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Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Organization and Capabilities



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An Intelligence Assessment

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Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Organization and Capabilities




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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by 
Office of Global Issues. It was coordinated with the
Directorate of Operations and reviewed by the US
Embassy in Manila. 

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Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Organization and Capabilities



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Key Judgments

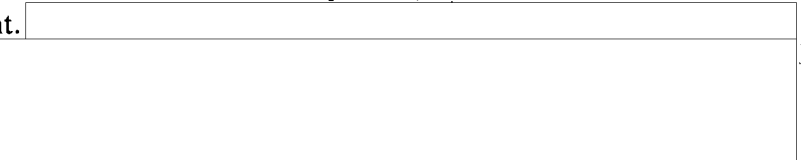
Information available as of 30 May 1985 was used in this report.

The Communist insurgency in the Philippines now presents a formidable challenge to the Marcos government and US strategic and political interests in Asia. Moreover, the insurgency is capable of growing more rapidly in the next two years than at any time in the past. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA), have seized the initiative in the countryside and are preparing to bring their revolution to Manila. The insurgents have not, however, been seriously contested militarily or politically by the government. This absence of sustained counterinsurgent pressure has allowed the Communists a free hand in many areas of the country and has left their potential vulnerabilities unexploited.

Party leaders are pursuing a dual military and political strategy aimed at achieving a stalemate on the battlefield while forming a broad political alliance with the anti-Marcos opposition. The party is in a strong position to gain politically from the malaise now prevalent throughout Philippine society and the government's unwillingness to undertake political and economic reforms. Party leaders hope to seize power by joining with the moderate opposition in a post-Marcos coalition government they intend to dominate. To this end, they plan to participate in the 1986 nationwide elections and support candidates whom they can co-opt.

The Communists have assembled an extensive and sophisticated clandestine political/military organization over the last 16 years that is waging protracted guerrilla war along 56 to 60 fronts nationwide, effectively controlling villages inhabited by at least 5 million people, and contesting control of villages inhabited by another 5.5 million:

- The CPP——is a tightly knit organization with a coherent ideology, centralized and cohesive leadership, an effective propaganda apparatus, and the discipline and patience required for a protracted struggle.
- The National Democratic Front (NDF), through its organizing and propaganda activities, has been in the forefront of the Communists' legal effort to form a broad alliance of Filipinos opposed to the Marcos government.



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- The NPA—  has become a credible military force that is rapidly gaining experience and confidence and is capable of fielding guerrilla battalions in many parts of the country. NPA attacks against the government are characterized by effective command and control, secure communications, good intelligence, sound guerrilla tactics, and effective adaptation to the Philippine environment.


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The Communists are sensitive to the misgivings of many Filipinos about uniting with Marxist revolutionaries. Consequently, their propaganda—a clever mixture of Marxism, Catholic liberation theology, and traditional Philippine values—is careful to emphasize the nationalist aspects of their struggle. They frequently cite Nicaragua as an example of a revolution in which Marxist-Leninists combined with a moderate opposition to successfully overthrow a dictator. Popular support for the Marcos government is at an alltime low, and party propagandists are exploiting this to their advantage.

Despite its formidable organization and successful performance, the CPP/NPA has weaknesses. A charismatic leader capable of galvanizing popular support for the revolution has yet to appear, its anti-American rhetoric rings hollow with many Filipinos, and the party's emphasis on nationalism over Communism has drawn to its banner many individuals lacking in ideological commitment. However, the most serious CPP/NPA liability is the absence of a reliable logistic pipeline to provide arms, ammunition, and other war materiel to the guerrillas. Although a small number of weapons are now being smuggled into the Philippines by the NPA, we believe the guerrillas lack the equipment to sustain an offensive of even a week's duration and the combined-arms capability required to attack well-defended military targets. The Communists have so far eschewed foreign support, and the isolated character of the Philippines severely complicates establishing a reliable logistic network or foreign sanctuary. 

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 Although extensive cooperation between the Communists and the Muslim Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) could help ease this problem, we believe there is little prospect for more than token cooperation between them.

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Scope Note

This assessment is intended to serve as a model for analyzing the organization and capabilities of a politically organized insurgency. In this case, we examine a well-developed insurgent organization, the Communist Party of the Philippines; its military arm, the New People's Army; and united front activities that attempt to mask the radical nature of the movement and broaden its appeal. The paper does not systematically compare the performance of the insurgents against the Philippine military,

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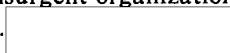
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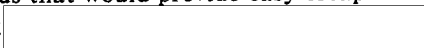
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Introduction

Since its founding in 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its military element, the New People's Army (NPA), have consistently demonstrated slow but steady growth. During the past two years, they have taken advantage of increasing popular discontent with the Marcos government to swell their ranks. The NPA now aggressively attacks the government's Armed Forces, increasing both the number and sophistication of tactical operations, while the party maneuvers to seize political power in a post-Marcos government. This paper reviews the party's political and military strategy and examines current insurgent organization, capabilities, and performance.



Yenan; they believed to do so was only to invite government offensives that the CPP/NPA could not hope to repel. Instead, guerrilla fronts were initiated throughout the Philippines—especially on the larger islands that would provide easy escape and concealment



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In 1981 party leaders decided that with the lifting of martial law the time was ripe to reactivate the urban underground that had been decimated by government security forces. Urban guerrilla units, dormant since 1972, were reactivated in Mindanao to assassinate government supporters and demonstrate the pervasiveness of the CPP/NPA. Urban united front activities, whose purpose is to broaden the base of support for the revolution, have since mushroomed in an attempt to win over the Philippine middle class, largely alienated from the government following the Aquino assassination.



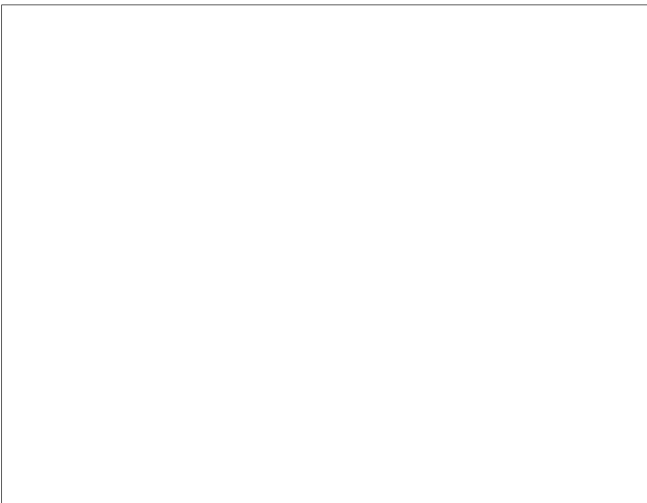
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The Overall Strategy of the Insurgency

The CPP/NPA has most closely followed the political and guerrilla strategy of protracted revolutionary warfare developed by Mao Zedong and articulated by party founder Jose Maria Sison in documents still used in teaching all party members. As in Mao's revolution, the Communist insurgency in the Philippines emphasizes the importance of building a base of support in the countryside among the peasant population. It also has an urban component, however, that is increasing in size and importance. All NPA military activity is controlled by the Communist Party's political leadership, which has generally stressed organization and recruitment over direct military action. The Communists' military strategy is complemented by a political program in which party members and front groups work to undermine the Marcos government and legitimize their own organization.



Another of the Communists' strategies is to achieve political power by presenting themselves as nationalists and joining with the moderate opposition in a post-Marcos coalition government. This is now evident from Embassy reporting and the public statements of party-controlled front organizations that

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Communist leaders have also demonstrated an ability to adapt Maoist strategy to the geography and politics of the Philippines. Following setbacks in 1972 in the Cagayan Valley, the leadership decided not to establish permanently liberated zones in imitation of Mao in

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now actively promote this concept. To broaden its popular appeal, the party frequently cites Nicaragua as an example of a revolution in which both Marxist-Leninists and a moderate opposition successfully united to overthrow a dictator. The Sandinista regime is portrayed as a state where the Christian plea for social justice has been realized. In our judgment, this analogy particularly appeals to many Filipino Catholics who oppose the Marcos regime but have misgivings about uniting with Communist revolutionaries. The newly formed organization, Bayan (the Nation), is the Communists' latest attempt to portray party willingness to join forces with moderates in a coalition.



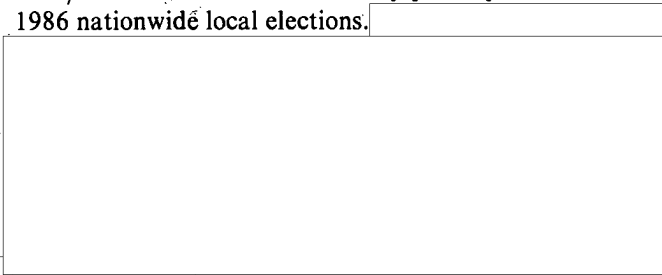
It is in the political sphere that we believe the Communists now see their most advantageous prospects. Our analysis of Embassy reporting leads us to believe that, to exploit the vulnerabilities of the Marcos regime, the CPP is skillfully maneuvering for a role in any government that might be formed should the President die in office and is actively promoting the concept of a coalition government in which it would legally participate. In a switch from its previous position advocating a boycott of elections, the CPP/NPA also intends to actively participate in the 1986 nationwide local elections.

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The party's consolidation plan is another aspect of CPP strategy, which though not well publicized is taught to all cadres. According to Sison's writings, once the Communists come to power they plan a subsequent "socialist revolution" to consolidate Communism in Philippine society. Although united front tactics and coalition government proposals are expedient now in forging a broad alliance, once the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines has been established the party alone will be responsible for transforming the society into a "proletarian dictatorship." Presumably, at this time the "blood debt to the people" owed by the landlord class will be avenged.



Party strategists maintain that theirs is an "unfinished revolution." The Communists insist that the Philippine people were never really liberated—not in February 1945 or July 1946 nor, for that matter, in 1898. They were simply transferred from Spanish, to American, to Japanese, and then, following the granting of nominal independence, to neocolonial domination. The United States is now identified as the principal enemy of the Philippine people, and President Marcos is depicted as a puppet carrying out the mandates of Washington. We believe the anti-American rhetoric may ring hollow with many Filipinos, but the appeal to nationalism and independence from foreign dictates does not.

