
Restoring and Strengthening Civilian Control:
Best Practices in Civil-Military Relations
in the Philippines

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31 December 1999

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The paper examines the programs, policies and initiatives that had been implemented during the critical transition period from 1986 to 1998 that sought to strengthen civilian control and to effect democratic consolidation. These programs include those formulated and implemented by the national government, the top brass of the AFP, and civilian groups.

Reform Measures

Ravaged by coups d'etat and insurgency, the Aquino administration focused on professionalizing the military through institutional change, redefinition of the military's role, enhanced training, and value formation. The paper discusses the investigation of the failed coup of December 1989, the administration's initiative to separate the police and constabulary from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and place the former under the control of the Department of Interior and Local Government. This policy resulted in a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities, separation of command, control, and supervisory mechanisms, and separation of budget allocations between the military and the police.

Moreover, the paper describes the process by which the military together with civilian organizations redefined the core values of the military. This process resulted in the formulation of the Military Values Education (MILVED) program, the attendance in human rights courses and clearance from the Philippine Commission on Human Rights as a requirement for military promotions and the establishment of the Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability. In addition, a legislative initiative requiring all government personnel including those in the military to file a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as an anti-corruption instrument in government is also discussed.

When the Ramos administration succeeded the Aquino administration, most of the country's democratic institutions have been re-established, reformed or reinvented. The main challenge to the Ramos administration was how to sustain the existence of these institutions in the face armed challenges to the government, of the gargantuan debt problem, the negative growth of the economy, and continuous calamities that ravaged the country. He pursued critically important macro-economic restructuring measures to open up various sectors in the economy, destroy monopolies, and restore investor confidence.

The Ramos administration also tapped the military as a partner in progress. The paper discusses the role of the Philippine Air Force and Navy in Relief and Disaster Coordination programs and environmental activities, and the implications of the policy of removing the gender bias in military science through the admission of women into the officer corps.

Best Practices

Numerous initiatives are being implemented to improve civil-military relations in the Philippines. Between civilian organizations and the military, the latter is more proactive in formulating and implementing confidence-building measures (CBMs).

Confidence-building measures can be classified into two broad categories: informal and formal. Civilian organizations lean more on informal CBMs that are related to their particular advocacy.

Meanwhile, the AFP's initiatives can be classified into three categories each having its own target audience. Under the first category are activities that aim to increase public awareness of the AFP's goals and activities. The target audience is the public-at-large.

The second category is focused on providing direct services to communities. Particular attention is given to communities that were once strongholds of communist insurgents.

The third category is composed of activities that enhance inter-agency cooperation and coordination. The target audience are other government agencies or institutions.

Profile of Best Practices

Profile 1: Redefining the Core Values of the AFP

Profile 2: The AFP and its Agenda on Human Rights

Profile 3: Co-ed military education and recruitment at the Philippine Military Academy

Profile 4: Civil-military operations with special focus on the *Unlad-Bayan* Program

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMRSP	Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFPCOE	Armed Forces of the Philippines Code of Ethics
ALTAS	Alyansang Tapat sa Sambayanan
CAA	Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units - Active Auxiliaries
CAFGU	Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units
CHDF	Civilian Home Defense Force
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CMO	Civil-Military Operations
COIN	Counter-insurgency program
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CSAFP	Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DLG	Department of Local Government
DND	Department of National Defense
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
EMJP	Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace
EO	Executive Order
FLAG	Free Legal Assistance Group
GHQ	General headquarters
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
GSC	General Staff Course
HR	Human rights
HUK	Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHL	International humanitarian law
INP	Integrated National Police
KAPATID	Kapisanan ng mga Kamag-Ariak at Kaibigan ng mga Bilianggong Pulitikal sa Pilipinas
MILVED	Military Values Education Program
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MNSA	Master in National Security and Administration
NAC	National Amnesty Commission
NAPOLCOM	National Police Commission
NASSA	National Secretariat for Social Action
NGO	Non-government organization
NPA	New People's Army
NPUDC	National Program for Unification and Development Council
NUC	National Unification Commission
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OESPA	Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
OPS	Office of the Press Secretary
PAHRA	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
PC	Philippine Constabulary
PMA	Philippine Military Academy
PNP	Philippine National Police
PO	Peoples organization

RAM	Reform Armed Movement
SAL	Statement of Assets and Liabilities
SEMP	Socio-Economic Military Program
SWS	Social Weather Stations
TFDP	Task Force Detainees of the Philippines
TDCS	The Deputy Chief of the Staff
WAC	Women's Auxiliary Corps
YOU	Young Officers Union

Part One

Civil-Military Relations in the Philippines

For a country trying to effect democratic consolidation, a careful study of its institutions, which have deliberately breached the principle of civilian supremacy, must be conscientiously attended to. In the case of the Philippines, the military's participation in martial rule and other subsequent attempts to usurp civilian political authority is well documented and can serve as a useful case study in democratizing civil-military relations.

