



# Philippines Australia Solidarity Group

## NEWSLETTER

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### US FACT-FINDING MISSION UNCOVERS CIA BEHIND VIGILANTE GROUPS

A recent United States Fact Finding Mission to the Philippines has found massive evidence of CIA involvement in counter insurgency operations, organising of vigilante groups and fuelling anti-communist propaganda.

One of the conclusions of the report is that "The CIA is engaged in a covert counter-insurgency war in the Philippines that involves millions of dollars, and undoubtedly incorporates the kinds of dirty tricks which have caused uncounted numbers of deaths around the world".

Members of the US mission included former Attorney-General Ramsey Clark, Gerald Horn, Professor of History and Law at the Sara Lawrence College, Ralph McGhee, former CIA Officer and Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The Objectives of the Mission were to study and document the impact of right wing vigilanteism on the lives of the Filipino people, to investigate the relationship between the vigilante groups and the counter insurgency plans of the Aquino government, and to examine the role of the United States in the formation and support of these vigilante groups.

Evidence of CIA involvement was not difficult to obtain. In a Presidential Finding of early 1987 President Reagan directed the CIA to conduct low intensity conflict against the NPA. The Report prepared by the Mission succinctly summarises Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) as "...the method of protecting US interests through the use of surrogate forces obviating the necessity of using US



Attempted Military Coup - Channel 7

Manila, January 27, 1987.

troops to directly fight indigenous peoples struggling for freedom from our domination. Rather than urge social equality, US policy supports, for the benefit of US financial interests, the total inequities of foreign elitist systems and uses their police and military forces to violently suppress the aspirations of the peoples of third world countries".

In February 1987, the CIA covertly sponsored the first national conference of anti-communist vigilante groups held at the Manila headquarters of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. Shortly after this, CAUSA, the political arm of Rev. Moon's Unification Church held a follow up conference following a similar pattern adopted in other third world countries and thereby suggesting covert US funding. Former US General John Singlaub appears to serve in the capacity of a CIA contract agent as well as chairing the World Anti-Communist League. He has been urging the formation of vigilante groups to Filipino businessmen and right wing groups. Also Singlaub has been active in recruiting US and foreign nations with Vietnam experience to train Filipino troops in unconventional warfare techniques.

The US Information Service role has been that of creating a climate of fear by labelling progressive groups in the Philippines as "communist"; it has also engaged in the planting of communist fabricated atrocity stories in Filipino and foreign newspapers.

The problem of violence in the Philippines, the Report states "... will never be solved so long as it is viewed along ideological lines of "democracy" versus "communist". The problems are practical ones of hunger, landlessness, and military abuse, and violence will give way when these problems are addressed. The Report highlights that the principal reason for the US involvement with the vigilante groups is for the protection of economic and strategic interests. This was evidenced by the labelling and targeting of those who oppose the continued presence of US military bases on Philippines soil and those who question the labour practices of the US and other multi-national corporations."

COPIES OF THE REPORT ARE AVAILABLE FROM PASG-QLD AT A COST OF \$1.50 (including postage)

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Printing costs forced us to alter our commitment of a monthly newsletter. After this issue, our newsletter will come out bi-monthly. Each issue will focus on specific themes reflecting the complexity and diversity of political and socio-economic problems in the Philippines. For this issue, we are focusing on militarisation.

Also, note the change in the regular PASG monthly meetings which is now moved to the 3rd tuesday of the month. Informational activities are part of the meetings so non-members are also welcome.

PASG monthly meetings - every third tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm at the Latin American Center, 264 Barry Parade, Valley. Ms. Susan Black will share insights on her recent trip to the Philippines during the August meeting.

## MILITARISATION AND DISDEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Dr. David C. Hyndman

(David is lecturer, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Queensland and PASG committee member. He presented this paper to the Workshop on Development Education in the Deep North on July 1987 sponsored by Community Aid Abroad)

"Defense" policy in the Philippines has little to do with defending the state against foreign invaders. It is fundamentally a policy designed to ensure that the local population supports whatever 'pro-democracy/anti-communist' programme the army has decided to pursue in the name of the people. The military attains economic and social objectives through promoting national defence.

An unconventional and undeclared war exists behind the scenes of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines known as Low Intensity Conflict (LIC); a new multi-dimensional political, diplomatic, economic, psychological and ideological counter-insurgency military strategy of the United States. The LIC strategy, according to Schultz, is a "global offensive against communism at the fringes of the Soviet Empire". LIC places Soviet expansionism behind instability and what the United States terms terrorism in the Third World. Projection of an 'East-West'/communism vs democracy conflict within the Philippines and elsewhere in the Third World is used to obscure the true agenda of the protection and promotion of U.S. economic and strategic interests. In the words of U.S. Colonel Waghelstein, LIC is "total war at the grass roots level". Because economic aid and humanitarian assistance are regarded as LIC weapons, the distinctions between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the Pentagon and the CIA becomes blurred.

The U.S. army published their LIC manual in 1981 calling for pacification and civilian paramilitary action programmes to secure pacified areas. Large scale deployment of U.S.

military forces is avoided in preference for surrogate forces. U.S. forces trained for unconventional operations and demonstration of strength through war games and naval presence. The U.S. uses 'surrogate infrastructure' to refer to the formation of local structures in the Philippines and elsewhere in the Third World used to combat insurgency and make use of U.S. military assistance. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), under Aquino's 'declaration of war speech' to the Philippine Military Academy, has intensified its counter-insurgency operations. The Aquino government's Oplan Mamamayan counter-insurgency programme follows the LIC scheme.

