

THE CORRUPTION OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

In December 1989, the Aquino government narrowly survived the sixth and most serious coup attempt by the military. The December coup attempt was led by the RAM Boys, the same group of military officers who mutinied against Marcos in February 1986 that paved the way for the installation of Corazon Aquino as the president of the Philippines.

RAM is an acronym for Reform the Armed Forces Movement, a small group made up of career military officers who graduated from the Philippine Military Academy. It is a faction within the officers corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) which emerged in 1985. RAM's intervention in Philippine politics was unprecedented in Philippine history.

In contrast to some developing countries where military interventions became part of their political cultures, the Philippines had a democratic tradition in which the military was always subordinated to civilian authority. When Philippine independence was granted by the United States in 1946, a strong chief executive, a functional two-party legislature, an independent judiciary, and a relatively professional bureaucracy were in place to guarantee the continuity of a democratic legacy from four decades of American colonial rule. Moreover, the Philippine military was molded in the professional tradition of the American military. The Insular Police which later became the core of the Philippine Army was organized and trained by the Americans. In preparation for the imminent war in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur was sent to the Philippines to strengthen the organization and improve the training and discipline of the Philippine Army. As embodied in the Military Agreement of 1947, the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) was established to assist the professional development of the A.F.P. In addition some military officers and enlisted men were given professional training in some US service academies and special US military schools.

Given the background of the Philippine military, it would seem unlikely that some of its elements would intervene in politics. The interventionist orientation in the AFP developed during the Marcos administration (1965-1986). To understand this unexpected development, a look into the concepts of corporate culture and praetorianism is necessary.

Corporate Culture

Every organization has its own corporate culture. Corporate culture is the pattern of beliefs or shared meaning in an organization supported by various operating norms and rituals.¹

It is a behavioral framework that defines organizational reactions toward a given stimulus; it outlines the methodology of an organization in performing its roles and in managing internal or external tensions.

Corporate culture is dynamic and it is always in the process of evolution.² Changes in the corporate culture may either reinforce an existing belief system or it may shape a new structure of beliefs that tends to change the orientation of the

¹Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (Beverly Hills: SAGE Publications, 1986), p. 121.

²*Ibid.*, p. 139.

organization.

Corporate culture develops in the course of social interactions.³ It is a product of the collusion of events, situations, actions, and general circumstances. It can therefore be manipulated to make it an instrument for an objective. However, the manipulation of a culture can backfire. An awareness to the manipulation process can create hostility against the manipulating agent.

Organizations may also develop subcultures. These are organizational ethos that arise due to divided loyalties or desire by some members to advance their personal interests rather than organizational ends.⁴ Organizational subcultures are shaped by common viewpoints shared by a cohesive group within the organization. These subcultures divide organizations into factions and they may develop into counter-cultures that contradict existing organizational values.

Pragtorianism

Professional soldiers have distinct careers from those of civilians.⁵ Being trained for a particular role, they are not adaptive to play other social or political roles.⁶

A profession is an occupation that requires advance training in a specialized field. Hence, a military professional can be most effective by performing what he is trained to do.

Experience is a very important factor for a successful career. It is a necessary part in the internalization of the ethos of one's profession. Once internalized these ethos are difficult to unlearn. In addition, years of experience in one's profession make it difficult to learn and internalize another profession.

The technological revolution in management and strategy in the present century compelled the military organization to adopt new skills in order to modernize. The expansion of the skills and technology base of the military had widened its social and political horizons.⁸

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Ibid. p. 127.

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Ibid.

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Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 79.

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Ibid.

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Amos Perlmutter, *The Military and Politics in Modern Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 1.

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Ibid

The adoption of new and non-traditional skills has broadened the orientations of the modern military officer. It has enhanced his capacity to manage present day high-tech military operations that need massive logistical supports, extensive intelligence data, and complicated coordinations.

The modern military organization did not only develop its own bureaucracy but also developed its own defense related industries, schools, research and development facilities, and other activities that demanded new skills. These developments have transformed the military officer today into a manager with corporate and bureaucratic roles.

