

## INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

Fort Del Pilar  
Baguio City

October 12, 1987

The Philippine Military Academy

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Dear Peter,

The Senator came from Manila to sell democracy to the 850 cadets at the elite Philippine Military Academy. One month ago, the entire cadet corps had supported the August 28 coup attempt. Dressed in a snappy, white suit, the Senator lectured the rows of cadets sitting stiffly in their grey uniforms. After his speech on the role of the constitution and civilian supremacy over the military, he asked, "Has your education convinced you that it is valid for you to lay down your life for democracy?" "Yes sir," answered one of the cadets. "But better dead than red, sir."

Although the response was half-facetious, it drew thunderous applause from the cadets. One month after the failed coup attempt led by Col. Gregorio Honasan, cadets at the academy are, as one said, "sympathetic with the cause of Honasan."

Set on a cool, scenic, mountain-top located 150 miles north of Manila, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) is a special place for the armed forces. Almost all of the military's top officers have paraded as cadets here in the shade of towering pine trees. Events here are seen as something of a weathervane for sentiment throughout the military. In 1985, officers and cadets protested against Marcos for the first time at PMA and announced the emergence of a military reform group that would contribute to Marcos's downfall. In 1986, the cadets put their support behind the military's breakaway from Marcos. And now in 1987, the cadets were once again in rebellion.

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A look at how and why the cadets at PMA rebelled offers some insights into the military as a whole.

Shortly before the coup attempt, Col. Honasan's classmates posted at PMA had gained the support of some 30 junior officers (180 officers run PMA). Agitated by these junior officers, the entire cadet corps went on a "passive strike" and issued a manifesto "supporting the cause" of the rebels. Twice the officers attempted to lead cadets out of the camp, probably to join rebel forces in central Luzon. Cadets later insisted that their actions and statements only supported the airing of grievances and not the coup itself. Their complaints included: the presence of leftists in government, lack of government support for the military's counter-insurgency effort, and low pay for soldiers.

As in other places during the coup, top officers at PMA did not immediately act to squash the rebellion but waited to see which way events would go in Manila. By the time the government reasserted control, news from Manila was still sketchy. Thus it took a 2:00 a.m. phone call on Saturday the 29th, from Manila to convince the junior officers that the game was over.

Yet the cadets were still fired-up, and piqued at being told by senior officers that they had been misled, they continued their "passive strike" for two days--refusing to fall in formation for meals. Cadet leaders described in private with considerable pride how they had set up a secret "war room" for planning. One early, impetuous plan was to go down to Manila and march in between the government and rebel forces to stop the fighting.

Events came to a head on Sunday when the cadets donned combat gear in their most serious bid to leave PMA. The Commandant of Cadets, Col. Lisandro Abadia, confronted them at the barracks, fired his M-16 in the air and said, "Gentlemen, I'm not play-acting here. You will leave over my dead body." Cadets said they backed down because they respected the old combat veteran.

After a few days, the cadets settled down as they accepted their punishment: confinement to the camp for 90 days plus 90 hours of extra marching for the upperclassmen. Two junior officers from the PMA staff, but not the ringleaders, are under arrest and four cadets are under further investigation. The staff at PMA want to put the episode behind them and, as Col. Abadia said, "treat it like a bad dream." It was ironic that Col. Abadia took the lead in handling the situation: first delaying the junior officers from leaving the camp until the coup was over, and later confronting the cadets. Head of army operations under Marcos, Col. Abadia was exiled to PMA because the armed forces Chief of Staff, Gen. Fidel Ramos, did not trust him at other, more sensitive positions.

Protests at PMA are nothing new. According to present and past Superintendents of PMA, the cadets have a long tradition of rebellion and siding with the underdog. In past years, the cadets have walked off the camp over lesser issues. Yet some independent observers at PMA believe that if there was another coup, the cadets would join in again.

### I. Idealistic Cadets

Honasan and the young officers associated with him captured the cadets' allegiance by doing two basic things. First, they articulated and exploited the military's grievances with the civilian government. Second, they capitalized on the role of personality and personal loyalty in the armed forces.