The Insurgent Organization and Capabilities

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To implement their strategy, the Philippine Communists have assembled an effective, clandestine political-military organization that wages protracted guerrilla war along 56 to 60 fronts nationwide, effectively controls villages inhabited by at least 5 million people, and contests control of villages inhabited by another 5.5 million. For the purpose of this paper, we use the term Communist-controlled village to mean areas where:

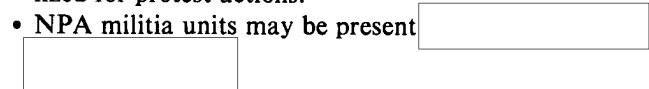
- A Communist "shadow government" has been established.
- Communist peasant, women, and youth associations are functioning.
- Most of the population is sympathetic and gives material support to the insurgents.
- At least 50 percent of the population can be mobilized for protest actions.
- NPA militia units may be present

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Communist Short-Term Intentions

We believe the Communists recognize that they lack the capability to defeat the government militarily and would settle for a stalemate on the battlefield.



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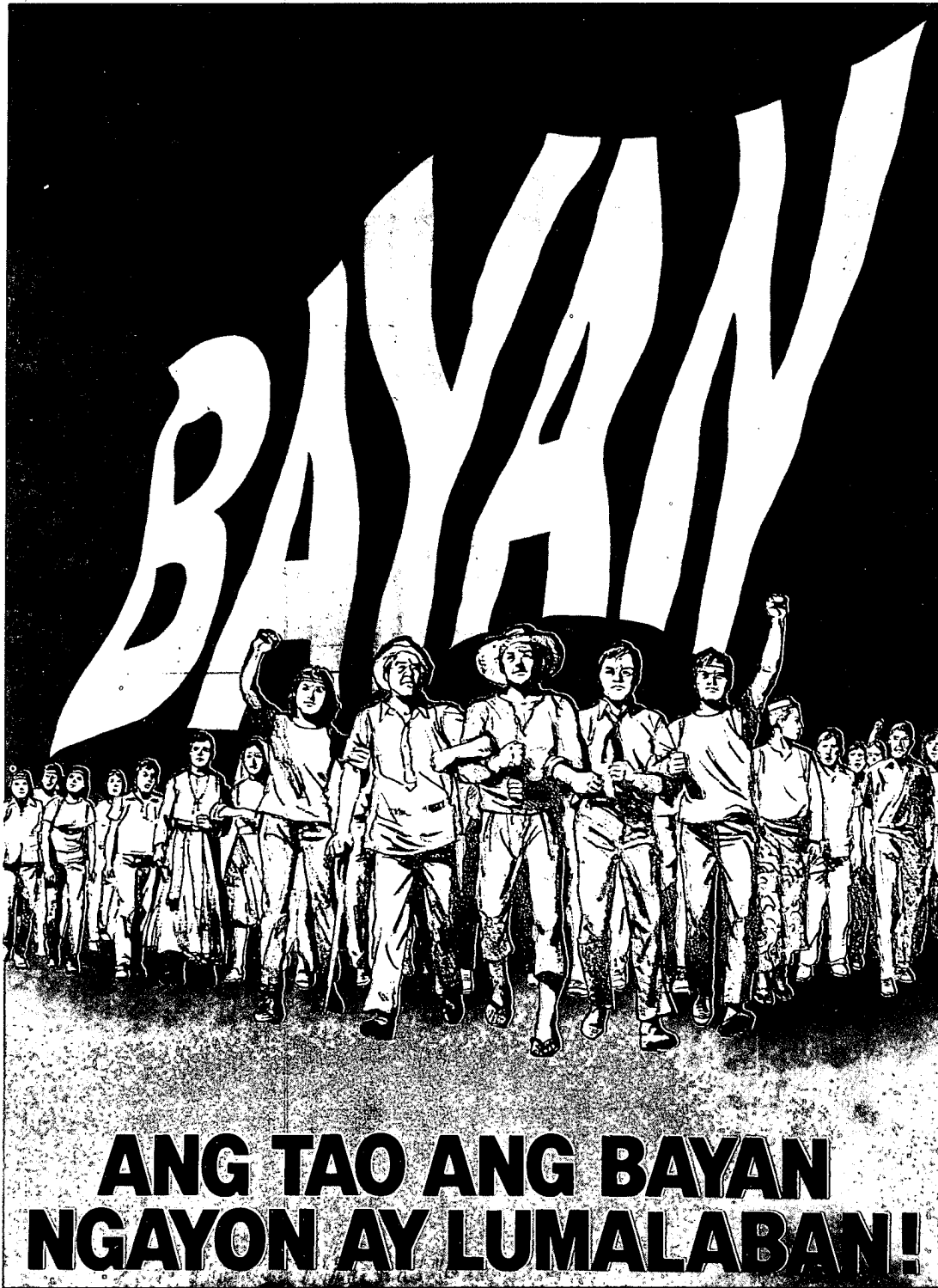


Figure 2. This poster publicizing the new CPP-dominated united front, "Bayan" (The Nation), is now plastered on walls throughout Manila.

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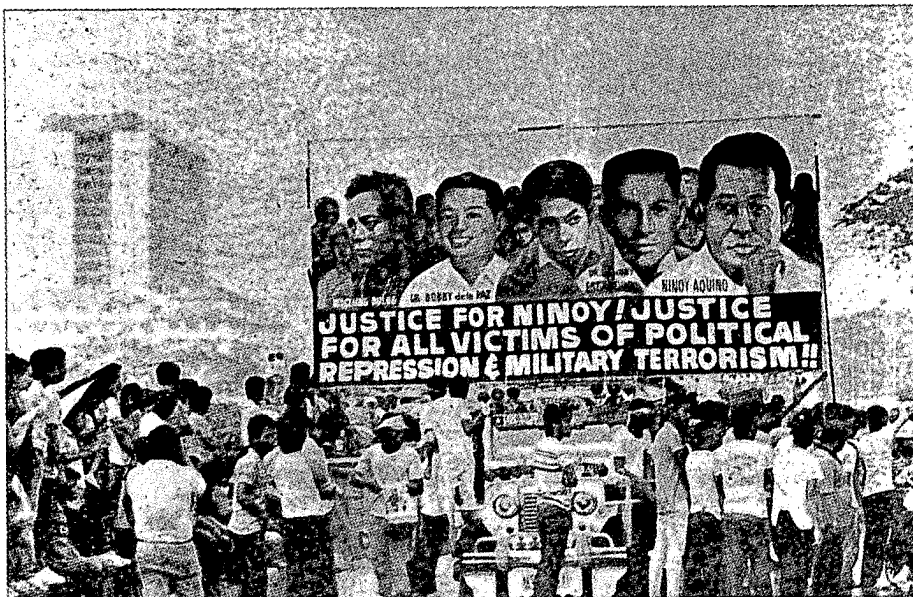


Figure 3. Communist propaganda attempts to equate party members arrested or killed with opposition leaders such as Ninoy Aquino, murdered at Manila airport in 1983. At this protest in Manila, radical students carried a billboard picturing leading cadres—including Central Committee members Johnny Escandor and Edgar Jopson—killed since 1980.

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The CPP—[redacted]—is a tightly knit organization led by professionals who are well trained and highly disciplined. The National Democratic Front (NDF), the party's main united front organ, is in the forefront of the Communists' legal effort to form a broad alliance of Filipinos opposed to the Marcos government. [redacted]

[redacted]

The Communists' organizational model—with its parallel party, united front, and military echelons—is very similar to other Communist insurgent organizations we have seen during the last 50 years. Neither the party organization itself, the distinctive organizational practices it follows, the subsidiary organizations it has set up, nor the conceptual framework it has pursued in evolving its forces and in contending with the government is unique. Rather, the Communist

organization in the Philippines is a synthesis of organizational principles and operational procedures evolved in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere. [redacted]

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The Party

As with all Communist parties, the CPP/NPA is under the firm control of a small number of highly dedicated leaders, or cadres, who make all important decisions regarding ideology, strategy, and management of the party. These cadres form the Central Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Politburo [redacted] We base this judgment on the analysis of more than a decade of party decisionmaking and leadership behavior as documented in Embassy reporting. This committee structure is duplicated from the national level down to the village, called a barangay or barrio, [redacted] Central Committee directives are interpreted and implemented by barrio committees, the NPA at each level is under the command of both the local party

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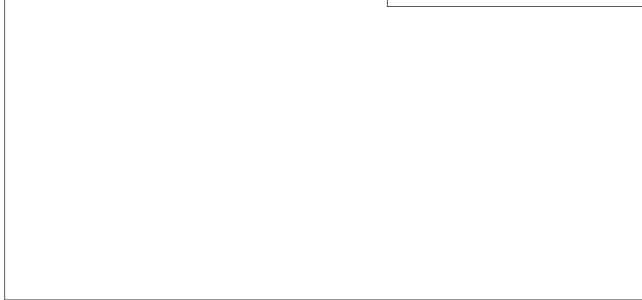


created in the 1980s to cope with the geographic spread of the party and to ensure that all subordinate committees operate in accordance with the party line set by the Central Committee. Five functional commissions oversee party activities in the areas of propaganda, military affairs, united front activities, and "mass movement" organizations.

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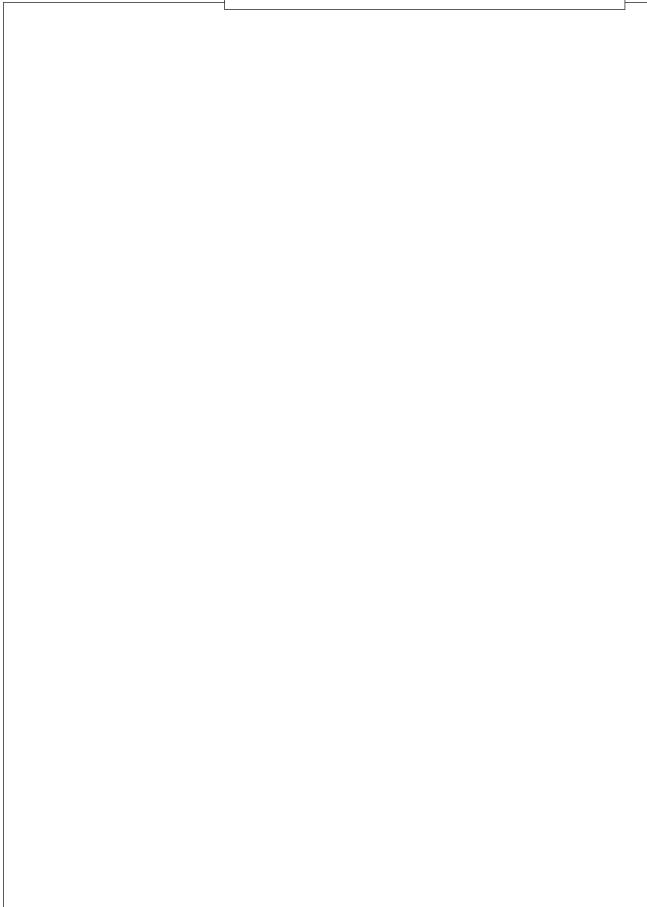
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Since its founding, the CPP has stressed organizational efforts and recruitment in rural areas rather than military activities.