As a corporate body, the military organization strives for internal control of its profession and for protection from external political control.⁹ Its professional ethics and the democratic parliamentary institutions guarantee military obedience to civilian political authority.¹⁰

The military intervenes in politics if there is no valid and sustaining civilian and political authority to defend its corporate interests.¹¹ Military intervention is a manifestation of a broader phenomenon of instability leading to the politicization of social forces and institutions.¹² Praetorianism therefore, does not only imply the intervention of the military in politics but also of religious leaders, students, labor unions, and other interest groups. The direct intervention of these social forces is due to the absence or weakness of political institutions in the society that are capable of mediating, refining, and moderating their political actions.¹³

Praetorianism is the military's use of force or the threat of force in pursuing its interests or to bring about or to prevent the replacement of the government by another group.¹⁴ Praetorianism is a response to a perceived threat against military identity or against civilian transgressions into the autonomy, professionalism, cohesiveness, and pride of the military profession.

In praetorianism, intervention is always resorted to by a few professional officers.¹⁵ The need for secrecy and discipline in the planning and executing of a coup calls for the involvement of a small and cohesive group of officers bound by

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ibid., p. 5.

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Morris Janowitz, *op.cit.*

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Amos Perlmutter, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

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Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 194.

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ibid., p. 196.

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Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.) 1977, p. 3.

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Amos Perlmutter, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

similar viewpoints.¹⁶ Their cohesion is developed mainly through past interactions such as being in the same class in the military academy or for having been in the same service or assignment.

The involvement in a praetorian intervention is limited by cleavages in the officers' corps. Cleavages are due to intergeneration gap, membership in different academies, and different ethno-linguistic origins.

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

The present Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had its beginning from the Philippine Constabulary, a police force established by the Americans. The Philippine Constabulary members were trained and supervised by American officers who served with the regular forces who fought in the Hispanic-American War and later on, in the Philippine-American War. When the Philippine Commonwealth was established, the Philippine Army was organized and the Constabulary became its nucleus. Later, the Philippine Army became one of the four service components of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The Legacy of Professionalism

The Philippine Constabulary was organized as the Insular Constabulary under Act 175 by the Philippine Commission on August 18, 1901. Though it was at first intended to be a police force, it developed into a very efficient jungle fighting unit under the able leadership of American officers.¹⁷ Originally, its men were not given the same training, weaponry and logistical support as the regular forces of the US but were exacted the same discipline, hence, they performed splendidly in the pacification campaign all over the Philippine Archipelago which involved jungle warfare which the US regular forces were unprepared to engage in.

The Philippine Army and later on, the Armed Forces of the Philippines as a whole, had earned a reputation for efficiency despite the lack of supplies and material. Due to the inculcation of strict military tradition under American officers in the Philippine Constabulary and through the efforts of General Douglas MacArthur who became the military adviser of President Manuel L. Quezon, the AFP became the very model of a western army.¹⁸ The professionalism instilled in Filipino men in uniform, both in the Philippine Constabulary and in the Armed Forces of the Philippines as a whole has been shown in their performance in the field. They were responsible in pacifying the Philippines to ensure the smooth operation of the American colonial administration. Among Southeast Asians, the Filipino soldiers offered the longest resistance against the Japanese Imperial Army during the Second World War. During the early days of the Philippine Republic, they successfully ended the insurgency of the HUKBALAHAP. From 1901 until the outbreak of the Second World War, Filipino men in uniform were trained and supervised by

¹⁶ Henry Bienen and David Morrell, "Transition from Military Rule. Thailand's Experience," *Political Military Systems, Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Catherine McArdle Kelleher (Beverly Hills, SAGE Publications, 1974) p. 11.

¹⁷ Vic Hurley, *Jungle Patrol, The Story of the Philippine Constabulary*, (New York, E. P. Dutton and Co. 1938), p. 60.

¹⁸ Charles C. McDougald, *The Marcos File* (San Francisco, San Francisco Publishers), 1987, p. 159.

American officers. When independence was granted in 1946, the Filipino men in uniform were provided with U.S. Army equipment and supplies. The Philippine Military Academy which was established by the Americans continued as the training school for regular officers. In addition, a military assistance agreement was affected between the Philippines and the U.S. in 1947 which provided opportunity to selected Filipino officers to study in American military academies and service schools.