In light of the role played by the AFP in the last thirty years of Philippine political history, important considerations must be raised regarding civil-military relations in the Philippines especially as the country strives to strengthen its claim to democratic ideals and institutions. How is the AFP adjusting to the re-democratization of Philippine institutions? What roles does it seek to play in the building of a democratic and globally-competitive society? How has the government and civil society responded to the legitimate concerns of the military?

This paper examines the programs, policies and initiatives that were implemented during the critical transition years from 1986 to 1998 that sought to strengthen civilian control and to effect democratic consolidation. These programs include those formulated by the national government, the top brass of the AFP, and civilian groups. In addition, the paper documents the best practices in restoring confidence between government and civil society on the one hand, and the military, on the other.

I. State of Civil-Military Relations: 1940 - 1964 Pre-Marcos Administration

From its inception in 1936 to the 1940s the task of the AFP was confined to defending the country from external threats, providing for internal defense, and promoting peace and order. US military presence in the bases in the Philippines as well as the Mutual Defense Treaty between them tended to de-emphasize the task of external defense in the mission of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The rise of communist insurgency tended to put the responsibility for internal defense at the top of its mission. Certain sociopolitical factors led to the military's assumption of socioeconomic functions beginning in the early 1950s. These expanded into other roles, including political especially by the time of the imposition of martial law in 1972.

The AFP was subordinated to the civilian political authority through the Commander-in-Chief of the military who was the elected President of the Republic. Control powers over the military by the executive were shared with the legislature through power over the budget, appointments and promotion of ranking military officers, and investigation of cases including those involving military and defense matters.

Political parties, an independent judiciary, a free and vibrant press, and an active civil society helped ensure civilian oversight, together with the emphasis on civilian supremacy over the military in civilian and military educational institutions. Socialization into this ethos among military officers was also effected through military schooling in US military academies and colleges, and other training schools.

The Rise of Communist Insurgency in the Philippines

Foremost of the factors that facilitated the role expansion of the military was the rise of the Hukbalahap (Huks), an agrarian-based and Soviet-influenced insurgency, which threatened to destabilize the government and hinder development in the countryside. Having lost faith in the government and the electoral process, the Huks escalated their armed struggle under the slogan of "bullets not ballots".¹

The AFP was tasked to implement the government's counterinsurgency strategy that was not confined to armed combat but extended through a combination of political, socioeconomic, and military activities which initiated an expanded role for the military beyond its traditional functions of external and internal defense, and peace and order. The appointment of active duty military officers to civilian positions involved in counterinsurgency operations started with Ramon Magsaysay as Defense Secretary, and later as President.

For more than two decades, from 1950 to 1971, various Commanders-in-Chief except for President Diosdado Macapagal, utilized the same strategies to neutralize the peoples' support and sympathy for the Huks. Two of the programs under these strategies were the counter-insurgency program (COIN) under Magsaysay and the Socio-Economic Military Program (SEMP) under President Carlos Garcia.²

Under the COIN Program, the AFP undertook an array of socioeconomic activities to win the hearts and minds of the local population. These included the building of roads, bridges, irrigation systems, ditches, and school buildings. They also provided free dental, medical, and legal services to residents in the rural areas. The program also included the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) project that resettled and provided land for communist rebels who surrendered to the government in public lands located in various parts of the country.

On the other hand, the SEMP utilized military personnel for land resettlement, rural development, food production, and public works construction. A number of SEMP settlements were established in Mindanao, Luzon, and Panay islands.

Unlike Magsaysay and Garcia, Diosdado Macapagal strongly believed that the military should not be involved in civic programs because it tended to encourage its officers to engage in politics. He sent the military back to the barracks and relegated their role back to external defense. He was fortunate in that the communist insurgency abated from the early 1950s through his term of office (1960-1964) that lasted until its resurgence after the imposition of martial law in 1972.