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committee and higher level NPA commands, and united front activities are directed by a similar interlocking command structure. Such a system of command and control provides local flexibility in implementing orders from above.

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The CPP is organized along both territorial and functional lines and, since 1984, by rural and urban responsibilities as well. Six Regional Commissions, each headed by a Central Committee member, were

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[Redacted]

We believe nearly all party members are highly motivated and dedicated to the revolution; few cadres have defected. [Redacted]

Parallel to the party structure for full members, but separate and distinct from it, is the party youth organization, the Kabataang Makabayan (KM).¹ [Redacted]

[Redacted]

The KM serves as a training school for future party members and allows the party access to the enthusiasm and dedication of young radicals. Some as young as 13 are admitted to the KM after a careful assessment and become eligible for party membership at age 18. [Redacted]

The United Front

In our view, united front organizing has heretofore been the weak link in this Communist insurgency. The party's efforts to form a broad alliance of Filipinos opposed to the Marcos government have suffered setbacks repeatedly. In addition to an ideological bias favoring rural organization and a reluctance of many Filipinos to join a Communist movement, the long period of martial law (1972-81) made all overt opposition activities very difficult. Since 1979, government security forces have captured or killed many key cadres connected with these efforts: Sixto Carlos, Horacio Morales, Isagani Serrano, Edgar Jopson, and Mila Aguilar Roque. [Redacted]

¹ The KM is distinct from the League of Filipino Students, the CPP's legal mass organization for youth, which appeals, with little discrimination, to all youth. [Redacted]

Marketing Nationalism, Not Communism

The unofficial national anthem of the CPP/NPA is *Bayan Ko (My Country)*, which conveys a strong sense of nationalism and anticolonialism with a subtle blend of anti-Americanism while omitting any mention of Communist ideology. The song originated during the Philippine-American war, but the party has changed the words and popularized this version. Today it can be heard at most moderate and radical opposition gatherings, always sung in Pilipino:

Bayan Ko (My Country)

*In my golden land of Philippines
Fragrant flowers filled the morning breeze.
Loving fingers built a paradise,
A resting place for humankind.*

*One day foreign ships and strangers came,
Seeking out our wealth and beauty.
Left our people bound in chains,
Our hearts in misery.*

*Birds go winging freely through the sky.
Try to cage them and they surely cry.
Take away a people's liberty,
Sons and daughters live to set them free.*

*Soon one day our trials will be done.
Night will fade and golden morning come.
Now, my life and love
I give to set my country free.* [Redacted]

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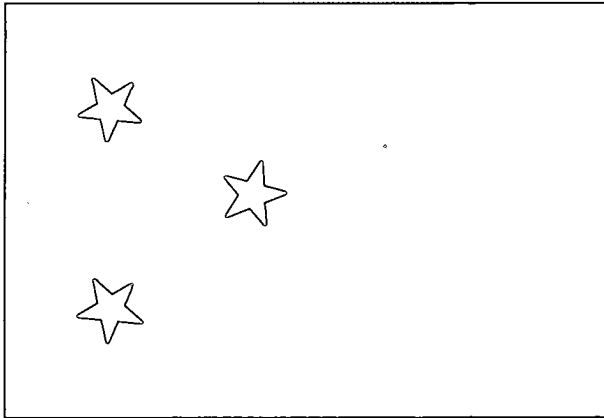
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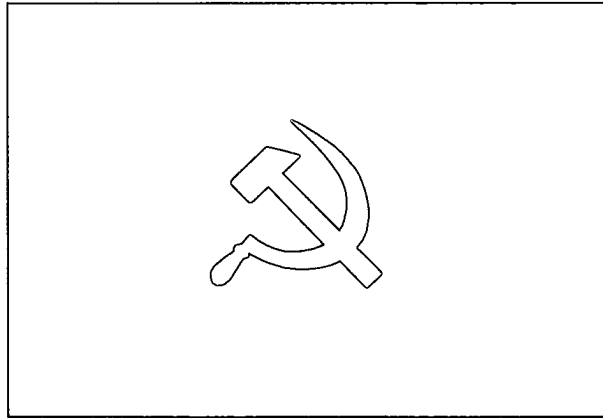
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Figure 6
CPP/NPA Flags^a



Flag of the hoped-for People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines.



The same flag is used by the Maoist Sendero Luminoso insurgents in Peru.

^a CPP=Communist Party of the Philippines.
NPA=New People's Army.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]
party leaders realize this weakness and are now concentrating their attention on united front activities to ensure a role for the party in any successor government. The CPP/NPA has begun to scatter party cells, infiltrating the leadership of some organizations, forming new ones seemingly independent of the party when necessary, and establishing alliances throughout Philippine society in support of the party's revolutionary objectives. [Redacted]

working in urban united front activities nationwide, with 2,800 active in Manila. The same source asserted that there are now 38,600 urban activists in the National Democratic Front—a claim that the Embassy believes may be exaggerated. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The party's control over the activities of the NDF is accomplished by clandestine cells of three to five persons who work together to broaden the base of support for the CPP/NPA revolution. Cadres use as a guide the 12-point program contained in the NDF manifesto of 1 January 1973. In urban areas, the cadres are to forge links with labor federations and unions, teachers associations, student organizations, and professional and civic organizations. In rural areas, the cell is to conduct social investigations among peasants and farmworkers and eventually help

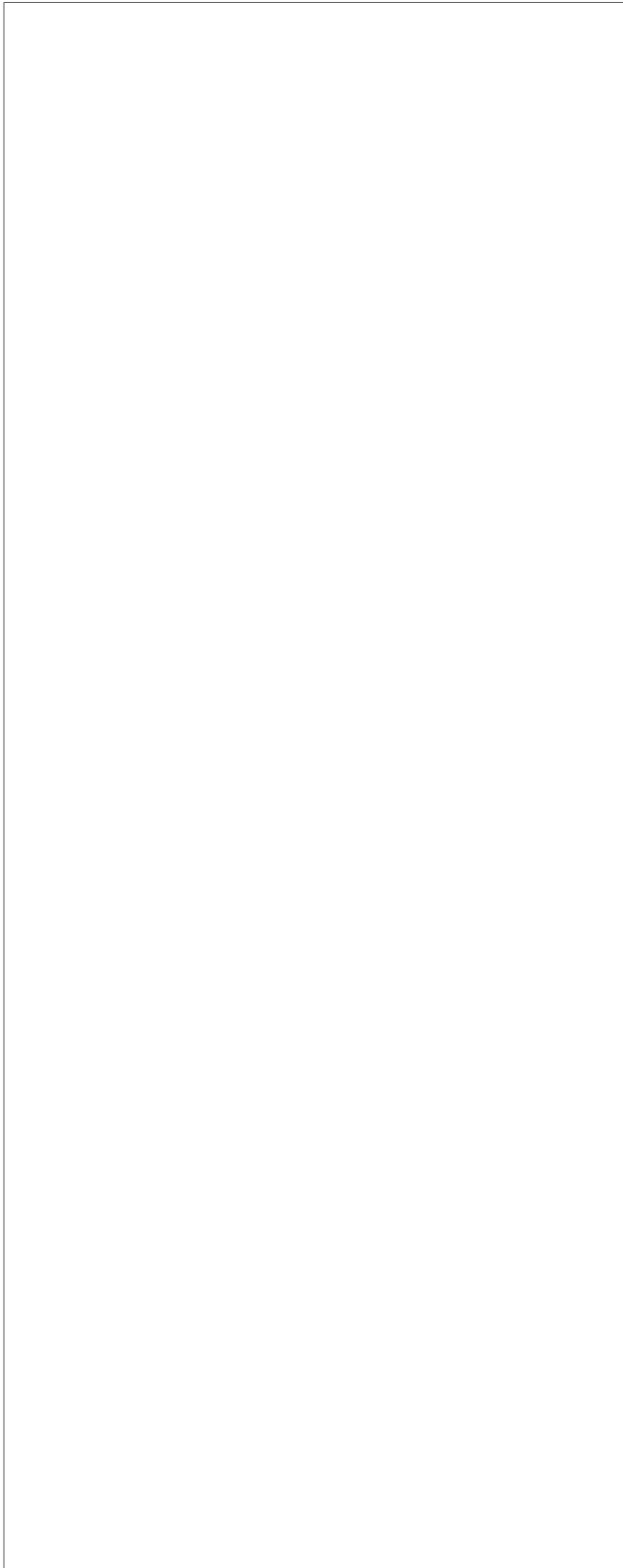
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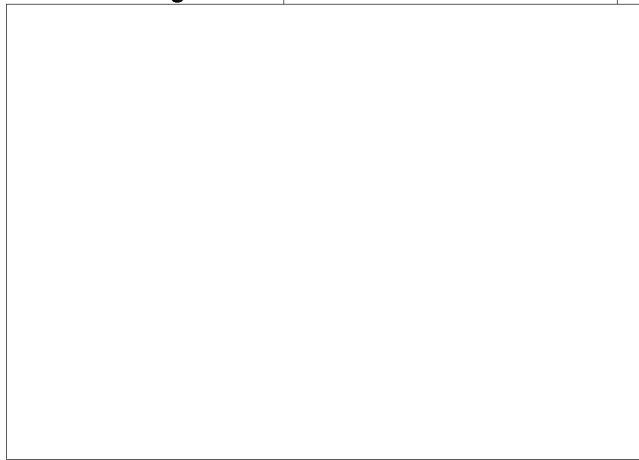
[Redacted] Embassy reporting from a well-informed source, which we believe to be fairly accurate, indicates that the party now has about 5,800 members

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recruit NPA guerrillas.