The Birth of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

The Philippine Commonwealth was established in 1935 in preparation for the eventual grant of independence ten years later. The National Defense Act of 1935 authorized the organization of the Philippine Army which was formally established through Executive Order No. 11 by President Quezon on January 11, 1936. The Philippine Air Force came into its present form in 1947. Actually, it had evolved from the Philippine Constabulary Air Group which was activated on January 2, 1935. The Philippine Navy was established in 1951. Similar to the Philippine Air Force, however, it started as the Offshore Patrol which was organized as a unit of the Philippine Army in 1939. On December 3, 1950, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was born through Executive Order No. 389 by President Elpidio Quirino. It is composed of four major service commands: the Philippine Army (PA), the Philippine Air Force (PAF), the Philippine Constabulary (PC), and the Philippine Navy (PN).

The PC is a paramilitary organization which started as a national police and was placed under the Department of Interior. In the 1950s, however, the need to coordinate efforts against the HUK rebellion led to the integration of the PC under the Department of National Defense. This arrangement made the PC eligible for military assistance under a US-Philippine treaty agreement.¹⁹

The creation of the four branches of the AFP did not carry a distinction among career military officers. Most of them graduated from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) and some graduated from service academies in the U.S. After undergoing the same training for four years, PMA graduates made their own choice of serving under the different branches of service in the AFP. A bigger component of the officers corps comes from the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). Reserve officers have more varied educational background compared with their regular counterparts from the Philippine Military Academy.

Training

Aside from their training in the academy or in the ROTC, officers can undergo advance training in order to acquire more skills. Some of them take advance military courses but the most recent trend has been the acquisition of adaptive skills (e.g. managerial, engineering, law). After serving for at least two years, some officers are allowed to take up graduate degrees. Studies could be done either on full time scholarship or by seeking assignments where education is accessible. For advance military training (prescriptive skills), some go to the National Defense College, the Philippine Command and General Staff College or to some military schools in Great Britain, Australia and the U.S. Most of the senior officers today possess advance degrees, which include PhDs for some colonels and generals. A graduate degree is now considered as additional qualification for promotion.

¹⁹ Fred Poole and Max Vanzi, *Revolution in the Philippines* (New York, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1984), p. 208.

Organization

Before the declaration of martial law in 1972, there were instances when units from different service commands worked in coordinated operations. But formations remained distinct according to the branch of service where they belonged. Later, composite organizations began to emerge. These were units composed of men from more than one branch of service. These units became common especially in the military police. The composite model extended into bigger organizations such as the Southwest Command which later became the Southern Command. Multi-service commands were designed to improve military effectiveness in dealing with the Muslim and communist insurgents. Then the Regional Unified Commands (RUCs) were born. These commands embraced all military and paramilitary units in a certain geographic area.

Innovations in the military organization brought about duplications in some formations. The organization of the Metropolitan Area Command (METROCOM)²⁰ in 1968 duplicated the functions of local police forces and the provincial constabulary commands. Similarly, Metropolitan District Commands were soon organized in some urban areas which also resulted in duplication of functions with those of police forces. With the organization of the RUCs, components of some military units (e.g. divisions, brigades, battalions) found themselves operating in different zonal or regional jurisdictions. These organizational innovations strengthened control from the top but it reduced the operational effectiveness of units in the field.

The Expansion of Military Role under Martial Law

Before 1972, the involvement of the military in civilian affairs was concentrated mainly on civic actions (e.g. pest control, rain making, relief operations, road construction, reforestation, and policing elections). There were no military officers seeking high government offices there were no cases of military men enjoying "unexplained wealth," and soldiers were hardly seen at non-military social events.²¹

Military involvement in civilian affairs expanded after the declaration of martial law when Marcos designated the military as the major implementor of national policies. Consequently, military officers began filtering into various institutional fields which were traditionally civilian bureaucrats' and private managers' preserves. They became managers and directors of government-owned corporations as well as private economic establishments previously owned by the enemies of Marcos; many government agencies became their turfs; and, some of them became dispensers of justice with the creation of military tribunals that had jurisdiction over many cases.²² The military was also used to relocate squatters, enforce commodity prices, and administer the justice system.²³

²⁰ The METROCOM is a constabulary unit that covers greater Manila area which is made up of thirteen cities and municipalities. These cities and municipalities had their own police forces that continued to operate after the creation of the METROCOM.