Col. Honasan is merely the most prominent and telegenic leader of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement or RAM. Formed secretly in 1982 by Honasan and a few classmates from the 1971 PMA class, RAM was initially a response to corruption and lack of professionalism in the military. (Although most of RAM's leaders are class '71 officers, some of the deep thinkers behind RAM come from class '65). Many RAM leaders served on the personal staff of then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and widened their critique to include civilian society under Marcos. It has been well recounted elsewhere how the abortive coup by RAM and Enrile against Marcos was discovered, how it led to Ramos's breakaway from Marcos, and how it helped precipitate Marcos's downfall. What's important here are two perceptions. As PMA Superintendent Commodore Rogelio Dayan put it, the cadets "idolize" Honasan because of his key role in February 1986. And when Enrile and RAM later criticized and broke with Aquino for being soft on communism, RAM and Enrile came to be held as champions of the military's interests.

Because Ramos, as a member of government, has been muted in his criticisms, he is viewed (unfairly) by many officers as not defending the corporate interests of the armed forces. Ramos is perceived as not lobbying hard enough to garner more material support and to bring the civilian sectors of government behind the counter-insurgency effort.

In addition, Ramos has not been outspoken about the alleged presence of leftists in government. One issue consistently raised by the cadets was the presence of "left-leaning advisors in government." There is a widely held perception in the armed forces that former human rights lawyers who continue, either officially or unofficially, to hold key government positions are persecuting the military. (Although the government human rights commission has filed some cases against military personnel, there has not yet been a conviction for abuses allegedly committed since 1986.)

The big (and unrealistic) fear of the cadets is that, as in Laos, there will be some sort of a coalition government

with the communist party leading to an eventual communist take over. A cadet leader said, "We may have acted childish...or perhaps we acted nobly, [but it was to prevent the] country from sinking into communism."

For the cadets, Honasan wears the mantle of vigorous anti-communism. "One of the biggest come-ons was the strong anti-communism theme," said Col. Abadia. For example, cadet leaders told me in private that when they initially hesitated to issue their manifesto of support, one junior officer told them, "If you're anti-communist, you're with us. If not, sorry." With their decision framed in those terms, cadet leaders said, "What could we do? We had no choice."

Significantly, recent steps by the government--sacking two "left-leaning" cabinet members and moves to increase the soldier's pay--were not seen as signs that the government was solving problems. Instead, cadets said this was "proof" that Honasan's demands were correct.

Honasan and RAM brilliantly made use of personal loyalties to exploit leadership problems within the armed forces. According to Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, the previous Superintendent of PMA and currently Commandant of the Marines, during the Marcos era "the armed forces held [its] leaders in low esteem." Rampant corruption and incompetent commanders eroded the stature of the military leadership. The "rank and file hungered for someone who could give them leadership. Honasan provided that."

The cadets also wanted leadership. In one conversation cadet leaders told me that they were "frustrated" by learning about the NPA in their classes and "want to do something about it, but can't." Cadets were also frustrated about being left out of the February 1986 revolution. Back then, the cadets had offered to go down to Manila to help Ramos and Enrile. But Ramos told them to stay put. Add to this leadership changes at the very top: Commo. Dayan had only been Superintendent for less than two months before the coup and had little contact with the cadets. Honasan and the younger officers figuratively walked in and said to the cadets, "You can help save your country. Here's how."

Aside from providing leadership, Honasan and other RAM officers utilized the system of loyalty at PMA. The academy is a cloistered place. Here, for the first time in their lives, cadets are cut off from the sheltered environment of the traditional Filipino family and its web of supportive relatives. Naturally, classmates form close bonds.

The entire cadet corps is organized as a regiment with the outstanding and most popular cadet--the "Baron"--at the apex. As PMA "Baron" in 1971, Honasan literally commanded his class and the entire cadet corps. He not only had the personal loyalty of his classmates, but also graduates from successive years from 1972 to 1975 since almost half the cadets in any one class do not graduate on time but a year later.

This network of classmates was dispersed around the Philippines to presumably less critical posts in November 1986 after RAM officers were implicated in several coup attempts. But Brig. Gen. Maximino Bejar, PMA Dean, pointed out that many RAM officers came to the academy since it had a policy of accepting qualified officers regardless of political loyalty. The list of RAM officers at PMA reads like a who's who of key positions: the number two officer in charge of cadets, the operations officer, the Aide De Camp to the Superintendent, and several "tactical officers" who directly supervised the cadets.

