultural prominence. The second fact is that thousands of Filipinos had served in CIA-connected counter-insurgency support activities during the Indochina war. Many of these Filipinos worked with well-known CIA-backed or CIA-financed operations such as 'Operation Brotherhood'. The training in CIA-connected counter-insurgency support activities of these Filipinos was considered an additional help for CIA in the Philippines.

In Post-martial law cases, direct or indirect interference of CIA had been active. As directed by the CIA, Special Forces - (Green Berets) had conducted operations in dissident areas since martial law declaration. CIA agents, veterans of the Indochina campaign, had been assigned to the Philippines as U.S AID Provincial advisors. This supplemented the AID office of Public

110 Ibid.

Safety Assistance to the Police. U.S Special Forces were reported to be directly involved in direct combat operations against the NPA in provinces of high level NPA activity.

U.S forces stationed in the bases have also been used in counter-insurgency, in programmes disguised as 'Civic Action Programme' (CAP) and Professional Development Programmes (PDP). A central element of the Reagan Administrations efforts to maintain bases was heightened support for the Philippine military in its battle with the insurgent forces of the NPA. In 1985, top Pentagon Officials had declared the 'defeat' of the Philippine insurgents a major U.S objective, and had geared their military aid programmes to focus on counter-insurgency warfare and training. Pentagon officials later revised their military aid packages, including supply of new weaponry for aiding counter-insurgency operations. These consisted of weapons like fast patrol craft, armoured vehicles, combat helicopters and howitzers.

112 U.S Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Korea and the Philippines: November 1972, op. cit.

From 1980 to 1985, American Congress had approved money to provide combat training to approximately 1,700 Filipino soldiers under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. In 1985, the Philippines ranked fifth worldwide in the number of soldiers trained under IMET. As the U.S increased its military, there were frequent reports of U.S soldiers seen in the field with counter-insurgency units of the Philippine military. U.S equipment and U.S trained officers were the basis of an escalated counter-insurgency drive. The support of the U.S government for the Philippine government was not only to be seen in the arms and ammunition supplied by Washington, but also in the existence of 'Special Operation Forces' in both Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base. The continued presence of U.S troops, combined with growing support for the counter-insurgency, put U.S troops at risk and threatened an intensification of the U.S military role. The U.S Military Assistance Programmes were geared for counter-insurgency in different parts of the country. Section 606 of the foreign Assistance Act prohibited aid for Police training and Washington acknowledged that no external threat faced the

114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
Philippines. Yet in 1979 alone, $700,000 was budgeted for training the AFP. 116

For the past several years, the AFP and the U.S military have been cooperating in an annual war game on Philippine soil called Tangent Flash which involves practice in amphibious landings. 117 Every year, as the armed guerilla resistance grew in strength, these games took on more reality as preparations for war. U.S involvement with counter-insurgency operations in the Philippines was part of a long pattern of asserting military dominance over Philippines to protect U.S interest.

Role of paramilitary and fanatic groups

The creation of paramilitary units based inside the community extended the capability of the military to monitor local activities. The ICHDF thus played an active role in maintaining security in a given community. The ICHDF was the biggest paramilitary organization in the country. It supplemented the military capability of the armed forces of

116 cited in Robin Broad, International Actors..., op.cit., p.53.
the Philippines and thus intensified the counter-insurgency operations. Because of its members’ insufficient disciplinary training, they had committed heinous crimes and abuses of power.

In several ways, this set-up justified the common criticism that the military uses the paramilitary to perform abuses they could not openly do for fear of censure and prosecution.\textsuperscript{118} This allegation was substantiated by the fact that many ICHDF members were notorious and members of ultra-rightist fanatical religious groups.