²¹ Ibid. p. 216.

²² Rigoberto Tiglao, "Consolidation of the Dictatorship," *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, eds. Aurora Javate-de Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (Quezon City: Publishers' Printers, 1988), p. 53.

²³ James Clad, "Military Malcontents," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 10, 1987, p. 14.

After declaring martial law, Marcos padlocked the Philippine Congress. The Supreme Court was allowed to exist only to serve as a legitimizing device for the Marcos regime. Some of its functions were assumed by military tribunals. With the legislature dismantled and the bureaucracy and the Supreme Court neutralized, the military became the partner of Marcos in pursuing the goals of his New Society.

In order to maintain the loyalty of the military, Marcos appointed his relatives and friends to key military positions²⁴. Military personnel were given several pay increases that were not given to their civilian counterparts. In addition, government corporations were established mainly for military officers to manage.²⁵ Even the foreign service was not spared. Active and retired officers were posted in diplomatic missions abroad.²⁶ Some officers were also appointed as military governors or military mayors during martial law.²⁷

THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN THE AFP

The reform movement in the military evolved from the desire of some military officers to participate in shaping the post-Marcos leadership scenario.²⁸ By 1978, Marcos was already known to be suffering from lupus and speculations on possibilities after his death began to filter into the political atmosphere. Post-Marcos leadership scenarios were intriguing to many observers because of the issue of succession. Political institutions that could provide definitive processes for succession were destroyed by Marcos. Consequently, the power game set by Marcos's own men, who were positioning themselves to succeed him had started to split the AFP into factions supporting their own contenders.

Among the contenders, Marcos favored General Fabian Ver. Although he was just a reserve officer who became a general by virtue of his being a personal security man of Marcos, he was made the chief of staff in 1981. This had alienated his two rivals, Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile and General Fidel Ramos.

As the chief of staff, Gen. Ver reorganized the AFP into Regional Unified Commands (RUCs) in order to increase his direct control over the chain of command. This consequently diminished the influence of Gen. Ramos over the PC of which he was the chief. Marcos also neutralized Sec. Enrile by denying him the authority to move troops.

²⁴ General Fidel Ramos, a cousin of Marcos was made the Commanding General of the Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police, the biggest component of the AFP. Another relative, General Fabian Ver was made the chief of the Presidential Security Command and the National Intelligence Security Agency. Most top positions were assigned to officers from Marcos's own ethnic group, the Ilocanos.

²⁵ Carolina Hernandez, "The Military in Philippine Politics," 1980 mimeographed discussion paper, Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines, p.54.

²⁶ The foreign service became the "Siberia" for non-cooperative generals. Among those that were "banished" was General Rafael Ilet who was known to be the only general who objected to the declaration of martial law in 1972 while serving as the Vice Chief of Staff. He was appointed ambassador to Iran while still in active duty.

²⁷ Alfred W. McCoy, "RAM Boys Series," serialized at the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February, 1990, p. 3.

²⁸ Rodney Tasker, "The Hidden Hand," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 1, 1985, p. 10.

All key positions in the AFP were filled by Gen. Ver with partisans drawn mainly from ROTC graduates from the University of the Philippines, his alma mater. The patronage system exercised by General Ver in posting and promoting officers embittered the regular officers from the Philippine Military Academy.

The rivalry between the Enrile and Ver camps became intense and each group girded itself for a possible collision. Threatened by the growing powers of Gen. Ver and the persistent rumor that the general's hit men were out to eliminate him, Enrile began building an informal network of disgruntled PMA regulars who subsequently formed the core of the RAM.²⁹ Starting with PMA regulars in his staff led by his chief of security, Col. Gregorio Honasan, Enrile gradually recruited officers and men loyal to him to act as his personal security at the Ministry of National Defense. These were the men who joined Sec. Enrile when he rebelled against Marcos in February 1986.