These potent factors continue to favor Honasan, despite government efforts to remove some of the aura surrounding him. The administration correctly called Honasan's move a power grab and Ramos has issued a seven-page statement on the coup to all military personnel that, among other things, attacked Honasan's combat record. Some of this has backfired. One senior officer at PMA thought that the statement came across as "Ramos vs. Honasan" and showed that Ramos was "now going down to the level of Honasan." (There is a strong personal aspect to the conflict dating back to when Ramos refused to be a ninong (sponsor) at Honasan's wedding.)

Regardless of these official pronouncements, most cadets believe that Honasan was not personally motivated but had the country's good at heart. I found one incident particularly revealing. Immediately after the coup, Ramos called Honasan a "coward" for fleeing when the tide turned against him. I asked leaders of the cadet corps in private whether Honasan had abandoned his men. They insisted that he did not desert his men; rather, he made a "tactical" move similar to Mac Arthur's leaving Bataan during WWII. The implication was that Honasan too, would return to go on airing his "aspirations."

## II. Pandora's Box

It is one thing for cadets to have greivances; it is another matter to act upon them, break the chain of command, and challenge civilian authority. For Honasan's and RAM's message to appeal to the cadets it had to be in consonance with the cadet's basic beliefs about proper military behavior. Unlike many other Southeast Asian nations, the Philippines has a long tradition of civilian supremacy over the military. Twenty years ago it would have been unthinkable for officers to stage a coup. Today, most of the cadets at PMA, the cream of the future officer corps, believe that soldiers should be "politically aware"--their term for intervention in politics. [1]

This belief stems from two overarching developments.

First, is the legacy of the Marcos era. Then, the military was under civilian executive control, but other institutions that might have restrained the military--the legislature and judiciary--were either lacking or attenuated. According to

Superintendent Dayan, the younger officers "never really worked" in a "democratic environment." Thus the bickering, frustrations, and delays associated with the new congress are viewed not as normal but as a critical weakness. In addition, during the Marcos era the armed forces extended their role well beyond the traditional confines of national security and into economic development. This has been well documented, what is more interesting is whether changes in the military educational system also legitimized the role of the soldier in civilian politics.

The noted political scientist, Dr. Carolina Hernandez, argues that changes in the curriculum at PMA and other military educational institutions "led officers to believe that they could manage civilian affairs."

Indeed, during the late 1970's the proportion of science and engineering courses to social science courses at PMA (about 70% vs. 30%) was dramatically reversed in favor of social science courses. Whether adding new courses in social psychology and management led later generations of cadets to believe that they should have a greater role in politics is debatable. But it is clear that it made the cadets think more about political issues. Superintendent Dayan suggested that the changes in curriculum "made them more politically aware and might have compounded our problems." When I asked cadets which class was most active, they said that the seniors were more "vocal" because they had taken more classes in government.

The second factor is, of course, the February 1986 revolt by Enrile and Ramos against their commander in chief, Ferdinand Marcos. The revolt not only helped usher in Aquino, it also gave license to breaking the chain of command for higher principles. Gen. Biazon believes that this opened a "Pandora's box" and now soldiers are "muddled as to whether they are policy makers or policy implementors."

The self-image, or martial spirit, of the various militaries in Southeast Asia springs from their role in creating new political orders. Thus, in Indonesia, the role of the armed forces in the struggle against Dutch colonial rule legitimized the military's direct involvement in politics. In Thailand, the officers who led the 1932 revolution to overthrow the absolute monarchy and establish a constitutional monarchy set a precedent for military intervention in times of crisis. In the Philippines, however, the modern-day armed forces were created by the American colonial administration in 1901 and did not play a role sui generis in the transition to independence.

Retired Brig. Gen. Jose Almonte, a father figure for RAM officers, maintains that the February revolution reforged the Philippine martial tradition. In one grand movement, the armed forces threw off the shackles of corruption and materialism fostered by the Marcos years and moved toward becoming "spiritually oriented." [2] In his view, and that of many officers, the military could have kept power and then forced civilians to obey. Instead, the military relinquished power to Aquino with the understanding that it be used properly.