Early in 1987 Reagan approved \$US10 million for the CIA's LIC involvement in the Philippines, including overflights by US planes to target guerilla camps, teams of CIA advisors, provisioning of computers and computer technicians to Philippines intelligence, creation of new political groups and misinformation operations. News reports have quoted a 'critical Washington source' as saying that the CIA's plans have been approved by Aquino. The US National Security Council plans for the Island of Negros to be used as a new 'war laboratory' to develop and test LIC techniques. Negros was selected due to the dramatic growth in popularity of the NPA there who have scored a number of victories over the military.

The drive to integrate civic and humanitarian aid into the LIC strategy aims to coordinate all military and civilian resources in an offensive against communism. This year the Pentagon even created an Office of Humanitarian Assistance. Under Martial Law in the Philippines paramilitary Integrated Civilian Home Defence Forces were created as the military's partner in counter-insurgency. 1986 saw the creation of the civilian anti-communist death squads like Alsa Masa, Tadtad, and Nakasaka. Endorsed by the Aquino government, they combat insurgency in the name of 'peoples power'. These death squads are notorious for their violations of human rights. The ABC screening of the "Philippine Military Machine" on Four Corners in April 1987 highlighted the hysterical anti-communist fervor of the military in the Philippines. The Enrile faction of the army, which professes a reformist idealism, is equally committed to an all out communist offensive. The cease fire,

considered to be communist appeasement, was ignored, and current military cease fire violations continue a long history of human rights abuses which have never been prosecuted. The collapse of the cease fire has renewed the civil war in the Philippines. Private armies like Alsa Masa, under the military warlord Colonel Calida in Davao City of Mindanao, is one of many new vigilante death squads operating against civilians. (to be continued ...)

## EXPOSURE TRIP EXPERIENCES

Joanne Shears

(Joanne, NFIP and PASG member, was recently in the Philippines and the following were her impressions and account of the experience)

Recently, I was fortunate to be able to spend two weeks in the Philippines, talking with people of the urban poor, visiting with some of the sugar workers in Negros and staying with an indigenous tribal community in Zambales.

Everywhere, the people I met impressed on me that the overriding problem in the Philippines contrary to the claims of the government, is not communist insurgency nor is it the strikes and agitation by the workers.

### Fundamental problems

The actual problems which need immediate and farsighted attention are many and intimidating-- the interference and influence of the US, the urgent need for land reform, the intransigence of the landowners, foreign control of the economy and massive debts to international money agencies, the crushing injustices and corruption endemic in the political and economic systems - and the violence perpetrated against the people by the military, the vigilantes, the extremist anti-communist groups and the goon squads hired by landowners and others.

### Danger day by day

The tide of violence has risen in the barangays, the countryside and the cities since President Aquino came to power. The landowners, the rich and corrupt see their privilege and power threatened and fear their time is

running out. The government's approval of ever more aggressive military and para-military activities and American promotion and support for the strategy of "low intensity conflict" in Negros give license to more random killings and brutalities.

It is a very hazardous, dangerous place to live- even more so for anyone involved in organising resistance to harassment, for an end to foreign intervention, for better wages and living conditions or even support

groups which try to alleviate some of the misery of people living in appalling poverty.

Since the beginning of 1986, more than 20 organisers and activists of the National Federation of Sugar Workers have been murdered- two of them in the two weeks I was there. Death comes brutally - torture, shooting, beheading, by tadtad (chop chop) with cane knives.

In Manila and other cities, there are guards armed with handguns at the doors of almost every large building, supermarkets, bookstores, food outlets. Soldiers in the backs of trucks moving through the traffic carry M16s - in the provinces they take their guns home with them on public transport.

#### Political and social consciousness

People all across the country, more and more, are becoming aware of the value of solidarity, of unity. Among the thousands who live in the fringes of the mountain of rubbish in Manila collecting and recycling plastic bags, empty tins, anything at all that can be used one more time and which can be sold for a few centimes, councils and schools have been organised.

In the urban poor areas, health care programs and other improvements are being organised by the people, some of the street vendors are uniting against protection rackets. The demand for transfer of land ownership to the peasants and for fair wages and conditions mobilises masses of people. All recognise the need for solidarity against the political, economic and military interference of the US.

#### Courage and determination

The opposition which the people face is implacable and permeates every aspect of Philippines society. Activists know that they risk a brutal and premature death for doing what they do but they keep going anyway.

No one I spoke to was fearful of the New Peoples Army or condemned the

armed struggle. Not everyone would go to the hills to fight ( many pursue the struggle for justice and genuine democracy where they live and work) - but they understand and respect the reasons of those who do.

The lasting impression I have of the people I met is of their dignity and quite courage. They are determined that progressive change will come to their country and that they will be among the positive agents to bring about those changes. May success be theirs - and soon.

### **WHAT IS PASG?**

*The PASG (Qld) is part of a national organisation which has offices in all state capitals and in Canberra. It brings together people of diverse backgrounds and includes both Australians and Filipinos living in Australia. As well, it has close links with Filipino Community Organisations in Australia and the Philippines. Among its members there are people with extensive Philippines experience with information on trade unions, women's organisations, industrial working conditions, peasant organisations, rural working conditions, teachers working conditions and schools, the role of the churches (christian and non-christian) and the conditions of tribal Filipinos. The PASG Brisbane provides resource materials such as videos and slides as well as speakers.*

*The objectives of the PASG are to generate support in Australia for all Filipino organisations working for genuine democracy, freedom and sovereignty, to end Australian military aid to the Philippines and to oppose all forms of foreign intervention in the affairs of the Filipino people.*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

\* August 25, 1987 - showing of Fr. Brian Gore's film "I loved Ferdie" at the Drop-in Centre of the FWA, 149 Vulture St. West End, 12:30 pm.

\* September 11, 1987 - showing of the same film at the Christ the King Church (staff room), Graceville, 7:30 pm.