The Erosion of Professionalism in the Military

The emergence of RAM as a plus factor in Sec. Enrile's bid for power was just a symptom of a bigger problem. More than a decade before the emergence of the RAM, a transformation had been taking place in the military that caused the corruption of its professional tradition. It was through this changes in orientation within the military that set the stage for the emergence of the RAM.

Most of those who participated in the December 1989 coup were young officers in their 30s and early 40s. They belonged to a generation of PMA cadets that had experienced the martial law era and the erosion of the military indoctrination against political involvement.³⁰

After declaring martial law on September 21, 1972, Marcos inaugurated his "New Society". He envisioned this society to be based on national discipline which the military was tasked to enforce. In effect, the military was given the message that discipline could only be achieved through force. The continued use of the military to enforce a series of presidential decrees expanded the military's role in politics which made it a locus of power in Philippine society.³¹

In order to prop up his corrupt regime, Marcos developed a cult for himself. He hired ghost writers to write what he claimed to be the ideology of the New Society. He propounded the concept of "constitutional authoritarianism" as the basis of his authoritarian rule. He also popularized the idea of "revolution from the center" to justify his declaration of martial law. A book written under his name entitled **Filipino Ideology** is an adaptation of the leftist dependency theory, a theory he conveniently used to rationalize his act of decimating political parties and eliminating parliamentary democracy. All the ideas propounded by Marcos justified the use of force in the pursuance of an end.

One of the major effects of Marcos's attempt to deify himself is the politicization of the military which was said to be the cruelest curse of his regime.³² Marcos's rule

²⁹ Alfred McCoy, *op. cit.* p. 4.

³⁰ Rigoberto Tiglao, "How the Rot Set In," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 21, 1989, p. 12.

³¹ Rigoberto Tiglao, "The Consolidation of the Dictatorship," *op. cit.* p. 52.

³² Rigoberto Tiglao, "How the Rot Set In," *op. cit.*

did not only cause the breakdown of institutional mechanisms that ensured the depoliticization of the military, but also corrupted the values of the military by propagating his ideology among the Filipino soldiers. The curriculum of the Philippine Military Academy included courses that dealt with his ghost written books. For years, military education taught courses on the New Society which tried to legitimize Marcos's grab of power.³³ Seminars were conducted among soldiers to teach them the "ideals" of the New Society. All these military indoctrinations carried common themes: that the military carries a pivotal role in development by enlarging its intrusion into the civilian sphere of activities; that it is legitimate to use force and deny people of their basic rights in the name of progress, that democratic institutions and party politics were a nuisance to development.

The erosion of professionalism in the military led to its intensive interventions into civilian affairs. The deterioration of military discipline transformed many officers into gambling overlords, protectors of organized crimes, gun runners, carnappers, and drug traffickers.³⁴ Some military men became rich which gave them a personal stake in the maintenance of the Marcos dictatorship.³⁵ Originally, senior military officers were not included in the traditional elite of the Philippines. Under the Marcos administration, however, many became rich and they gained new prominence with their lavish mansions, frequent trips abroad and changing lifestyle.³⁶

Under martial law, the military ceased to be a professional organization but an organization on which no law applied.³⁷ Entrusted with powers nobody can check, the military became partisan. Generally, it became Marcos's personal instrument of repression.³⁸ It also became the protector of big businesses and the oppressor of the impoverished civilian population.

The reorientation of the military away from its professional tradition was so ingrained that high ranking military officers continued to act as "godfathers" of networks of criminal operations under the Aquino administration.³⁹ The difficulty of suppressing organized crimes in the Philippines was due to the involvement of soldiers and policemen in criminal activities such as bank robbery, carnapping and kidnapping for ransom.⁴⁰ Some military men had to resort to illegal activities in order to support their luxurious lifestyle which they had developed under Marcos.

³³ Marcos was the first reelected Philippine president. But the constitution allows only one reelection and Marcos's second term was supposed to end in 1973, less than a year after he declared martial law that allowed him to rule until 1986.

³⁴ Rigoberto Tiglao, "The Consolidation of Dictatorship," *op. cit.* p. 53.

³⁵ Fred Poole and Max Vanzi, *op. cit.* p. 208.