The cadets have been fed RAM's version of history by their tactical officers. To counter this, Dayan hopes to "downgrade" the role of Honasan and the military during February 1986 by inviting to PMA other civilian leaders active then. One of those considered is Jaime Cardinal Sin, Archbishop of Manila who is known for summoning "people power." Nineteen months after the event, senior officers acknowledge that there have been no courses or special lectures explaining the meaning of February 1986. The Cardinal will need all the powers vested in him to do the job.

### III. Roots

What of the cadets' social background, does it predispose them to intervene in politics? The hypothesis is tantalizing. Five of the members of PMA class '71 were the sons of generals, and two of them are top RAM leaders. As for Honasan, his father was an Army colonel who would have made general if a presidential election had turned out right. [3]

For the cadet corps as a whole, some academicians say that two trends helped to politicize the military. The first was an increase in the proportion of cadets who are "army brats" coming from a military background. During my brief stay at the academy I was able to gather data for only the past few years and, surprisingly, found just the opposite. In recent years, the proportion of cadets coming from a military background declined from 20% for the class of 1987 to only 13% for the class of 1990. [4]

Although four years of fewer "army brats" does not a trend make, it appears that this decline may continue. One reason is that in the last two years applications to PMA have shot up from 8,000 in past years to 12,000 last year. [5] And as the applicant pool at PMA increases with more candidates from civilian backgrounds applying, presumably the proportion of cadets from military backgrounds will decline. Gen. Bejar attributed the recent increase in applications both to high unemployment and the military's improved image under the new administration.

The second trend is the changing ethnic composition of the officer corps. The accepted wisdom is that Marcos stacked top military positions with generals and senior officers from his native Ilocos region. Given the importance of regional ties in the Philippines, today many of these officers would be more loyal to their region-mate, Marcos or Enrile, than to the chain of command.

Before martial law, ethnic, or at least geographic, diversity in the cadet corps, and hence the officer corps, was guaranteed by a quota system in which each congressional district had a slot reserved at PMA for a local applicant provided he

passed the entrance exam. With the abolition of congress during martial law, this system was scrapped. While it is not possible to verify whether the end of the quota system led to an increase in Ilocano cadets, today, at least, Ilocanos are greatly over-represented.

For the past seven years, Ilocanos make up on the average 22% of the cadet corps, almost three times the proportion of Ilocanos in the total population (about 8%). [6] In contrast, relatively few cadets come from the central Visayan and southern Mindanao regions. This is important, when cadets graduate as 2nd Lieutenants most will be sent to the field in these two unfamiliar regions.

Before this becomes a narrative of doom and gloom, let me add that when this year's cadets are shipped off to far-away garrisons, they will have received much better military training than their predecessors. According to one instructor at PMA, in the past the cadets lacked enough training in basic, small-unit tactics. The result was a high level of platoon leaders killed in ambushes. Now, due to major overhaul in PMA's program last year, military training has dramatically improved.

Traditionally, incoming cadets spent their first three months at the academy undergoing intense military and physical education as well as physical abuse by their upperclassmen. Due to the hazing about 20% of each entering class would drop out in the first year.

Under the revised system, new cadets spend their first four months at Camp Aquino in central Luzon, receiving the same basic military training as the enlisted men. The results are impressive: this year only 10% of the entering class dropped out; the cadets coming from Manila and other cities get a taste of life in the provinces; and they are better at the fundamentals. For graduating cadets, their last two months are now in a basic officer's course, also at Camp Aquino. Even those who initially opposed the program now commend the results. But the initial motives behind the program and how the program overcame strong resistance says something about how informal networks operate in the Philippine military.

The impetus behind the new program was not to improve basic military training, but to eradicate hazing. According to officers at PMA, Ramos was disturbed by reports of hazing and one year the son of prominent general dropped out. Ramos first came up with a proposal to totally separate first-year cadets from all upperclassmen. This proposal was too radical, so the PMA staff, then under Gen. Biazon, came up with a modified plan.

The hard part was selling it to the retired generals and flag officers who sit on the board of the PMA Alumni Association. They opposed the new program, saying that they had taken hazing in their days and that the cadets would go soft without



it. Although board members have no formal control over PMA, keeping them happy is important since (like the alumni of American colleges) they wield financial clout by informally lobbying the active officers who budget the funds for PMA. In the end, some minor concessions to the alumni plus lots of polite talk won the alumni's blessings.