The reasons for the formation and mushrooming growth of these groups were stated by a human rights organization thus:

\begin{quote}
The Philippine situation today is very comparable to that of South Vietnam right after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu: a restive population and a growing armed movement. After several years of direct military incursions, the U.S decided that the best approach to the Vietnam problem would be pacification. Hence it launched a campaign 'to win hearts and minds'. The strategy was pacification through military and civic action in order to effect a viable military plan designed to pacify the countryside, the government needs more than its approximately 300,000 members of the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{118} Human Rights situation and Militarization in the Philippines..., \textit{op.cit.}, p.3.
armed forces in the field. This force is reportedly thinly-spread in the countryside. There are 73 provinces in the country, 53 of whom have established NPA guerilla fronts. To effect pacification efforts would be to entail additional forces to beef up the regular military. Hence the formation of the ICHDF, the consequence was devastating to the human rights situation. 119

Although there were, in fact, more abuses committed by regular members of the armed forces, those committed by the paramilitary groups posed a more serious problem. ICHDF engaged in counter-insurgency pacification action including psychological tactics and harassment were employed in order to deprive the guerilla forces a population base to operate. The paramilitary groups came in handy, besides being an easy scapegoat for atrocities committed against civilians. 120 Members of paramilitary groups were useful to do a continuous monitoring of a specific locality because they originated from the place. They went around carrying their arms, and in many instances, have abused their authority. They were left untouched by other civilians even if they committed abuses because the civilians feared they might turn against them.


120 Ibid.
Besides ICHDF, other irregular paramilitary groups also served as a deterrent to guerilla incursions. 'Lost command', and 'Rock Christ', two other paramilitary groups operating with official sanction were engaged in counter-insurgency operations and also the 'clearing' of communities suspected to have dissident leanings.

**Lost Command**

This paramilitary unit made it to the headlines following its alleged involvement in the massacre of 45 men, women and children in a village of Las Navas, Northern Samar, wayback in 1982. The Lost Command was headed by an extendee PC officer Colonel Carlos Lademora. He had publicly stated that he was an active officer of the PC and that his unit was a Special Unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (SUAFP) engaged in counter-insurgency operations.\(^{121}\) The SUAFP was organised in 1974 during the height of the Muslim conflict. It was disbanded sometime after the formal lifting of martial law but its membership and influence continued to grow.

In 1982, the Lost Command figured in an international controversy when it was exposed as having served as the

security unit of a large agri-business project in Agusan del Sur, the NDC-Guthria Plantations, Inc., which was partially financed by the British government. The Lost Command continued to be active in its illegal business such as extortion, raffles and monopoly over the local gold panning business while at the same time serving as an unofficial armed counter-insurgency unit in the locality. Numerous complaints about the activities of the Lost Command were reported to have been made to President Marcos and Senior military officers by the provincial administration. Despite the known location and its activities, no action was taken to disband the unit. It was reported that the Lost Command was expanded in size after being constituted as a SUAFP and that its recruits received training, from among others, a PC Battalion based in Bicutan, Rizal. Funds for this training programme was reportedly channelled through the chief of Intelligence for Region X.

Amnesty International traced allegations of other official links to the Lost Command. It was reportedly operating against the NPA and MNLF insurgents. A string of

122 Human Rights Situation .... , op.cit., p.3.

murders, salvagings and even massacres had been attributed to this most notorious group. The Lost Command also forayed into nearby provinces; the San Pedro Cathedral bombing was allegedly done by this group.

The Marcos regime had also mobilised such groups as the barangay brigades. Tanod, and even Metro Manila aides to harass civilian populations, especially at rallies and demonstrations, etc. In 1982 August, Marcos had established a new 1000 strong, heavily armed and non-uniformed force (secret marshals) to ride the Metro Manila buses and jeepneys, supposedly to protect civilians against 'criminal elements'. Within the first week 41 people were gunned down by the marshals in the city. Under public pressure, Marcos ordered that half of the force were to wear uniform, and reminded them that they were to shoot to disable, not to kill. With the creation of this new force, a new wave of terror had swept over Manila, with the police and military becoming the enforces, accusers, prosecutors and executors of the law.

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124 "Emerging Patterns: From individual Salvaging to Massacres and War Tactics," In the Face of adversity, op.cit., p.16.

125 Ibid.
Fanatical Religious groups

The military had exploited to the maximum the pervasive folk religions during the authoritarian regime of Marcos. The military had armed and trained members of religious cults and transferred them into solid albeit terrorist, counter-insurgency units. Together with non-religious paramilitary groups, they had gained a notorious reputation.