³⁶ Belinda Aquino, *Politics of Plunder. The Philippines Under Marcos* (Quezon City: Great Books Trading, 1987), p. 39.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 218.

³⁸ Walden Bello, *Creating the Third Force: US Sponsored Low Intensity Conflict in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Institute of Food and Development Policy, 1987), p. 30.

³⁹ *Perils to Her Left, Perils to Her Right*, "The Economist", March 8, 1986. p. 34.

⁴⁰ "Crooks in Uniforms," *The Economist*, January 14, 1989, p. 34.

THE CUSTODIANS OF ORDER

During the December 1989 coup, General Jose Zumel, a Marcos loyalist who had also led a coup attempt against Pres. Aquino was seen with the rebel forces.⁴¹ This signaled an apparent tactical alliance between the RAM and Marcos loyalists which on the surface, appeared to be contradictory to the RAM's declared opposition to the Marcos dictatorship. This was not surprising, however, because since the beginning, RAM members had been harboring a hidden agenda behind their call for reform. Their apparent intention was to seize power for the military.⁴² When they grudgingly supported the installation of Corazon C. Aquino to the presidency, their thirst for power was not quenched. This was to be confirmed by the successive coup attempts which they staged against the present administration. Their use of *coup d'etat* as an instrument of change reveals their long term commitment to restructure state power by their own hands.⁴³ Their desire to seize power was shaped by their experience as custodians of order in the Marcos dictatorship that gave them a taste of wealth and power. Their experience made it difficult for them to return to the barracks and live a simple professional life. As custodians of order, the RAM Boys learned to use coercion to "discipline" civilians, to muzzle the press, and to emasculate democratic institutions. They have learned too that with monopoly of power they could be the masters of the civilians whom they are supposed to serve. In the absence of effective institutions to check the military, the law offers no protection to civilians against the violations of the law by its supposed custodians.⁴⁴

Having perpetrated atrocities against the civilians while implementing onerous and oppressive policies, RAM members are afraid to relinquish power. Like Enrile, their patron, they realized the need to retain power at all costs, otherwise, they must atone for their excesses.⁴⁵ The cry for justice from thousands of victims who were encouraged to voice their grievances after the fall of Marcos is threatening indeed for most RAM members with bloodied hands.

Deformed Reformers

RAM members helped to enforce martial law through surveillance, arrests, and torture of the civilian population.⁴⁶ They were invested with extraordinary powers which they used against civilians with impunity. The most shared experience among RAM leaders was their role as torturer-interrogators of the Marcos regime.⁴⁷

⁴¹ John Macbeth, "Gunning for Cory," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 14, 1989, p. 13.

⁴² Walden Bello, Walden, op. cit. p. 78.

⁴³ Richard Falk, "Militarization and Human Rights in the Third World," *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*, ed. Charles K. Wilber (New York: Random House Division, 1988), p. 469.

⁴⁴ Edward Lutwak, *Coup d'Etat: A Practical Handbook*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 16.

⁴⁵ Philip Bronstein, "Intriguing in the Philippines," *Dissent*, Fall 1986, p. 506.

⁴⁶ Alfred McCoy, op. cit. p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 3.

They were prominent actors in "safe houses" where suspected enemies of the regime were interrogated, tortured, abused and sometimes killed. They were implicated in cases of massacre, rape, and for protecting crime syndicates. The records of few prominent RAM leaders are typical of most of these self-styled reformers.

In February 1988, some RAM leaders were implicated in the torture-murder of Rolando Olalia, a prominent leftist trade union leader. Named by the National Bureau of Investigation as part of the murder or conspiracy to commit murder were Navy Capt. Rex Robles, Col. Gregorio Honasan, Lt. Col. Oscar Legaspi, and Lt. Col. Eduardo Kapunan.⁴⁸ This was not the first time that RAM leaders were accused of torture or murder. Immediately after the deposition of Marcos, the Task Force Detainees, a human rights group accused Col. Gregorio Honasan, the number one leader of the RAM of cutting the ears of prisoners when he was fighting the Moslem secessionist rebellion in Southern Philippines.⁴⁹

Navy Capt. Rex Robles is a psy-war expert. As an aide to Sec. Enrile, he concocted a black propaganda against Ninoy Aquino who was then running for the Marcos rubber-stamp legislature from his cell in 1978.⁵⁰ He manufactured charges against Aquino which among others, blamed him for the death of a union organizer in the hacienda owned by the family of his wife.