#### IV. Too Many Captains

When the cadets enter the officer corps they will face a grim future. Not the communist New People's Army, nor the muslim separatists, but a glut of mid-level officers.

The demographics of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) are important. Many commentators on the Philippine military have overlooked the dull reality that there are far too many officers, especially captains and majors. During the early and mid-1970's, the AFP expanded rapidly due to the outbreak of hostilities with muslim secessionists. As the military more than doubled in four years from 62,000 in 1972 to 142,000 in 1976, the officer corps also ballooned. This rapid expansion of the officer corps would have been fine if the entire military continued to grow. But it did not. Since 1978, military strength has hovered around 150,000 personnel. Thus, the glut in officers.

Why too many captains and majors? In the AFP, officers are regularly promoted each rank after a fixed number of years until the rank of major, after that, the jump to lieutenant colonel is based on merit. Hence a bottleneck at captain<sup>and</sup> major grades as waves of officers are automatically pushed up toward major rank grade but are not qualified to become colonels. The result is a slow down in promotions.

A good example is the Marine Corps, the most elite unit in the armed forces. The Marines have a total of 260 captains for a corps of about 9,500. Gen. Biazon says that he has 100 extra captains. Many of these captains are "underacheivers" who have been in the Marines for 10 to 15 years. These officers can't be removed from the armed forces because the only comparable job they could find would be with one of the numerous private armies. To correct the bulge in captains, Biazon has set the ambitious goal of demoting these 100 captains by the end of this year. He says it will be a gradual process and that he will first explain the program to the officers. But if Biazon keeps to his schedule, it will undoubtedly strain the loyalty of the Marine Corps. And right now, the Aquino administration exists because of the loyalty of Biazon's Marines. [7]

In addition to the slow down in promotions, the pay of officers and enlisted men has declined in real terms. Although

the military's budget expanded rapidly during martial law, it did not keep up with personnel growth. From 1972 to 1986, the pay and allowances for all personnel, from generals down to privates, declined by about 40% in constant pesos. [8] To be sure, other sectors of Philippine society have also suffered declining incomes, but what is important here is the perception of the military. In response to the August 28 coup attempt, Congress has legislated a 60% pay increase for all military personnel. But as mentioned before, from the point of view of the cadets and probably many officers, this increase is credited more to Honasan than to the government.

The combination of slow advancement through the ranks and declining pay has created the potential for widespread complaints about favoritism in promotions. This latent discontent is aggravated by twin developments in the post-Marcos military: the lack of "escape valves" and the lack of fear.

During the Marcos era, promotions were based not so much on merit but on the traditional "padrino system." (Padrino; Spanish for godfather, refers to a patron who helps one land a job or win a contract.) Although Marcos's excessive use of padrino system bred resentment among those who were on the outs, there were, to a certain extent, several possible padrinos one could approach for a promotion. As a senior Army colonel explained: "If you were not close to [former Chief of Staff Fabian] Ver, you had Ramos. If you were not close to Ramos and Ver, then you could go to Enrile. If not, then you could go to Imelda. And you still had Marcos. But now, only one person [Ramos] calls the shots. There is no escape valve."

To a certain degree, these "escape valves" provided the flexibility central to the padrino system. Currently, Ramos appears to make promotions based on a combination of the "Western-style," professional, merit system (to which he is publicly committed) suffused with elements of the padrino system. He may be reaping the worst of both worlds: the rigidity of the professional system based on merit and the public expectations it creates, combined with the cries of favoritism generated by the padrino system but without the loyalty the traditional system commands. The resulting tensions between raised expectations and partially following old ways is behind the grumbling of Army officers about Ramos promoting former subordinates from the Philippine Constabulary to top positions. For another example, see the Navy promotion mentioned in a previous newsletter (ERG-3).

Second, there is the lack of fear. During the latter part of the Marcos era, some professionally-minded soldiers may have chafed, but fear kept the troops in line for quite a while. Now it's hard to have a conversation with an officer without hearing complaints about promotions. New military factions seem to spring up all the time. Aside from RAM, there's a loose organization for enlisted men and reserve officers, and a new group for middle-aged Navy officers. Not surprisingly, most observers believe that the military is more fragmented

today than it was under Marcos.