Throughout these changes in leadership, the AFP was completely subordinated to the civilian political institutions and conformed to the principle of civilian supremacy. The President being the Commander-in-Chief enjoyed considerable control powers over

the military. Congress continued to exercise effective control over the military through its constitutional powers over the defense budget and the promotion and assignment of senior officers.

II. Civil-Military Relations: 1965 – 1985

Marcos Administration

After President Ferdinand Marcos assumed office on December 31, 1965, he made the AFP an integral component of his economic development program.³ He rationalized his decision to utilize military resources for development projects, stating that economic development was the permanent solution to internal security threats. With this, the AFP were recalled from the barracks and sent to the countryside to embark on a socioeconomic program of unprecedented scale under the banner of "civic action".

Meanwhile, the Huk movement had collapsed by 1954 and what remained were small groups, some of which turned to criminal activities for survival. In the late 1960s, however, a faction of the Huks that remained committed to the political goals of the movement linked up with a faction of the old Philippine Communist Party composed mostly of young University of the Philippines professors and students. This alliance gave rise to the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army (CPP/NPA). This new communist movement was to engage the AFP and to become the only remaining communist insurgency in Southeast Asia up to the end of the 20th century.

In the Southern Philippines, the Mindanao Independence Movement that originally straddled ethno-linguistic and religious lines and stemmed from grievances of social inequity against Manila gave rise to a distinct Moro-based armed separatist movement with the imposition of martial law. The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) became the focal point of this movement, led like the new CPP, by a professor at the University of the Philippines (Nur Misuari).

On September 21, 1972, Marcos placed the country under martial law, a decision he reached in consultation with his "Twelve Disciples", eleven of whom were high ranking military and defense officials.⁴ During this period, military ascendance grew at an unprecedented pace and scale. Soon after the declaration of martial law, Congress was abolished, mass activities were prohibited, political parties were disbanded and outlawed, and civil and political rights were suspended.

The judiciary was placed under judges controlled by Marcos while the Supreme Court Justices were required to hand in undated letters of resignation. This effectively ended judicial independence made possible in the past partly through security of tenure. The local government units were put under the control of local executives loyal to the President. Moreover, newspaper publications were ordered closed and curfew was strictly implemented.

With other political and government institutions decimated or constrained, the military was the only institution left to assist the President "to save the Republic and protect the democratic traditions cherished by Filipinos". The military became a partner of the government in implementing martial law and managing the authoritarian regime that followed it.

Throughout the years of martial law, active military men were appointed to civilian positions and performed many of its functions. Among these are: trying cases involving both military and civilians, manning elections, sitting as directors in private and public business corporations, managing media communications and public utilities, and acting as governors in places known to be strongholds of the insurgents. Military personnel were designated either as representatives of Marcos or military supervisors of certain offices such as the Board of Transportation, Land Transportation Commission, the Philippine Coconut Authority and the Philippine Sugar Commission.⁵ They were also appointed into the diplomatic service in increasing numbers.

Aside from the performance of these civilian functions, the AFP continued with their internal security functions and civic action outside the capital. This practice resulted in an enhancement of their political clout and the perpetration of their power over most aspects of civilian life from 1972 to 1986. Civilian control through political institutions was replaced during this time by personal control of the civilian President, a development that would not facilitate the transition to democratic civilian control after 1986.

The NPA insurgency grew substantially during the Marcos regime. Although the size of the military increased through mass enlistment, their role was so expanded that the consequences of spreading themselves thinly took its toll on its fight against the communist movement and armed Muslim secessionism. Aside from mass enlistment, men were transferred from desk jobs to armed combat. This was made worse by the soldier's lack of adequate training, equipment, and technical support. These had disastrous results such that troops fought against insurgents seasoned in guerilla warfare. With the breakdown of discipline, human rights violations increased, and demoralization set in as the military failed to secure mass support or to suppress the insurgency despite its size.

Problems at the Military Front

~~During martial law, Marcos coddled his favorites in the military.~~ Promotions continued to be his sole prerogative and personal loyalty became the primary criterion. Well-connected officers were able to place their people in key and lucrative positions. Consequently, some officers were retired at a fairly young age but at fairly lower ranks. A number of officers were promoted over more senior and qualified candidates. This included the promotion as Chief of Staff of the AFP of an officer personally loyal to Marcos but was widely perceived as inferior in professional qualifications to the other candidate, General Fidel V. Ramos. A breakdown in the merit system and demoralization became inevitable among the officer corps. This became the seeds for subsequent military plots against the government.