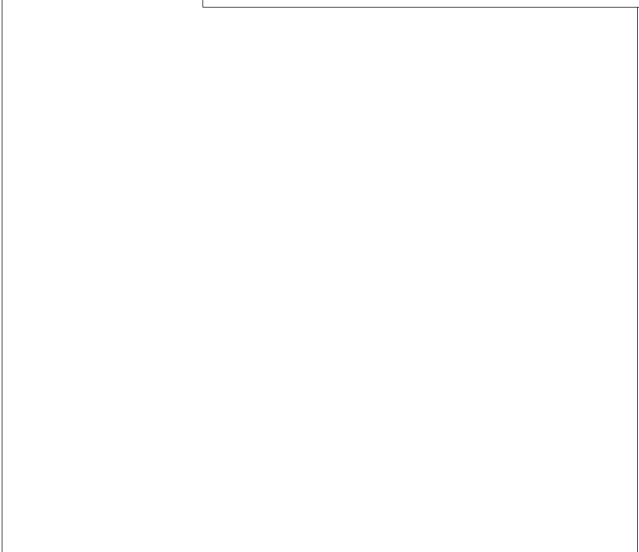


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In villages controlled by the party, united front activities take the form of mass organizations run by village cadres with members drawn from the village population—farmers, women, youth. Membership in these associations is voluntary, but the Village Party Committee makes every effort to involve every family; fear undoubtedly contributes to association ranks. However constituted, this is the “mass base” that grows food for the NPA and, at times, can be mobilized to support protests.

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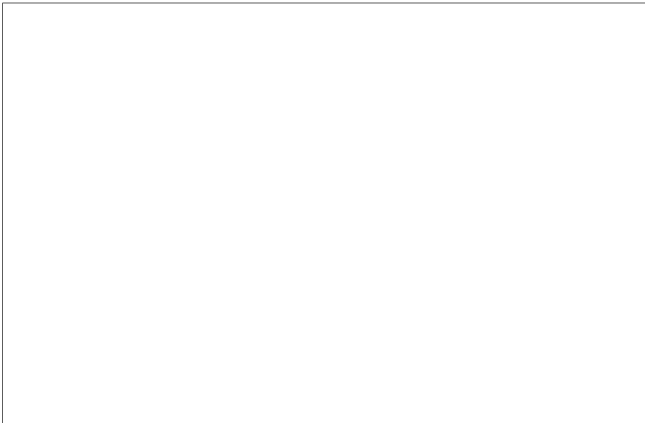


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The party publishes directly and through the NDF a wide variety of periodicals in the Philippines and abroad that serve as the prime source of information and propaganda for party members and sympathizers.

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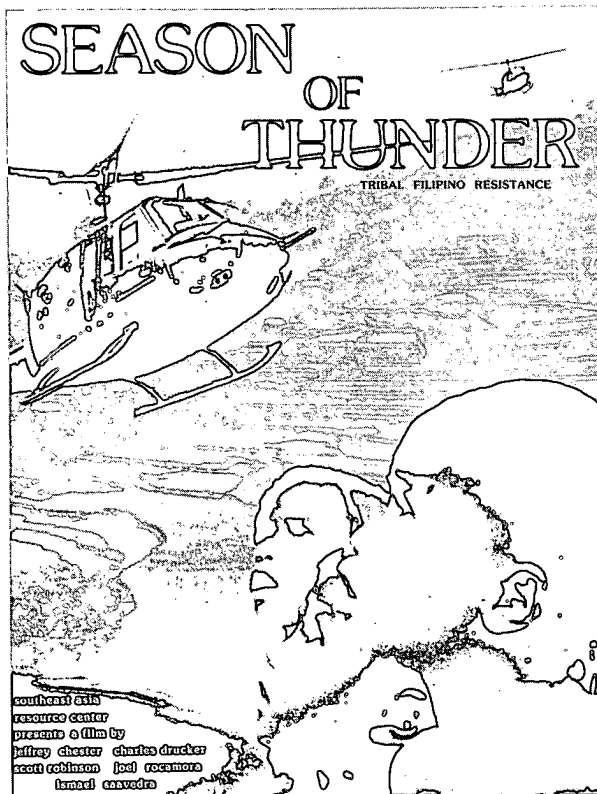
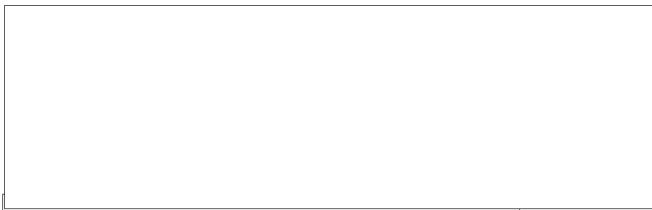


Figure 9. This advertisement for an NDF-produced movie that was filmed in Mexico in 1984 emphasizes US-supplied military equipment being used against Philippine children.

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In rural areas, probably the most important source of information on all matters are the ubiquitous "blackboard newspapers." Run by priests and nuns, the latest "news" is quickly spread from a centralized location to a network of barrio blackboards by schoolteachers and children. In many cases, this "news" includes a heavy dose of party propaganda.

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The New People's Army

The NPA is a military organization characterized by effective leadership and operational security, sound command and control, and strict discipline. The NPA is made up of both full-time regulars and part-time irregulars. We estimate that there are now probably about 15,000 to 16,500 regulars organized in infantry battalions and urban guerrilla units. Local guerrilla units and village militia make up the irregulars, [redacted]

[redacted] estimate at between 15,000 and 20,000. [redacted]

Regular Units—Regular Mobile Forces. The Regular Mobile Forces are the best trained, equipped, and organized guerrillas. These uniformed forces are responsible for most of the newsworthy raids and ambushes. NPA regulars operate at three levels—district, guerrilla front, and regional—under the direction of the respective party committees. [redacted]

Main Regional Guerrilla Units (MRGUs) and Secondary Regional Guerrilla Units (SRGUs) are each equivalent to a regular company of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and normally confine operations to the 56 to 60 guerrilla fronts now active throughout the country. According to Embassy reporting, the MRGU is a mobile force that can link up anytime with an SRGU, forming a combined force to conduct guerrilla operations in the latter's area. Within the past two years, the NPA has frequently combined such forces to successfully attack poorly defended government targets. MRGUs in Mindanao can now field 200 to 300 men (and in Northeast Mindanao, an additional squad armed with four M60 machineguns), but units of this size are still in their formative stages in most regions. Operations involving 100 to 200 guerrillas are the norm throughout the rest of the country. [redacted]

Regular Units—Armed City Partisans. The NPA uses classic urban guerrilla tactics to bring the war to the cities. [redacted]

[redacted] guerrilla teams specialize in



killing police, other government employees, and informers whom the party identifies in its propaganda as responsible for abuses of the people. Commonly called sparrow units, these assassins attack like sparrows, diving in pairs for food one after the other, so that if one misses, the second does not. [redacted]

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Irregular Units—People's Guerrillas. In municipalities and barangays where the party is contesting control or is already firmly entrenched, local guerrilla squads of 10 to 20 irregulars are formed by the NPA, both to support regular insurgent military forces and to operate independently. [redacted]

[redacted]

Irregular Units—People's Militia. [redacted]

[redacted]

mortars and a 90-mm recoilless rifle but would need many more of these kinds of artillery for combat support against well-defended targets. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] the insurgents seem to be able to transfer their weapons between units scattered throughout the Philippines. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] It is assumed that the NPA uses every means possible to supply its guerrillas, including reloading spent shell casings. [redacted]

[redacted]

Apparently, ammunition shortages are not a major problem for the NPA at this time. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] However, should military action increase, maintaining weapons and supplying adequate ammunition would become an important problem for the NPA. [redacted]

Although they have few firearms and receive only limited military training, members of the village militia are the eyes and ears of the insurgent movement within the village, providing tactical intelligence on all aspects of the local scene, according to Embassy reports. Training for the militia emphasizes political indoctrination. The village militia also supports NPA operations by playing a part in the flexible insurgent logistic system. The militia members provide a labor force for the transport and storage of food and equipment, serve as guides for guerrillas traveling through the area, and are a source of recruits for regular NPA units. [redacted]

Arms and Ammunition. Embassy reporting indicates that nearly all firearms used by the NPA have been purchased, stolen, or captured from the Philippine Armed Forces. We believe that the insurgents now have about 10,000 high-power rifles and an unknown but limited quantity of grenade launchers and machineguns. They recently acquired a few 60-mm

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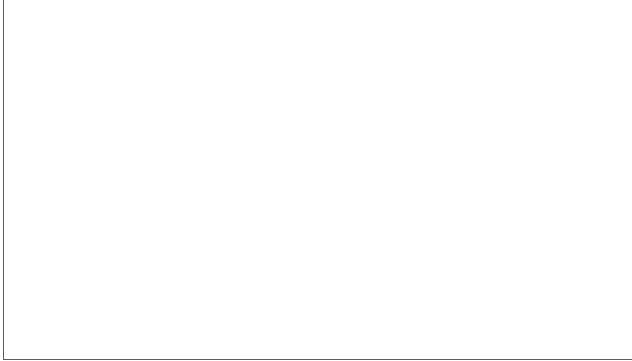
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Training.



Some former Armed Forces noncommissioned officers have joined the NPA and serve as training instructors, according to press reports. Training generally takes place at base camps located in remote areas and, in several cases, includes an obstacle course that meets US Army specifications. If the NPA follows classic guerrilla procedures, new recruits will be quickly included in combat operations—albeit in minor, less dangerous capacities—to acquire on-the-job training and boost their confidence.