Much of the grumbling about promotions and general restiveness in the ranks can be laid at Ramos's door. He, and the civilian government, failed to set out and stick by clear guidelines on rewards (promotions) and punishments (court martials). But no matter who is running the military, there would probably still be gripes about favoritism in promotions due to these basic demographic realities.

## V. IMET

What is the influence of U.S. aid on the Philippine military's propensity to intervene in politics given the current political instability, the cadet's education, and the harsh demographic reality of the officer corps? It is probably rather modest.

The International Military Education and Training program (IMET) trains Philippine military personnel in order to: increase their technical skills in operating U.S. equipment; strengthen local training programs; and, most importantly, develop "a reservoir of good-will toward the U.S. armed forces." [9] It is a modest-sized program, costing only \$2.7 million this year. But U.S. defense officials in Washington call it "probably the most cost-effective program we have for enhancing cooperation with our friends and allies." [10]

After years of neglect in the late 1970's and early 1980's, the IMET program for the Philippines was rapidly increased in 1983 when it became clear that there would be a post-Marcos Philippines and that the military would probably play a role in that transition. Currently, the Philippines, following Colombia, is the number-two recipient of IMET training worldwide with over 600 students in training this year. The foci of the IMET program are those students who are studying in the U.S.--338, roughly half officers and half enlisted men. (These figures should be viewed with some caution. U.S. figures are constantly changing and figures from the Philippine military are incomplete since their headquarters burned down.)

Studying in the U.S. includes everything from VIP tours for generals, to advanced infantry courses for captains and majors, courses in basic aircraft engine repair, to one advanced chaplain's course. A large proportion of the AFP officer corps has at one time or another had a stint in the U.S., which can last from eight weeks up to a year. According to an AFP official, "most of the officers in key positions are foreign trained." In recent years, the Philippine military, which determines what courses officers take, has emphasized courses in maintenance, supply, and advanced officer training. Aside from training in the U.S., 278 students are in "on the job training" in technical areas at Clark and Subic military bases.

Finally, two Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) are training students in communications and helicopter repair.

For Philippine officers, a study tour in the U.S. is a choice assignment that includes sightseeing as part of the program. Students are first selected by a special AFP board drawn from the personnel and operations divisions, and then must be personally approved by the Chief of Staff and Secretary of Defense. Finally, the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) completes the paperwork.

Since competition is fierce, with about 10 applicants per slot, applicants often hand-carry their forms to the appropriate member of the AFP selection board to insure proper treatment. Usually, the selection process is relatively smooth, although insiders say that favoritism can sometimes play a role. The advanced chaplain's course, which had been approved by former JUSMAG personnel, raised eyebrows. And in a few cases, the AFP head of personnel and the AFP head of operations each recommended different candidates to JUSMAG. The feuding parties each lobbied JUSMAG, which has no role in the selection process, to decide in their favor. JUSMAG declined to decide.

As for what the students learn, in "after action reports" completed by the students on their return, they give high marks on the training. The most frequent comments in these reports are on the quality of the training and the modern training facilities. Some of this may be a reflection of traditional Filipino politeness, but most of it seems genuine.

After their schooling, students are required by the AFP to spend one year teaching what they have learned at one of the various military schools, thereby achieving a "multiplier effect." The long-term goal is to develop the Philippines' own military education system. Often, however, officers avoid teaching assignments since they are viewed as being in a "freezer" that reduces the chances for promotion. Senior AFP officers say that there is a relatively low regard for education among many officers since education is often not directly tied to career advancement. In contrast, Philippine society as a whole, highly values education as a key to social mobility.

More importantly, to what extent does studying under IMET influence the attitudes of officers? The manual on IMET sets as its goals to: "encourage military professionalism" and "promote better understanding of the U.S., including its people, political system, and other institutions and how they reflect the U.S. commitment to the principles of internationally recognized human rights." [11] Are these goals met?

There is no clear answer. At one extreme, a very sanguine former State Department officer suggested in 1983 that every AFP officer of colonel grade receive at least two training

tours in the U.S. The proposal was quickly dismissed since it would have entailed a seven-fold increase in the program. At the other extreme, a U.S. official knowledgeable about the program despaired that, "an eight-week or six-month stay in the U.S. ...can promote more understanding, but it does not change cultural differences which hold back [ie. hamper] the AFP."