Although professing to be ‘Christians’, the religious fanatic group members had engaged in the atrocious killings and mutilations of defenseless barrio inhabitants, settlers and tribal Filipinos. These groups recruited barrio residents to join them. Those who refused were usually killed and mutilated to serve as a warning to the others. Residents were frightened, they flee their barrios and ended up in evacuation centres. They have been trained and armed by the local military or ICHDF members themselves. These groups were also concentrated in the areas where the presence of NPA and MNLF is felt.

A religious sect named Rural Reformist Movement (RRM), which operated in Davao and North Cotabato in Mindanao was responsible for several atrocities; for example, they
beheaded about hundred people in 1981. 126 RRM was controlled by NISA in Davao area. Another group, the Charismatic Movement of the Philippines (CMP) was also operating in Mindanao. Its main functions were to observe NPA movements in strategic areas where guerilla bases were thought to exit. It also placed armed men on NPA pathway with orders to kill any other armed men entering the area, and to confiscate arms for their own use. The CMP was responsible for an incident in Tiko, early 1981, where several NPA men were killed without a fight. The villagers were persuaded to identify the NPA at a CMP session, the NPA were then killed. 127

About forty fanatical sects and subsects operated in the Mindanao region itself, with several others reportedly activated in Luzon and the Visayas. 128 Their proclivity for extreme violence differed little from the brand of terrorism displayed by military and paramilitary troops conducting counter-insurgency operations. Ironically, most of them

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

Adopted Christian sounding names which were far from being congruent with monstrous deeds.

According to one writer who made a study of the phenomenon of fanaticism, the unprecedented growth of these groups could be traced to its members' neurotic fixation for invincibility that appeals to the male-ego or the macho image. Thus, fanatical sects usually had a penchant for amulets that their members believed would protect them from bullets and harm. They normally used coconut oil as amulets, rubbing it all over their body as part of a ritual before going to battle. They believe that no harm would come to them as long as they uphold what they consider to be the righteousness of God. 129 Greatly distorting and exploiting these beliefs, the military began supplying them arms and money, and even incorporated several groups with the ICHDF with the end view of enhancing the effectiveness of counter-insurgency campaign. Most of the fanatics are indoctrinated to believe that they will attain the glory of God by killing 'godless' people. Anyone who was suspected of being an NPA or a sympathiser became prey to these fanatical killing machines.

129 Ibid.
In May 1985, former CIA chief William Casey surreptitiously entered the country to hold talks with President Marcos concerning national defence and the rising insurgency threat. Mr. Marcos was quoted to have informed Casey that the use of cultists and other fanatic armed groups proved to be very effective in enhancing counter-insurgency operations in the countryside. The terror tactics of these fanatical groups supplemented equally repressive acts of government troops. There was widespread evidence that these groups were involved in massacres, murders, mutilations, cannibalism and torture for which the very perpetrators were honoured with medals for bravery and patriotism. This combination of fanaticism and terrorism became the most pronounced mechanism of the military after the beginning of the authoritarian regime of Marcos.

Role of Multinational Companies

The military’s access into the spheres of business and politics had given it almost unlimited leverage in both areas. The regime had allowed the military to actively

130 Ibid.

participate in private business, previously a strictly civilian domain. Such business as public utilities companies were later often headed or manned by retired generals. Presidential directives had also established military-run business corporations engaged in sundry projects such as fishing industry, and security and janitorial services for government institutions.\textsuperscript{132}

Obviously, despite repeated declarations by the Marcos administration that the military's role in the national scheme was to contain political threats, evidence pointed to the fact that its position was elevated principally so that it could assist in national development goals. This could be achieved by either actively participating in such or providing the necessary conducive atmosphere to allow unhindered national growth. This role laid the foundations for the dominance of the military in Philippine society. With such all-encompassing control over the country, the military had virtually transformed the Philippines into a Third World favourite with foreign industrialists. As a result of this, foreign participation in the exploitation process became significant and was concentrated in the largest corporations.

\textsuperscript{132} Gabriella, Peace is an illusion..., \textit{op. cit.}, p.13.
Foreign investment was prevalent in the large scale industries of the region. Across the various industry groups, the concentration of investment was in mining, manufacturing, marketing and banking, and logging. These foreign industries had availed various government incentives and privileges. The Philippine government had provided incentives to local and foreign businessmen. Among these were tax waivers, guarantees against paralyzing strikes, citizenship to investors, transportation, communication, power and others. But the biggest incentive was cheap labour. Inspite of these incentives, very few local investors had taken the opportunities. Mostly they were Filipino big businesses in partnership with TNCs.