This situation was further aggravated by government mismanagement of the economy and the rise of "crony" capitalism. Graft and corruption exacerbated the poverty problem, especially in the rural areas. Unable to effect genuine development in the countryside, NPA recruitment intensified and its cause gained popular support.

III. The Collapse of the Marcos Authoritarian Regime

The events that brought the collapse of Marcos' authoritarian regime came in swift succession although triggered by the assassination in August 1983 of Benigno

"Ninoy" Aquino, Jr., Marcos' staunchest critic and the most popular of the opposition figures. His assassination marked the turning point for the popular disenchantment against the Marcos authoritarian regime. The upper and middle classes joined the underclass in the opposition to the regime.

In 1986, the snap presidential elections called by Marcos to generate a fresh mandate and shore up his regime ended in the collapse of the regime and the ouster of Marcos. Aquino's widow, Corazon or Cory as she is popularly known, led the opposition in contesting the elections whose results Marcos tried to steal through fraud and violence. While millions of Filipinos stood their ground, a military conspiracy to oust Marcos and arrest the opposition was uncovered by the government. In order to save themselves from certain arrest and detention, the military rebels led by Col. Gregorio (Gringo) Honasan and the Defense Secretary, with General Ramos (then the Vice Chief of Staff) as a late and rather hesitant recruit, defected from the government and declared their support for Cory.

Millions of Filipinos poured to the streets to protest the officially declared results of the presidential snap elections proclaiming Marcos the winner and to lend support to the breakaway military faction. The people power revolt on EDSA in February 1986 is said to have inspired the ouster of authoritarian governments and the advent of democratization in the rest of the world, including in Poland, South Korea, Taiwan, and Pakistan in the late 1980s. With the ouster of Marcos, Corazon Aquino was installed as the new president.

¹ Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission. (Makati: Bookmark Publishing Co.) p. 31

² Ibid, p. 3

³ Ibid, p. 39

⁴ Ibid, p.44

⁵ Ibid, p. 47

Part Two

Challenges to Civil-Military Relations in the Transition Period

As the newly installed president, Corazon Aquino was fully aware of the "colossal mandate" that she faced.⁶ In her first "State of the Nation" address she described her situation " as the president of a country that had lost everything but honor " .⁷ Production had contracted by 11%, twelve percent of the labor force was unemployed, 5 million families lived below the poverty line, growth rate was minus 5%, foreign debt had ballooned to \$28 billion, many financial institutions were bankrupt, the civil service was weak and corrupted, the military was wary and divided, and to top it all she had to contend with a volatile communist insurgency and Moro separatism.

Included in her colossal mandate was the urgent task of overhauling or rebuilding institutions that were either destroyed or weakened by the authoritarian regime such as the Congress, the judiciary, political parties, civic organizations, and the media.

I. Rebuilding and Strengthening Civilian Control Institutions and Mechanisms

Instituting Freedom of the Press

The first civil rights that the Aquino administration restored were press freedom in particular and the right to free expression in general. For 14 years under dictatorial rule, Filipinos were deprived of their right to free expression. The military raided newspapers critical of the Marcos regime; broadcast stations were seized and controlled by the Office of the President; and journalists were jailed, forced to resign, or killed under mysterious circumstances. Neither were private homes safe from intrusion. Marcos utilized ~~hundreds of his loyalists to spy on homes and monitor conversations of people~~ critical of his administration.

Aquino changed all of this by instituting openness and transparency in government information, lifting the constraints on media including censorship, and pursuing the privatization of media facilities.

The main challenge to the administration was how to re-tool and streamline the bloated government media structure whose activities were anomalous in if not anathema to a democracy. The government addressed this problem by abolishing the principal media offices run by government, the Office of Media Affairs and the National Media Production Center.⁸ In its place, the Office of the Press Secretary (OPS) was established. The primary task of the OPS is to promote the free flow of accurate, timely and relevant information to and from the people. Beyond this, it sought to increase the people's understanding of government policies and programs to obtain public support.