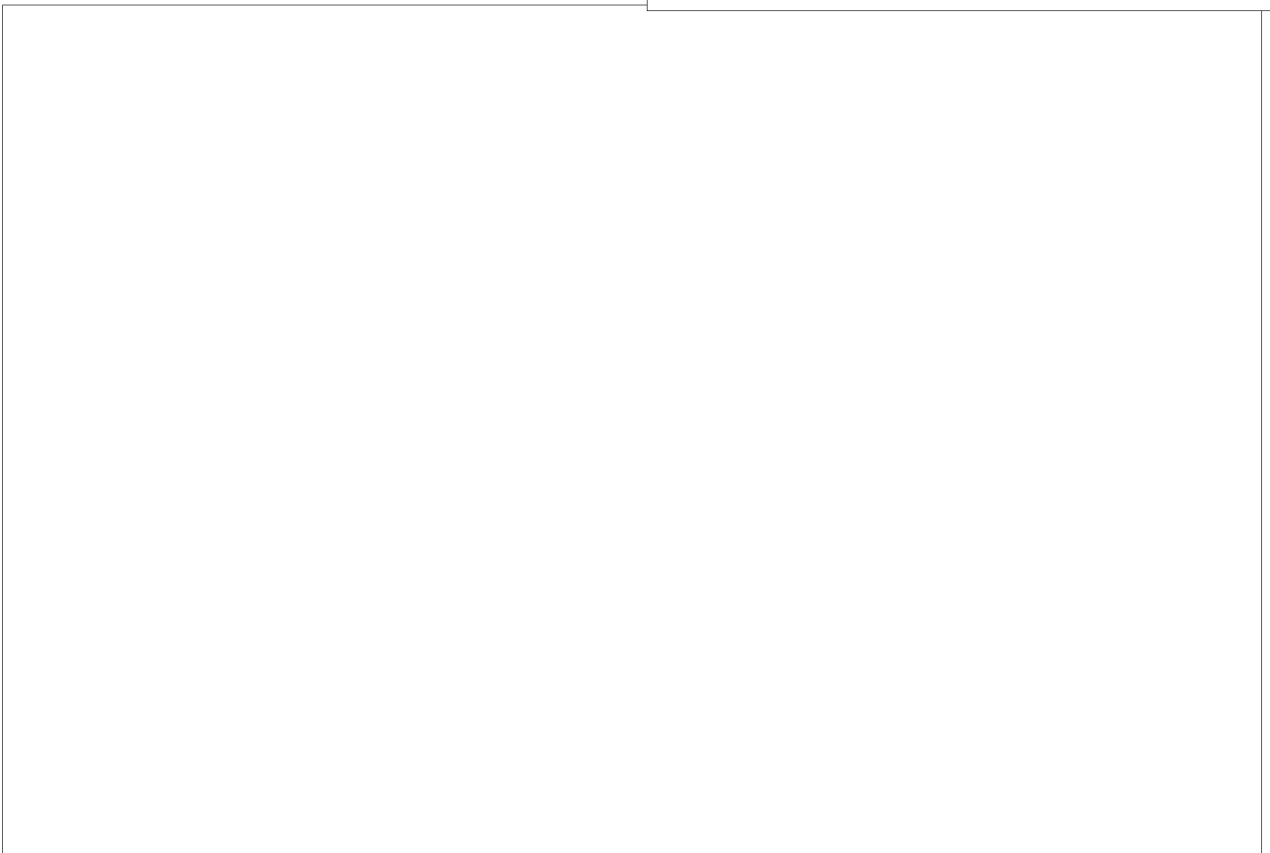
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Embassy reporting of CPP/NPA activities and our analysis [redacted] reveal strengths in a number of key areas that combine to make these insurgents a formidable opponent:

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- *Coherent ideology.* The party has a coherent, well-articulated ideology that emphasizes nationalism and anti-imperialism. First articulated by Jose Maria Sison, the CPP through its publications and courses presents a program that combines Marxism-Leninism and Catholic liberation theology, all in the guise of traditional Philippine nationalism.
- *Effective political leadership.* Through the Politburo, the Executive Committee, and the Central Committee, the CPP provides strong direction to subordinate cadres nationwide. Effectiveness can be judged by the absence of factionalism and—with one exception—high-level defections, and the minimal effects on operations caused by the capture of senior cadres.
- *Patience.* Aware of the Huk's premature switch to conventional warfare, party literature repeatedly stresses the protracted nature of this revolution to prepare followers for an indeterminate period of guerrilla warfare. We believe the party is quick to learn from mistakes and has been content to work slowly but steadily at establishing a popular base of support in the countryside.
- *Strong command and control.* The CPP/NPA follows the standard Marxist-Leninist policy of "Democratic Centralism." This policy provides considerable autonomy to local leadership as long as they adhere to Central Committee directives. Senior cadres are frequently reassigned, [redacted]
[redacted] Party discipline is strict and very effective.

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Key Insurgent Strengths

The CPP/NPA organizational infrastructure is now firmly in place and growing. Moreover, its performance over the past several years has been impressive.



- *Sound guerrilla tactics.* The NPA effectively uses classic guerrilla tactics and demonstrates a good military combat capability. Over the last several years, the NPA has cautiously escalated the number of operations to provide combat experience for guerrillas with minimal risks.
- *Effective use of environment.* The CPP/NPA has focused guerrilla activity in areas where the terrain provides cover and escape. As early as 1974, Sison saw the insular nature of the Philippines as a potential asset for the insurgents. He realized that the growth of guerrilla fronts on all the larger islands would stretch thin the capabilities of the Armed Forces while making it almost impossible to defeat the CPP/NPA in any one campaign.
- *Popular support.* Both the party and the NPA have demonstrated an ability to recruit and to mobilize the population in support of their cause. While coercion is sometimes used, [redacted] many people voluntarily cooperate with the insurgents at considerable risk of government retribution.
- *Effective propaganda.* The CPP has infiltrated many opposition organizations—[redacted]—to secure favorable coverage for its cause and discredit the Marcos government and the Armed Forces. This covert propaganda campaign has been effective both in the Philippines and abroad.
- *Momentum.* The CPP/NPA has gradually built a momentum—a combination of its own initiative and government inaction—that could take years to reverse. [redacted]

Is This Really a Communist Revolution?

Analysts are divided over the degree of commitment to Communism of NPA guerrillas, party sympathizers, the rural population living in areas now controlled by the CPP/NPA, and the population at large. Some analysts believe that many, if not most, of these people may be cooperating with the insurgents because of human rights abuses by the military, grievances against the Marcos government, or the lack of improvement in rural standards of living. The issue is central to US concerns because, like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the commitment to Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong ideology will largely determine whether the Philippines would become a Communist state should the revolution succeed. It also affects the effort required to dissipate support for revolution and defeat the insurgency.

[redacted] *hardcore CPP/NPA members are ideologically committed Communists who are determined to bring a Marxist government to power—even if they have to impose it from the top. Moreover, in areas controlled by the party, there are indications that some people cooperate voluntarily, not just out of fear. Although we cannot gauge the attitudes of most rural dwellers, we believe that the longer an area is under Communist control—and we estimate that at least 5 million people now live in CPP/NPA-controlled areas—the stronger the popular commitment to the party and the revolution is likely to become. However, the party is sensitive to the lack of strong commitments to any ideology on the part of most Filipinos and the peasants' almost exclusive concerns with local issues. Thus, the party stresses anti-Marcos themes, nationalism, land reform, and abuses by the military while downplaying Communist rhetoric (appendix C).*

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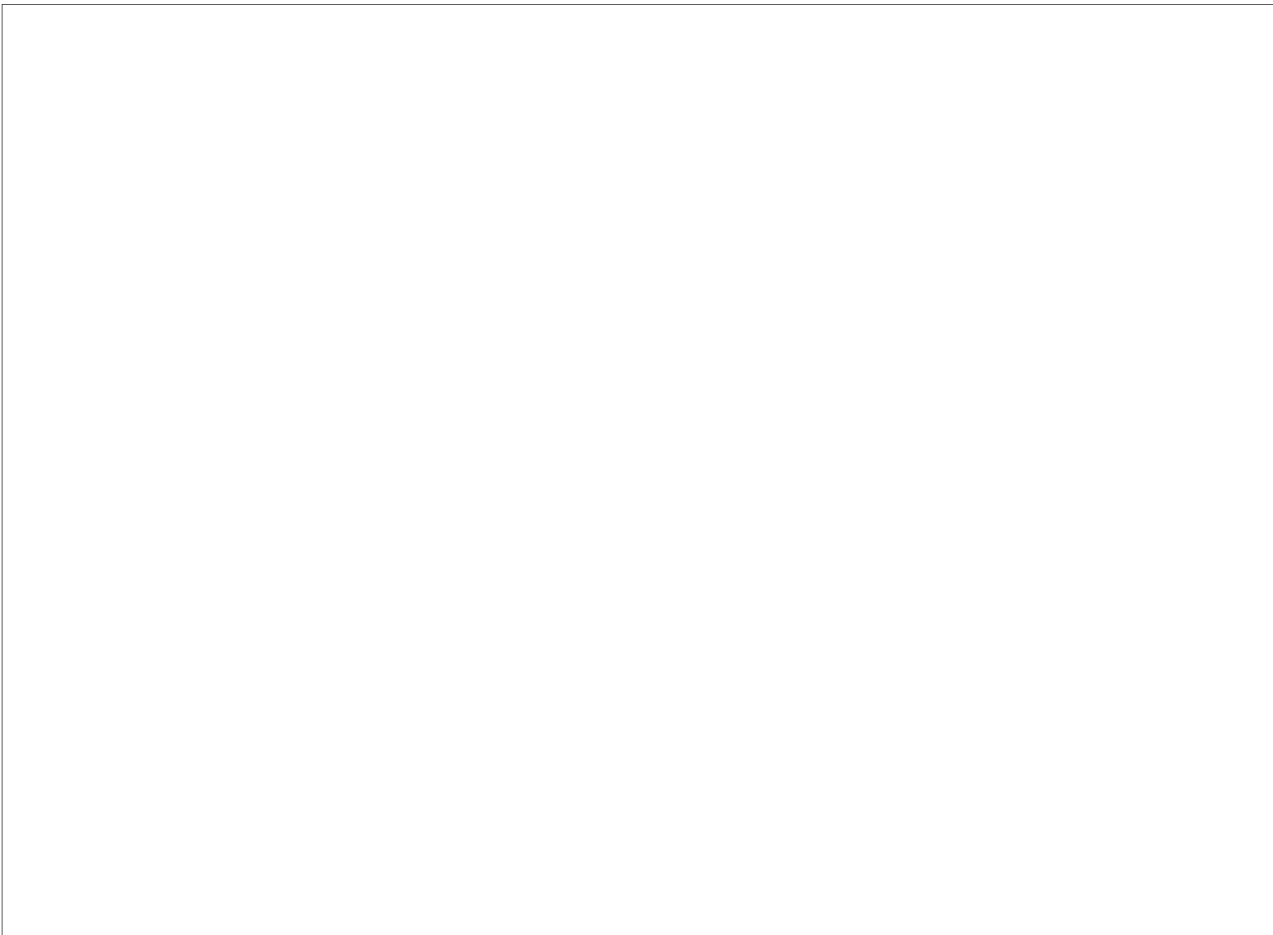
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Key Insurgent Vulnerabilities