In 1972, shortly after the declaration of martial law, the Marcos regime placed an advertisement in New York Times, inviting foreign capital investment in the country. The advertisement stated:

... Recent Presidential decrees have simplified conciliation and arbitration of labour disputes (both strikes and lockouts are prohibited), lifted work restrictions on Sundays and holidays, liberalized the employment of women and children, and expanded the scope of apprenticeship programme... 133

133 New York Times, (New York), July 24, 1974, p.5F
TNCs responded to the receptive climate of the martial law regime. Though Philippine law prohibits foreigners from owning land, agribusiness TNCs had engaged in extensive leasing of land or gone into joint ventures, often with a government corporation. The consequences of the very unequal power relationship between the TNCs and the people were stark. Examples abound of land speculation and the displacement of farmers, often with the connivance of the Bureau of Lands (in effect, stealing land from its rightful owners), or by outright intimidation.134 Greater control had to be exerted by the government in order to woo back the wary transnationals. And this courtship was conducted with the granting of more privileges. The regime also made it more possible for foreign agri-businesses to acquire larger and larger tracts of land for their plantations through hamletting.135

Industries dominated by American, Japanese, British, Swiss TNCs were exploiting the land, minerals, forests and waters. Aggressive penetration and expansion of TNCs and

135 Peace is an illusion..., op. cit., p.15.
export-oriented agri-business created conditions of impoverishment and economic deprivation of the vast majority. At the same time, Marcos regime was in collusion with the profit-hungry foreign capitalists and protecting their interests by means of decrees, agencies, infrastructures and even coercive measures. The vast majority of Filipinos were deprived, dislocated, robbed exploited and sacrificed in the name of development and industrialization and, finally, in the midst of plenty people had to live in poverty and misery. Wages went down to an all-times low in most of the industries. Small businesses went bankrupt, and a large chunk of the middle class sector found themselves faced with the danger of going below the poverty line. Militarization had to be stepped up further to contain the growing and visible resentment against the Marcos regime on the part of the unemployed and of those employed under unjust wages and working conditions.

The gnawing impoverishment experienced by the Filipinos could be attributed to the country’s long dependence on export-oriented agricultural growth, to the control of agricultural resources by an elite of big landowners, capitalists and bureaucrats whose overriding interests were profits and more profits, to the laws promulgated by the
Harcos regime which upheld the interests of the foreign capitalists and their lackeys over and above that of the toiling masses, to world recession and inflation which affected the poor, the oppressed and the exploited. 136

The neglect of these on the part of the government had given the rebels, especially the NPA, a wide range of issues in winning the people's sympathies to their cause. Reports of the NPA gaining broad sector adherents and mass bases were confirmed by no less than official sources, short of admitting failure on their part. The military was regularly called upon to help run business and industry, was resorted to in order to provide the needed muscle in winning back the people's faith in the government. The military was forcing upon the people, even in the latter's helplessness, whims of foreign business interests.

The incursion of more agri-business and mining multinational corporations into Mindanao and other parts of the country caused displacements of more peasant and tribal Filipinos from their ancestral property. Whenever the TNCs operated -- to cut timber, to mine ore, to fish, or to clear

land and cultivate banana and pineapple - the military was always there to keep them company and provide free security. And whenever the people protested, the military was called upon to suppress people's resistance. Task Force of Detainees in the Philippines (TFDP), a national human rights organisation had reported in 1982:

The most disturbing of today's military function is its willingness to coerce and subjugate the citizenry... In the wake of all these military functions and operations waged against 'secessionists', 'public order violators', 'subversives', and 'troublemakers', countless civilians are involved in the strife. Many become victims of the crossfire, and many more become nameless sacrificial lambs in the indiscriminate assault of the military. Militarization in 1982 increased in frequency, intensity and brutality.  

Since 1972 an undeclared war had been waged against the people where the TNCs were engaged in their business. The reason was obvious: the vast interests of the multinational companies in the region must be preserved at any cost, even at the cost of the people's lives and culture.

The iron arm of the state became more evident whenever there was a strong resistance from the local people.