The work of the OPS was important because it served as the example of the administration's commitment to the free and unhampered flow of information. It demonstrated this commitment by providing facilities for media people in Malacañang Palace, making open and available the schedule and activities of the President,

facilitating the coverage of the President and her cabinet's activities, and actively building a relationship based on respect with the press.

On the other hand, the remaining government news bureaus were merged or made independent.

Judicial Reform

Aquino also sought to bring back the judiciary's integrity and independence. She called for the resignation of Marcos appointees from the Supreme Court, the Intermediate Appellate Courts, and the local Courts of First Instance. She appointed Justice Claudio Teehankee, the most senior justice and who by tradition should have been Chief Justice under Marcos but was bypassed, and who was also well-respected by his peers, to become the new chief justice and to lead the reorganization and transformation of the judiciary.⁹

A select committee was formed to assess the qualifications and fitness of the members of the lower courts and of the applicants and recommendees for the vacated positions. The Committee formulated guidelines for the conduct of the sessions and for the screening of incumbent justices and judges, applicants, and recommendees for positions in the bench.

These guidelines established uniform criteria seeking to ensure objectivity and fair play in the evaluation of qualifications and performance. As in the case of non-judicial personnel, judicial reorganization was pursued with the same standard of impartiality and fairness applied to the former group. This enabled the unprecedented appointment of a large group of qualified individuals to the judiciary.

The Department of Justice and its agencies were also reorganized. Its personnel were assessed based on educational qualifications, experience, ethical conduct, and integrity.¹⁰ The process was conducted by a task force headed by the Justice Secretary and lawyers from human rights groups such as the MABINI and BONIFACIO. Members of the Philippine Bar Association served as resource persons.

Civil Society Empowerment

Social organizations engaged in development work constitute most of civil society in the Philippines. Tracing its roots from volunteer groups working alongside American welfare agencies during the American colonial period, the civil society movement in the Philippines was forced to go underground during the martial law period. On the eve of the debates on whether to participate or not in the February 1986 snap elections, non-government organizations (NGOs) and peoples organizations (POs), except those identified with the CPP/NPA threw their support behind Aquino's candidacy. These organizations played a crucial role in organizing and mobilizing the popular forces before and during the popular revolt following the elections.

As a consequence of their role in bringing down the authoritarian regime, various socially progressive laws were enacted in Congress to actualize provisions in the Constitution affirming the role of civil society in nation building. The enactment of the Local Government Code, the Urban Development and Housing Act, and the Women in Development and Nation Building Act are just some examples of laws that empowered

these organizations.

Moreover, Aquino formed the KABISIG movement, a partnership between non-government organizations and the government, to address the issue of poverty and empowerment of communities through joint efforts of government and NGOs. KABISIG is an acronym for *kapit-bisig* which is a Filipino term for "arms linked together". Being more than just a program, Aquino utilized the movement to bring about national unity and solidarity and in particular, to provide a venue for confidence building between the military and civilian groups in and out of government.

Through KABISIG projects, soldiers and civil society groups that used to face each other across the barricades put up by the military to secure the Marcos government came to know each other and work together in nation building efforts. Official development assistance (ODA) funds - which increased dramatically due to the international community's goodwill to Aquino - were channeled to the NGO sector to fund projects that complemented the government's priorities. An example is the school building program that was funded by the government but implemented by the NGOs.¹¹

New Constitution

Taking hold of power given by the people's mandate, Aquino further set out to put the Philippine house in order by laying the groundwork for the drafting of a new constitution. She appointed a Constitutional Commission of 50 distinguished citizens to draft a new constitution that would be ratified through a national plebiscite. On February 2, 1987, an overwhelming 90% of the voting population participated in the nationwide plebiscite, 76.30% of whom voted for the ratification of the Constitution.¹²

The 1987 Constitution laid down the framework for democratic institution-building. It re-affirmed the Bill of Rights, set limits on the emergency powers of the president, prohibited political dynasties by setting rules on terms of office and re-election, reasserted and secured civilian supremacy over the military, recognized ~~women's role in nation-building, guaranteed respect for human rights, and promoted~~ political empowerment of the people.

Beyond these, the ratification of the Constitution validated Aquino's assumption to power that up till then had been contested by the Marcos loyalists and the military break away faction that became sidelined soon after her installation in office. These opponents of Aquino put the issue of the ratification of the Constitution within the framework of political legitimacy in the sense that their campaign slogan was "a vote for the Constitution is a vote for Cory and a vote against it is a vote against Cory". Within this context, the overwhelming vote to ratify the Constitution served a legitimizing function for the Aquino presidency.