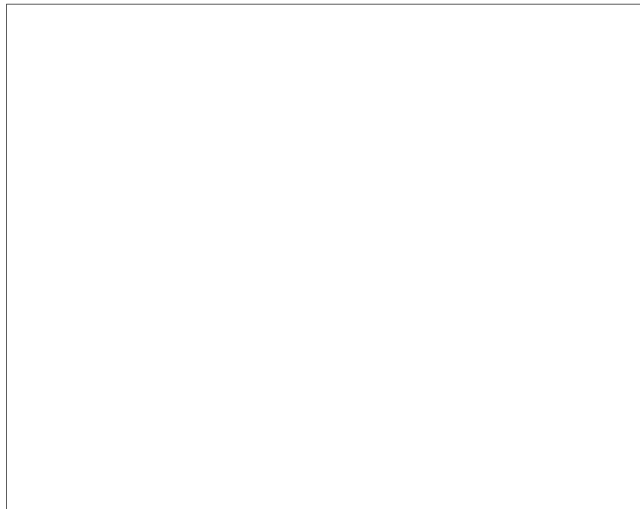
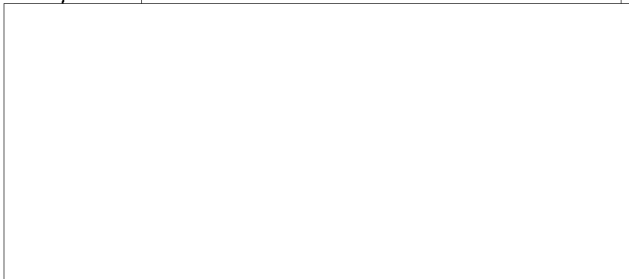
Despite their extensive organization and the strengths their performance has shown, the CPP/NPA has a number of current and potential vulnerabilities. In combination, these shortcomings have hindered insurgent expansion and provided the government with several key targets for exploitation.

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The lack of foreign support is the key weakness of the CPP/NPA.

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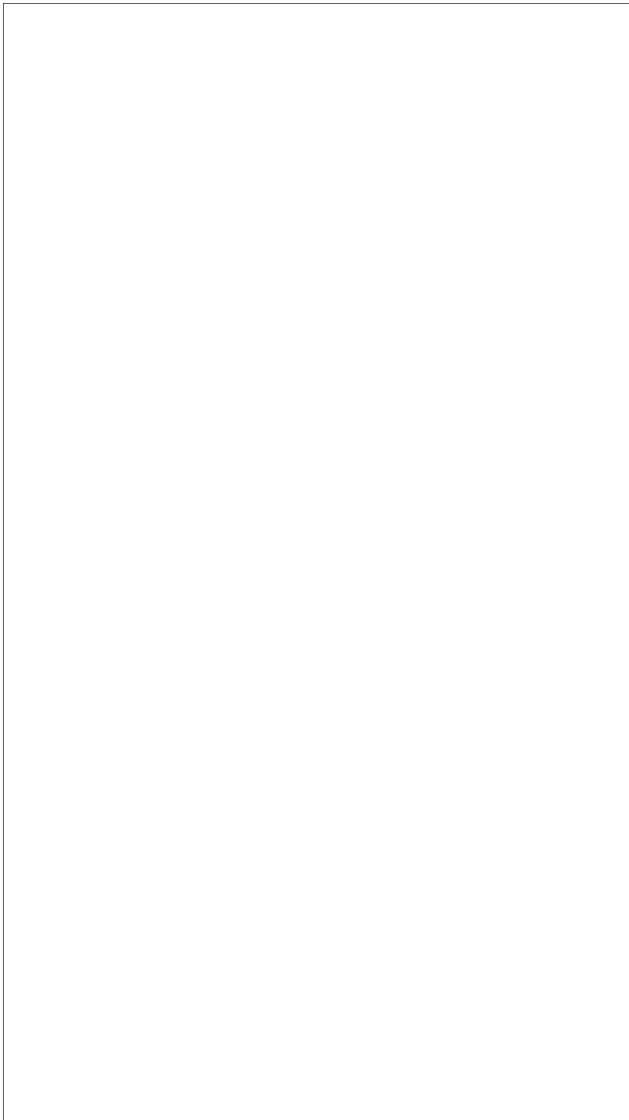


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Beyond the absence of a reliable logistic pipeline to support a guerrilla war, other CPP/NPA weaknesses include:

- *No foreign sanctuary.* The Philippines is geographically isolated—a situation almost unique in the world—and neither Malaysia nor Indonesia, the nearest countries, will permit Communist insurgent bases on their soil. The CPP has so far used the island's environment to their advantage by forcing

the government to confront them on several fronts and by establishing bases in remote mountainous terrain found throughout the Philippines. However, should the government's counterinsurgent effort intensify, the Communists—like the Huks of 30 years ago—could find their lack of sanctuary a serious liability.

- *Penchant for paperwork.* The Communists keep detailed records and files that are regularly discovered when cadres are captured at their homes or safehouses. When compromised, such information provides government security forces with a better understanding of the insurgent organization, membership, and plans.
- *No charismatic leader.* The CPP/NPA has no one of the stature of Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, or Fidel Castro. The Central Committee and senior cadres in prison are virtually unknown to the public. Were a popular non-Communist leader—with the charisma of Magsaysay—to emerge in the post-Marcos era, he might attract considerable popular support away from the Communists.



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- *Anti-American rhetoric.* Party propaganda portrays the United States as an imperialist nation and the sole prop supporting the Marcos government. But we believe America and Americans are favorably regarded by most Filipinos, and this propaganda rings hollow. [redacted]

NPA units nationwide now regularly attack military targets, and, in our judgment, the guerrillas have gradually gained the combat experience and confidence necessary to sustain the revolution's momentum. In 1984 NPA raids and ambushes involving 100 to 200 guerrillas became more common in most regions of the Philippines, especially in Mindanao and other areas where the NPA is strong. Raids, which net the guerrillas favorable publicity and firearms, increased by 53 percent in the past year—216 were carried out in 1984. [redacted]

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- *Non-Communist elements in the NPA.* In the attempt to stress nationalism over Communism, the party appears to have accepted under its banner many individuals who have a grudge against the government but lack ideological commitment to Communism. In Kalinga Apayao, several hundred guerrillas belonging to an ethnic minority recently defected from the NPA but continue to war against the government. Similarly, in Palawan the CPP/NPA has not been able to establish a front because of the activities of a renegade NPA band, according to Embassy reports.

[redacted] By attacking weakly defended targets in such numbers, the NPA is virtually assured a tactical and propaganda victory.

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- *No combined-arms capability.* The NPA has demonstrated an ability to use small-unit guerrilla tactics effectively but to date has not used combined arms—the coordination of different types of military units—in its operations. Should the Communists decide to attack well-defended military installations, they will find it necessary to use direct and indirect fire from machineguns and mortars to support their assault force. [redacted]

Most guerrilla-initiated military activity is focused on assassinations and assaults upon individuals to acquire weapons. Such incidents now occur nationwide. [redacted]

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[redacted] Insurgent losses are increasing but at a much smaller rate than might be expected given their more aggressive posture. [redacted]

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The Performance Record

NPA Military Performance

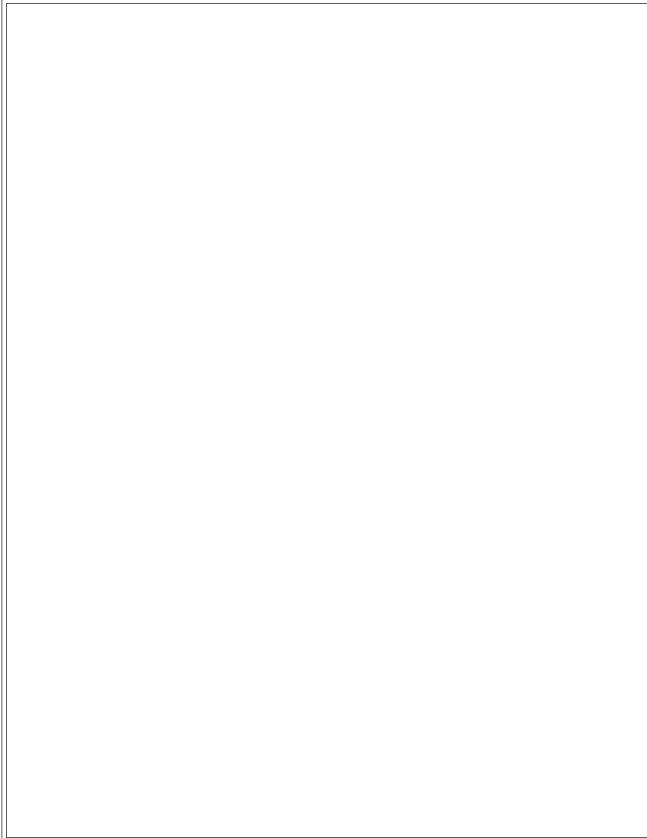
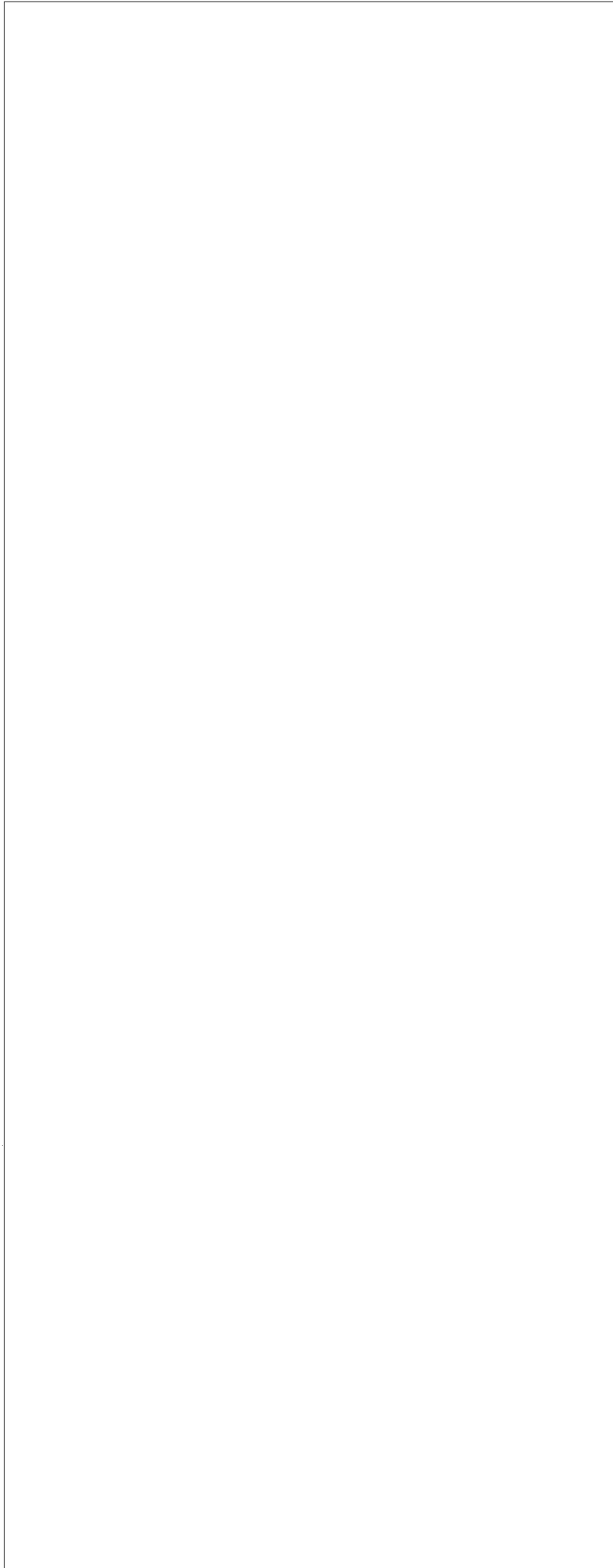
Analysis of CPP/NPA-initiated actions from 1973 through January 1985 reveals that the level of insurgent activity has increased steadily over the last decade with a significant upsurge in 1984—80 percent of the more than 5,000 violent incidents were initiated by the NPA in 1984. Last year there were 12 times more violent incidents than 10 years earlier and 107 percent more than in 1983. Much of this sudden increase last year occurred during two months—in January, when there was a national plebiscite, and in May, when parliamentary elections were held.