Consider the five core RAM officers. At least three of them trained in the U.S. Navy captains Felix Turingan and Rex Robles studied in the U.S. under the IMET program, and Col. Victor Batac had recently returned from an extended fellowship in the U.S. when all three of them joined in their bid for power. Clearly, their stay in the U.S. did not change their conception of "military professionalism."

Yet, in specific cases, IMET can encourage important personal relationships between U.S. and Philippine officers. It helps, for instance, if a military attache went to Command and General Staff College with six AFP officers, three of whom later became generals.

From speaking with a variety of officers, it seems that the main result of a training tour in the U.S. is to inculcate some affection for America. When one is interviewing or chatting with a Philippine officer, the conversation often turns to his trip to the states, where he visited and what he saw. Even those officers who complain that their training was below them and that they already knew more than their instructors, still warmly recall their stint overseas.

But however fondly officers recall their trip to the U.S., more important for molding values and forming personal loyalties are their days as cadets at PMA.

Sincerely,



Erik Guyot

1. A significant proportion of officers share this belief as well. A survey of over 400 officers conducted in May 1987 found 34% agreed that "If the head of government is unable to perform his duties properly, any group in the military may try unseating him even if this means using force." while 33% disagreed, and 22% were neutral. See Felipe Miranda and Ruben Ciron, "Development and the Military in the Philippines," August, 1987. This poll is not the same one mentioned in ERG-3.

2. Jose Almonte, "Towards Reshaping Philippine Martial Traditions," undated manuscript, p. 83.

3. To date there has been no in-depth sociological study of the members of RAM. The classic study of a military faction is Chai-Anan Samudavanija's The Thai Young Turks (Singapore: 1982).

4. Office of the Registrar, Philippine Military Academy.

5. PMA is highly selective, of the 12,000 applicants, 6,500 took the admissions exam and 470 were accepted. Attrition is also very high, only 40% of a given class normally graduates on time, about 30% graduate a year later, and 30% drop out or are discharged. Graduating cadets fill about 20% of the officer corps for all the services. One cadet who almost didn't make it is Gen. Biazon who graduated a year late. He jokes that when he became Superintendent of PMA some of his classmates on the PMA staff resented being ordered by "the guy who graduated number 8 from the bottom."

6. Office of the Registrar, Philippine Military Academy and National Economic and Development Administration Yearbook, 1985, p. 129.

7. The Marines' loyalty comes from Biazon's hands-on, talkative style of leadership and the death of a Marine machine gunner. Biazon says that the death of the Marine private during the coup "probably saved the republic." It's a bit of an exaggeration, but basically true. When Biazon took command of the Marines, he conducted a series of "diagnostics meetings" with officers and enlisted men to gauge their grievances and win their loyalty. It paid off. On the morning of the 28th the Marines were called to reinforce Malacañang palace following the attack by Honasan. Despite a pep talk by Biazon, the Marines were "sporting their long faces" and clearly didn't want to fire on fellow soldiers. Fortunately, there was no trouble at the presidential palace since Honasan's forces had gone to Camp Aguinaldo, AFP headquarters. The Marines had returned to their own headquarters to refuel when news came that a Marine machine gunner had been killed by Honasan's men. It "electrified everybody" and the Marines wanted to go and storm the rebel position at nearby Villamore Airbase. Instead, they were sent to Camp Aguinaldo which they soon recaptured ending the coup.

8. Felipe Miranda and Ruben Ciron, "Philippine Defense Expenditures and Threat Perceptions," August, 1986, p. 14. Miranda's calculations do not take into account non-official sources of income for AFP personnel, ie extra income collected through logging concessions. But the trend nevertheless holds. Some of the new, monthly basic salaries that will take effect December 1 are: brigadier general 7,000 P, colonel 6,000 P, lieutenant colonel 5,500 P, major 5,000 P, captain 4,000 P, first lieutenant 3,500 P, second lieutenant 3,000 P, master sergeant 2,400 P, staff sergeant 1,800 P, corporal 1,300 P, and private first class 1,100 P. The exchange rate is 20 pesos to the dollar.

9. Statement of Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, before House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, February 23, 1983.

10. Ibid.

11. DoD 5105.38-M, "Security Assistance Management Manual," March, 1987, 10-2.

Received in Hanover 10/26/87