Post-Edsa Elections

With a widely supported constitution accompanied by sweeping judicial reforms, electing the Congress was the final step in setting up the structures of formal democratic rule. The elections of the country's 8th Congress took place on May 11, 1987. Commission on Elections (COMELEC) Chair Hilario G. Davide, Jr. regarded the congressional elections as "an unqualified success and a triumph of the democratic system ingrained in the 1987 Constitution".¹³

Since then, ten other elections had taken place. The most important ones are the national elections that saw the peaceful transfer of power from Aquino to her successor. Fidel V. Ramos, Aquino's anointed, won in the 1992 elections that ensured the continuation of Aquino's political and economic reform programs. This was a crucial step in democratization that contributed much to lending political and economic stability to the country. In May 1998, the second national elections led to the second democratic transfer of power from Ramos to Joseph E. Estrada. Table 1 presents a tally of voter turn out per electoral exercise from 1986 to 1998.

II. Redefining the Military Role: Institutional Separation of the Police from the AFP

Simultaneous with the rebuilding of civilian political institutions, the Aquino administration looked into the rebuilding of the widely polarized and unstable military institution. During the drafting of the Constitution, there was a very strong public clamor to redefine the military's role in a way that would prevent the repetition of events leading to martial law. Civilians called for a clear delineation of separate spheres of military and police functions.

For more than 15 years since its formation, elements of the Integrated National Police (INP) were said to have been "militarized", especially after they were formally merged with the Philippine Constabulary (PC) in 1976.¹⁴ The PC at that time was one of the major service commands of the AFP. Prior to the merger, local chief executives in the cities, municipalities, and provinces exercised control and supervision over the police forces. Marcos sought to centralize under his control as commander-in-chief all armed units of the government by integrating the police forces and putting them under the control of the chief of the PC.

This merger resulted in the INP losing its "civilian" character and mindset in addressing peace and order issues. Being under the command of a Director-General who was also the Chief of the PC put the INP under the administrative supervision and control of the Department of National Defense (DND), together with the four major commands of the AFP (army, navy, air force, and constabulary). It became identified with military operations and was lumped with the AFP in allegations of human rights abuses during the Marcos years.

The clamor to separate the police from military jurisdiction was addressed with the inclusion of Article XVI, Section 6 in the 1987 Constitution:

" The State shall establish and maintain one police force, which shall be national in scope and civilian in character, to be administered and controlled by a national police commission. The authority of local executives over the police units in their jurisdiction shall be provided by law."

The government operationalized this constitutional provision with the enactment of Republic Act 6975, otherwise known as the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act in 1990. President Aquino regarded this measure as "the last step in eliminating the remaining vestiges of the past authoritarian regime."¹⁵

Table 1: Voter Turn-out by Date and Type of Electoral Exercise
From 1988 to 1998

ELECTORAL EXERCISES		No. of Precincts	Total Registered Voters	No. of Voters who actually Voted	Voter Turn-out
DATE	TYPE				
1	Feb. 7, 1986	85,688	26,278,744	20,716,075	78.83%
2	May 11, 1987	101,410	26,569,539	22,739,995	85.59%
3	Jan. 18, 1988	103,464	27,625,062	21,797,365	78.90%
4	Mar. 28, 1989	104,415	27,938,065	18,855,929	67.49%
5	May 11, 1992	169,935	32,141,079	24,254,954	75.46%
6	Dec. 4, 1992	39,762	4,180,479	3,227,329	77.20%

ELECTORAL EXERCISES						
DATE	TYPE	No. of Precincts	Total Registered Voters	No. of Voters who actually Voted	Voter Turn-out	
7 May 9, 1994	Barangay Elections	-	35,004,502	22,668,696	64.76%	
8 May 8, 1995	Congressional polls elected the 10 th Congress	169,863	36,415,154	25,736,505	70.68%	
9 May 12, 1997	Barangay Elections	101,685	37,736,792	24,073,966	63.79%	
10 May 11, 1998	Synchronized National and Local Elections; elected the president, vice-president, Congress, and local government officials	173,077	33,873,665	29,285,775	86.46%	

Source: Commission on Elections, Records and Statistics Division

Republic Act 6975 provides for the reorganization of the Department of Local Government (DLG) into the new Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). Under the new set-up, the DILG is to be composed of the following bureaus: Local Government, Local Government Academy, National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Philippine Public Safety College.¹⁶

The same law outlines the process by which the Philippine Constabulary and the Integrated National Police were to become members of the new Philippine National Police.