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The Rural Control Situation³

For more than 15 years, the party and the NPA have concentrated their efforts on organizing the Philippine village population in support of the revolution. [redacted]

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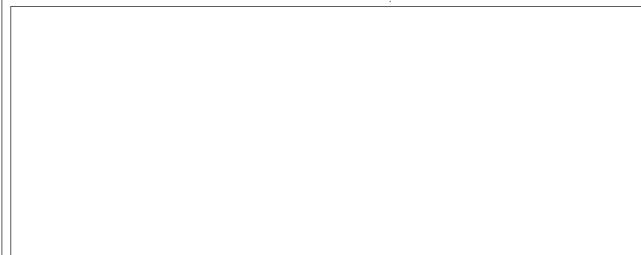


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[redacted] We believe these long-term efforts are now yielding dividends, and villages are being won over to the Communists' side at an increasing rate. [redacted]

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- Foreign arms supplies will determine whether the guerrillas will have enough arms and ammunition to sustain offensive actions, defend base areas, and mount conventional attacks against the Armed Forces. [redacted]

We believe the Communist insurgency has the potential to grow more rapidly during the next two years than at any time in the past. The Communist Party is now in a strong position to benefit from the malaise prevalent throughout Philippine society: popular support for the Marcos government is at an alltime low; the record of the last few years leads us to conclude that the prospects for meaningful political reforms under this regime are slight; the military's response to urban terror by the NPA is to step up extralegal killings, which further damages its reputation; and the economic crisis is expected to erode standards of living further in the next two years. Given the Armed Forces' lack of logistics, their poor leadership, and the politicized nature of the officer corps, it is unlikely that the military's performance will improve enough to stem increased NPA activity. The elections planned for 1986 and 1987 are likely to be the most contentious and violent in Philippine history—probably driving more people into the ranks of the Communist Party. [redacted]

The NPA probably will grow in numbers, gradually escalate military actions, and improve its military tactics to include assaults against well-defended targets and night operations. If present trends continue unchecked, government forces may soon be forced to cede de facto control of the rural highlands to the Communists in many regions of the country. But the Communists cannot hope to defeat the Armed Forces in the near future and will be unable to sustain an offensive of even a few weeks' duration without substantially more arms and ammunition than they now possess. [redacted]

If party leaders have been able to arrange for weapons purchases abroad, as now seems likely, they must also arrange for numerous clandestine arms deliveries to various islands in the archipelago. We believe it will be difficult, but not impossible, to sustain such a logistic pipeline over time; as the deliveries increase, interdiction could become easier. [redacted]

Party efforts to join ranks with the MNLF insurgents have not, and probably will not, succeed. The MNLF is beset with defections, financial problems, and factionalism along ethnolinguistic lines. Nur Misuari, leader of the largest and most radical group, the Tausug Muslims, [redacted]

[redacted] commands little allegiance among Muslim guerrillas outside of Sulu. Communist propaganda aimed at the Muslim community has not been able to overcome longstanding Christian-Muslim hatreds. Although Misuari may help arrange arms purchases for the NPA, we believe there will be little cooperation between the two insurgent groups in the next two years. Moreover, as the NPA increases activity in MNLF areas of operations in Mindanao and presents a threat to established MNLF extortion activities, there will be even more friction and enmity between the rival insurgent groups. [redacted]

Support for the party by Catholic clergy and nuns is growing, largely because of human rights abuses by the Constabulary, police, and Civilian Home Defense Forces. If alienated, nuns and priests would provide a highly dedicated and professional work force for party and united front activities. Father Balweg, a rebel priest and NPA commander, is now a popular folk hero. Analogies between the Philippines and Nicaragua—where the revolution succeeded in toppling the Somoza dictatorship with the assistance of religious radicals—are becoming more common in the Philippines. We believe government attempts to isolate religious radicals and regain the support of priests and nuns will be futile without military reforms to curtail abuses of the population. [redacted]

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Threat to US Military Facilities

We do not consider the principal threat to US bases in the Philippines to be military. Rather, party propaganda opposing American use of the Clark and Subic bases aims to make continued US use of the bases politically untenable for any future government. Party propaganda decries "US imperialism" and cites the presence of US military facilities on Philippine soil as the most visible manifestation of America's imperialist intentions and an affront to Philippine sovereignty. Repeated use of this propaganda theme over the last decade has helped polarize most opposition politicians. Today, those who do not oppose the bases are accused of being unpatriotic and "tools of the CIA." To avoid such charges, any successor government may have to demand either renegotiation of the bases agreement on terms more favorable to the Philippines or the abrogation of the agreement. [redacted]

A direct military attack on one of the bases is possible—and threats of military or terrorist action have been received—but the NPA is much more likely to selectively target US personnel or attempt to place bombs in US installations. Direct assaults against the bases by guerrilla units in the near future would be counterproductive and costly. The NPA leadership is aware of their limited firepower, lack of fire support, and the difficulty of secretly massing

Suspected CPP/NPA Attacks Against US Personnel ^a

1969

3 July Two airmen wounded near main gate of Clark Air Base by automatic weapons fired from a moving vehicle.

31 July Four airmen injured by a grenade thrown from a moving vehicle in Angeles City. 25X1

4 August Six airmen wounded by an explosive device thrown from a moving vehicle in Angeles City.

1970

21 January Car bomb exploded outside the Joint US Military Advisory Group Headquarters in Quezon City.

31 January US Navy seaman attending a fiesta with his wife and children shot and killed in Bamban.

24 March USAF officer wounded by gunfire while driving near Clark Air Base.

2 April Two US airmen tied up, beaten, and shot to death in a remote section of Clark Air Base.

1971

March Bomb exploded in an Angeles City nightclub frequented by Americans. Antenna of a US Navy communications site adjoining Camp O'Donnell bombed. 25X1

1974

13 April Three US Navy officers shot and killed while traveling by jeep through an unimproved area at Subic Bay Naval Base. [redacted] 25X1

^a As reported in USAF OSI Special Report, "Republic of the Philippines: The New People's Army," November 1983. [redacted]

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troops for a surprise attack in Central Luzon. Party leaders also realize that such actions would justify increased US military actions. [redacted]

Threat to US Personnel

Assassination of US personnel, on the other hand, could easily be accomplished by trained NPA sparrow units and has, in the past, been sanctioned by the party leaders—the same leaders who now control the party. [redacted]

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Rodolfo Salas and Juanito Rivera both participated in the killing of US servicemen in the early 1970s. [redacted]

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Appendix C

Communist Analysis of Philippine Society

In 1970 Jose Maria Sison published an analysis of social classes in the Philippines in *Philippine Society and Revolution*. Today, his ideas are still taught to all CPP members and form the basis for deciding a person's eligibility for party membership. Table C-1 summarizes the essence of this class analysis. The terminology frequently appears in party propaganda and opposition publications, but the meanings are not clearly understood by most analysts. Modeled after Mao's analysis of China's prerevolutionary society, this analysis shows the enemies and targets of the Communist revolution and makes the point that landlords "owe a blood debt to the people" that must be satisfied at some future date—a fact that rarely surfaces when Communists describe their "nationalistic" revolution. [redacted]

Today, the party leadership is making a concerted effort to broaden its base of support by including as many groups as possible in allied united front organizations. [redacted]



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To win the support of a broad spectrum of Philippine society, the party tailors its propaganda to appeal to specific audiences. [redacted]

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Communist Class Analysis of Philippine Society