With the separation of the national police from the military, roles and jurisdiction were redefined. Under Republic Act 6975, the PNP would absorb the functions of the PC, the INP, and the Narcotics Command, including the police functions of the Coast Guard under the administrative control of the NAPOLCOM. The PNP took over from the AFP the primary role of preserving internal security including the suppression of insurgency (after a period of transition), leaving to the AFP its primary role of preserving external security. However, the AFP, upon the recommendation of the Peace and Order Council, assumed the primary role in situations of serious threats to internal security and the PNP would play a supportive role in the area concerned.

Due to the serious character of the communist insurgency and Moro separatism, the AFP remained in charge of fighting these two groups. They continue to be heavily armed and in the case of Moro separatism under the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), to receive foreign assistance, especially from Islamic fundamentalist groups. This situation warranted the continuing front line function of the military in counter-insurgency operations.

III. Coups d'Etat: Challenging Political Leadership

It is ironic that the same phenomenon that catapulted Aquino to her position was the same phenomenon that sought to topple her from it. With the usual three-month honeymoon period just barely over, Aquino faced one of the toughest tests of her leadership when in July 1986, a group of armed military men and supporters of the ousted Marcos occupied the Manila Hotel and declared it as the temporary seat of government. Some 490 military personnel and about 5,000 Marcos loyalists witnessed Marcos' vice-presidential running mate, Arturo Tolentino, take his "oath of office" as acting president on behalf of Marcos who had been exiled in Hawaii.¹⁷

This was only the first of seven coup attempts that the Aquino regime survived over a three-year period. They were launched either by the Marcos loyalist forces (or ALTAS), or by the military break away faction led by Honasan and a new group of nationalist young officers called the YOU (Young Officers Union).

In the report of the Fact-Finding Commission tasked to investigate the last (December 1989) of the coup attempts against the Aquino government, the investigation determined that military dissatisfaction stemmed from several factors. Some were internal to military operation such as inadequate pay and benefits, insufficient logistical services and supplies to soldiers in the field, favoritism in promotions and assignments, and discriminatory treatment in the case of Marcos loyalists. On the other hand, the

grievances against the government focused on the issues of graft and corruption, failure of the government to deliver basic services to the people, bureaucratic inefficiency, absence of genuine reconciliation, uneven treatment of human rights violations among soldiers and insurgents, and the dissimilar strategy (of the civilian government and the military) in solving the insurgency problem. What non-government organizations labeled as hard-stanced in fighting the insurgents was seen as insufficient by some groups in the military. They attributed the perceived "soft-approach" of Aquino to the presence of so-called left-leaning officials in her Cabinet and their alleged anti-military biases.

As already noted, there were at least three military rebel groups that tried to wrest power away from Aquino. These groups were:

- ◆ The Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan or RAM (the break away faction in February 1986) had about 500 active members. A majority of them were trained in the country's only military academy whose alumni had inordinate high self-esteem. They belonged to the Classes of 1971 to 1973, and 1981 to 1988. They are described as the young elite faction in the AFP that had long grown disenchanted with what they claimed as patronage and unprofessionalism in the military particularly during the Marcos period.¹⁸
- ◆ The Alyansang Tapat sa Sambayanan (ALTAS) was a group formed to represent members of the military and civilian rebels loyal to Marcos. Leading ALTAS members were, at one time or another, linked with the Presidential Security Command of Marcos and/or the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) under Gen. Fabian Ver.¹⁹
- ◆ The Young Officers Union (YOU) was formally launched on August 8, 1988 by some AFP/INP lieutenants and captains who met at Camp Aguinaldo to explore common problem areas and grievances besetting the defense and law enforcement agencies in relation to the overall national situation. The Fact-Finding Commission concluded that YOU could be a splinter group from RAM, and was "an attempt to distance young generation of officers from their elders, many of whom have been tainted by close association with powerful politicians in the previous regime".²⁰

There are indications that the plots by RAM against the Aquino government were supported by leading opposition politicians, particularly Enrile, but the refusal of high ranking military and defense officials to give formal testimony prevented the agencies of the government in charge of prosecuting these cases from pursuing them in court. At any rate, none of these plots succeeded due to the support for the Constitution and for Aquino of the AFP's key officers and units. The coup plotters also did not enjoy public support even as Aquino's popular support declined.

IV. Pervasive Graft and Corruption

In some of the most critical junctures in her leadership, Aquino's legitimacy and hold on power remained steadfast due to popular perception of her sincerity and integrity. In fact, her moral ascendancy was a major deciding factor for the opposition to field her as its sole challenger to Ferdinand Marcos in the 1986 snap presidential elections. Aquino was well aware of the people's goodwill and used this as a linchpin to re-establish democratic institutions and reinvigorate democratic processes in the

country.

But in spite of her unquestioned moral ascendancy and leadership by example, graft and corruption remained unabated. In 1988, the Philippines ranked third to China and Indonesia in graft and corruption. This ranking was based on a comparative country risk survey conducted by the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, Ltd.²¹ For the next succeeding years the Philippines stayed in that list and reaped its negative consequences, especially in terms of foreign investments and economic growth.

Graft and Corruption in the Military

The military was not exempt from such affliction. As an institution, graft and corruption had long taken roots in the military. This was nurtured by the long years of political patronage, slowly eroding the moral foundation of the organization.

Graft and corruption in the military exists in different degrees. It may be as negligible as siphoning petroleum from military vehicles for private consumption to illegal logging or gun-smuggling activities. Military officers involved in the coups d'etat testified to its prevalence.²² It exists in the form of over-pricing of military uniforms and supplies, "conversion deals", and lending money at usurious rates. Conversion deals are those which involve the creation of artificial allocations in the budget for the purpose of circumventing the rules and regulations of the Commission on Audit.²³ Soldiers themselves were affected by lack of transparency in the administration of soldiers' benefits.

Consequently, the claims of rebel soldiers against graft and corruption in the civilian government could not carry much moral authority because of the involvement of their own officers in these practices. The Fact-Finding Commission in fact documented the involvement of key military rebel officers in the above-cited graft and corrupt practices, but also in illegal mining, illegal logging, and in operating illegal numbers games. It is highly likely that some of the proceeds of these illegal activities were used to fund the plots against the Aquino government.

It is also widely believed that military and police officers may be involved in the operations of crime syndicates either as principals or protectors. Thus, public perceptions of both the military and the police leave much to be desired. This perception could have worked in favor of civilian supremacy in the sense that the poor public perception of the military has facilitated the lack of popular support for military plots against the civilian government.

⁶Corazon C. Aquino. "State of the Nation". Malacajiang Journal Vol. 1 No. 9 (July-August 1987), p. 2

⁷Ibid

⁸Corazon C. Aquino and her Cabinet. The Aquino Administration: Record and legacy (1986 –1992) (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press) p. 76

⁹Claude A. Buss. Cory Aquino and the People of the Philippines. (Stanford Alumni Association) p. 65

¹⁰Corazon C. Aquino and her Cabinet. The Aquino Administration: Record and legacy (1986 –

1992) (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press) p. 119

¹¹Corazon C. Aquino and her Cabinet. The Aquino Administration: Record and legacy (1986 – 1992) (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press) p. 9

¹²Consortium on Electoral Reforms. The 1998 Voter's Guide. (p. 5)

¹³Ibid

¹⁴Albert C. Lim. "Police: National or Local?" Sanggunian: The Philippine Local Government Journal. December 1998, p. 13

¹⁵Gene A. Velosa. "Nazareno is PNP Chief," The Constable and the INP. Nov-Dec. 1990, p. 8

¹⁶Rules and Regulations Implementing the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990. (pp. 4-6)

¹⁷Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission. (Makati: BookmarkPublishing Co.) p. 137

¹⁸Miriam Colonel-Ferrer ed. Peace Matters: a Philippine Peace Compendium. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press) p. 219

¹⁹Ibid, p. 209

²⁰Ibid, p. 220

²¹" RP, China, Indonesia top the list," Philippine Daily Inquirer. December 15, 1988, p. 1

²²Final Report of the Fact-Finding Commission. (Makati : Bookmark Publishing Co.) p. 532

²³Ibid