Class	Members	Economic Status	Political Attitude	Role in the Revolution
Landlords				
Big, middle, small	Landowners; leaseholders/concessionaires; managers and promoters of farm cooperatives; those who assist in collecting rent or managing estates; usurers	Own vast tract of land; exact onerous land rent; lend money at usurious rates; increase land rents arbitrarily	Most backward and reactionary; main obstacle to change; main social base of imperialism; resist the revolution violently	Target of the revolution; owe a blood debt to the people
Bourgeoisie				
Comprador big bourgeoisie	Fifty big families (Sorianos, Ayalas, Zobels, et al); principal trading and financial agents of US imperialism; bureaucrat capitalists; managers, lawyers, big accountants, highly paid reactionary publicists, and intellectuals in service of big bourgeoisie	Ties to big landlords wealth derived from export of local raw materials and import of finished products	Control the present political system; violently opposed to the revolution	Target of the revolution
Middle bourgeoisie (national bourgeoisie)	Businessmen interested in "nationalist industrialization"; manufacturers	Fettered by feudalism but many belong to landlord class	Inconsistent attitude toward revolution (leftists support revolution, rightists oppose it)	Limited participation in revolution possible
Petty bourgeoisie	Teachers, student youth, low-income professionals, office clerks and lower government officials, small businessmen, skilled workers	Possess small amount of property; limited and fixed income	Susceptible to counterrevolutionary ideas	Motive force of the revolution and reliable ally of working class
Upper		Have some savings	Rightwing	
Middle		Just make ends meet	Abusive of imperialists; tendency to stay neutral; doubt effectiveness of revolution	Must be won over to the revolution
Lower		In debt; falling incomes	Leftwing; welcome the revolution	Intelligencia are the spearhead of the revolution

Peasantry				
Rich peasants (rural bourgeoisie)	5 percent of rural population; own their land and rent to others	Income exceeds needs; some are minor landlords	Often side with reactionaries	Should not be prematurely targeted; encourage grain or cash contribution from them; must be removed from political leadership of barrios
Middle peasants (rural petty bourgeoisie)	15 to 20 percent of rural population	Self-sufficient; live austerely		Willing to join; welcome agricultural cooperation and socialism; reliable ally; important motive force of the revolution
Upper level		Slight surplus	Aspire to be rich peasants	
Middle level		Just self-sufficient	Follow opinions of upper-middle and rich peasants in good times	
Lower level		In debt		
Poor peasants and farm workers	75 to 80 percent of rural population; tenants	Own no land; often obliged to sell their labor; often in debt	Most reliable ally of proletariat; can be aroused and mobilized to smash landlords, imperialists, comprador big bourgeoisie, bureaucrat capitalists	Biggest motive force of revolution; because the land problem is their essential problem, it is main problem of the revolution; main source for NPA
Proletariat	15 percent of total manpower in Philippines; industrial workers; farm workers	Own no means of production; extremely oppressed by US imperialism, local capitalism, and feudalism	Always willing to exercise their clan leadership and strike down oppressors and exploiters	Leading force of the revolution
Semi-proletariat	Unemployed and underemployed: dock workers, market cargadores, pedicab drivers, jeepney drivers, and restaurant helpers	Irregular and insufficient income	Eager to fight in revolution	A motive force of the revolution
Lumpen proletariat	Dregs of society—thieves, robbers, prostitutes, vagrants (often found in slums)	Resort to antisocial acts to make a living	Easily bought off by the enemy; some can be remolded	They can become source of roving rebel bands and anarchist ideology

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Appendix H

Chronology of Key Events

- 1872** Three Franciscan priests—Fathers Burgos, Gomez, and Tamora—executed by the Spanish colonial government for inciting the Cavite Mutiny. Catholics in the CPP refer to the historical precedent of these “martyrs” in justifying the involvement of religious in the Communist revolution.
- 1880-1890s** “Propaganda Movement” initiated by a small group of intelligentsia to introduce ideas of European liberalism, including national self-determination into the Philippines. This movement set the stage for the revolution of 1896 and a precedent for a “second propaganda movement” to revise Communist ideology (that is, Sison’s attempt to introduce Maoist principles into the PKP) in the 1960s.
- 1896** Insurgency against the Spanish colonial government begins following the execution of the novelist, physician, and political thinker Jose Rizal by the Spanish. The insurgency is started by Andres Bonifacio—regarded as a “proletarian hero” by the Communists—who had organized workers in the slums of Manila.
- 1899-1902** Following the surrender of the Spanish in the Spanish-American War, the United States wages massive counterinsurgency effort against the guerrilla forces of Emilio Aguinaldo. 150,000 US soldiers fought the guerrillas; more than 4,000 were killed. The Communists today portray themselves as the standard bearers of the 1896 “unfinished” revolution.
- 7 November 1930** Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP) established by Crisanto Evangelista.
- 1942-45** Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon—Hukbalahap (Anti-Japanese People’s Army), the armed wing of the PKP, wages guerrilla war against the Japanese in Central Luzon.
- 1950-54** PKP wages armed insurgency in Central Luzon against the Philippine Government. The guerrilla organization crumbles with the surrender of leader Luis Taruc in May 1954.
- 30 November 1964** Kabataang Makabayan (Nationalist Youth) (KM) founded by Jose Maria Sison and other young PKP radicals to lead the movement to revitalize the PKP known now as the “Second Propaganda Movement.” By 1966 the KM claimed 10,000 members throughout the Philippines.
- 11 September 1967** League of Filipino Students, a front organization for the KM, founded ostensibly to protest rising school tuition fees.
- 1967** First major theoretical document of the CPP revolution published, Jose Maria Sison’s *Struggle for National Democracy*. Reprinted in 1972 by Amado Hernandez Memorial Foundation, Quezon City.

- 1968** Young radicals in the PKP compile a document, "Rectify Errors and Rebuild the Party," enumerating the political, ideological, and organizational mistakes of the PKP in an attempt to wrest leadership from the party's old guard.
- 26 December 1968** A new Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founded by dissident young radical cadres in the PKP who desire armed struggle based on the strategy and tactics of Mao Zedong.
- 1969** Young radical Muslims led by Nurullaji Misuari—a colleague of Jose Maria Sison at the University of the Philippines and in the KM—split from the Moro Independence Movement and form the Moro National Liberation Front.
- 29 March 1969** The New People's Army (NPA) founded as the military arm of the CPP. Under the leadership of Bernabe Buscayno, "Commander Dante," the NPA begins with 60 men and women and 35 old firearms in Tarlac, Central Luzon.
- 1970** Lt. Victor Corpus, instructor at the Philippine Military Academy, defects to the NPA after raiding the academy armory.
- The CPP/NPA expands into Isabela Province (Cagayan Valley).
- 30 July 1970** CPP leader Jose Maria Sison's *Philippine Society and Revolution* published in both English and Pilipino editions and immediately becomes the ideological primer for the CPP. (Reprinted by the Chinese Communist newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* in Hong Kong in 1971 and by International Association of Filipino Patriots, Oakland, California, in 1979.)
- 1971** CPP/NPA expands into Southern Luzon—the Bicol and Southern Tagalog regions.
- February 1972** Catholics for National Liberation (CNL) founded by CPP member and admirer of Mao Zedong, Father Edicio de la Torre, as an organization of Christians in support of the NDF and Communist insurgency.
- 22 April 1972** Sison's *Pomeroy's Portrait: Revisionist Renegade* published by Revolutionary School of Mao Tsetung Thought.
- July 1972** "Karagatan" arms shipment intercepted.
- 22 September 1972** Marcos government declares martial law following large, violent student demonstrations in Manila.
- Fall 1972** MNLF initiates insurgency in Western Mindanao.
- 1973** CPP/NPA expands into Samar, Panay, Negros, and Mindanao.
- April 1973** CPP creates the Preparatory Commission for the National Democratic Front (NDF) and issues a manifesto endorsing armed struggle and a 10-point program.

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- 1974** CPP/NPA claims to be operating in 34 provinces.
- PKP leadership surrenders formally to Marcos.
- High point of the MNLF insurgency.
- 27 November 1974** More than 1,000 residents of Tondo, the Philippines' largest slum, march to Malacanang Palace to protest a government plan to raze their homes. Led by ZOTO (Zone One Tondo Association), a CPP-infiltrated group.
- 1 December 1974** Sison publishes *Specific Characteristics of Our People's War*, which outlines the strategy for waging Maoist people's war in the Philippine archipelago. Reprinted in 1979 by International Association of Filipino Patriots, Oakland, California.
- 1975** CPP/NPA expands into Quezon and Aurora Provinces.
- May 1975** "Nine independent unions and a number of small workers' groups" unite to form the Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (Alliance of Filipino Workers) (BMP), a CPP-infiltrated labor organization. A Catholic "workers' mass" is held to mark the occasion.
- June 1975** Marcos government reestablishes diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Chinese support for the CPP/NPA wanes.
- October 1975** The CPP-infiltrated labor group, BMP, leads a workers' strike at La Tondena Corp. distillery to test a government proclamation forbidding strikes in essential industries. Workers seize the factory, 400 are arrested, and three days later the government allows management to grant the workers' demands. Before the year ended, workers in 26 major firms went on strike. The BMP had reportedly grown to 130 unions with some 80,000 members.
- 1975** CPP claims that this year its urban underground was responsible for more than 400 strikes, with the support of students, religious, and the urban poor.
- 1976** NPA leader Bernabe Buscayno, Commander Dante, captured.
- CPP/NPA expands into Ilocos-Cordillera-Pangasinan areas of Northern Luzon. The party claims to be operating in all 12 regions of the Philippines with 20 guerrilla fronts.
- December 1976** The Marcos government signs an agreement with the MNLF in Tripoli providing for Moro autonomy. A nine-month cease-fire with the MNLF follows.
- Early 1977** Kabataang Makabayan (KM), the CPP organization for party youth banned at the imposition of martial law, revived.
- 1977** *Makibaka* published in London as an annotated collection of documents on the revolution from 1972 to 1977. Reprinted in 1978 by Filippenengroep Netherlands in Amsterdam.

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- April 1977** ZOTO leader Trinidad Herrera arrested. A year later she runs for parliament in national elections and subsequently goes underground.
- July/August 1977** Student protests and boycotts erupt at 25 major colleges and universities.
- 10 November 1977** CPP Chairman Jose Maria Sison captured.
- 12 November 1977** NDF Preparatory Commission reissued its 10-point program with more detailed analysis of conditions, more precise statement of goals, and more specific tasks to be accomplished.
- 1977** Horacio "Boy" Morales defects to the CPP/NPA. (He was captured in 1982.)
- October/November 1980** Permanent People's Tribunal—sponsored by European radicals and the CPP/NPA and MNLF—meets at the University of Antwerp, Belgium, and condemns the Philippine Government. Proceedings are published in London in 1981.
- Early 1981** Marcos ends martial law just before visit of Pope John Paul II.
- 1981** Government initiates KKK Program to aid the rural population economically. The program yields few results.
- 1982** Government initiates Oplan Katatagan, an integrated counterinsurgency program that produces few results.
- 21 August 1983** Aquino assassination leads to first major protests in more than a decade.



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