Lt. Col. Aguinaldo was also fingered by the Task Force Detainees as a persistent and systematic torturer who inflicted permanent injuries to his victims.⁵¹ His trademark allegedly included burning the genital of male suspects and terrorizing female prisoners. His notoriety was so well known that the mere mention of his name was sufficient to make civilians shudder in fear. He was also implicated in the killing of Brig. General Oscar Florendo, the chief spokesman of the AFP and head of the military civil relations branch who was sent to arrest him for supporting the December 1989 coup attempt.

Lt. Col. Hernani Figueroa is one of the most dreaded interrogators in the military. He is known to be capable of doing anything for the right price.⁵² One of his known acts was the interrogation and torture of Father Kangleon, a priest who was forced to accept all fabricated accusations against him and his colleagues, who were suspected as communists. Father Kangleon died later but he left a 25-page memoir of his incarceration that described the brutal standard procedure in a military interrogation.⁵³

⁴⁸ James Clad, "A Military Murder," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 10, 1988, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Philip Bronstein, op. cit. p. 511.

⁵⁰ Alfred McCoy, op. cit. p. 5.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 7.

⁵² Ibid. p. 6.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 7.

Lt. Col. Vic Batac, a RAM strategist was featured in affidavits of former detainees. In a report by the International Commission of Jurists in 1977, Batac was named as one of the torturers of a woman who was arrested by the military. 54 For 15 days, the victim was subjected to electric shock, water cure, sleep deprivation, sexual indignities, pistol whipping, and threats to relatives.

One common characteristic of RAM leaders is their acquisition of special skills which qualified them to be in intelligence work and special assignments. Most of these assignments involved handling counter-insurgency jobs which exposed them to the experience of torturing or summary execution of suspects. Some of them became sadists who enjoyed mutilating victims before killing them. Generally, the socialization of most RAM members took place at a time when there were no institutional checks to their excesses and while they were invested with the mission as partners of Marcos in carrying out his envisioned national development under his New Society. 55

CONCLUSION

The six military interventions since 1986 were new phenomena in Philippine politics. These were brought about by changes that had greatly transformed the corporate culture of the military. The transformation undertook three stages. It started with indoctrinations through military education. The young officers who would later constitute the interventionist RAM belonged to a generation of PMA cadets who were educated under the authoritarian part of the Marcos regime. Their stay in the PMA coincided with a period of great ferment in Philippine society. Social forces, particularly the studentry, the church, and the labor unions were politicized by the extreme deprivations brought about by the corrupt Marcos administration. PMA cadets were not insulated from student activism in the late '60s and early '70s. The class of 1971 of Col. Gregorio Honasan was in the PMA when Lt. Victor Corpus, one of their instructors raided the academy's armory and carted away arms to the camp of the New Peoples' Army, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Lt. Corpus served as a trainer of communist insurgents for many years. This breach of military discipline showed an ongoing process of reorientation among career officers from the PMA. The later batches who joined the PMA from 1972 onward saw their curriculum impregnated with authoritarian doctrines of martial law.

The second stage in the transformation of a professional military organization was the experience as enforcer of martial law. The grant of licentious power to suppress dissents against Marcos gave RAM members a taste of power and wealth. The development of personal stakes on the continuation of the Marcos rule made some officers calloused oppressors of the civilians they had sworn to protect.

The final and triggering stage was their relationship with Defense Sec. Enrile. In his long service as defense secretary, Enrile acquired influence which he adeptly used

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Ibid. p. 8.

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Carolina Hernandez, "Towards Understanding Coups and Civilian-Military Relations," Manila Bulletin, January 6, 1988. p. 7.

in dispensing patronage in the military. When Marcos stripped Enrile of his powers over the military, the privileged status of the officers loyal to him was also threatened. This was aggravated by the ascension of Gen. Ver as the Chief of Staff which gave him the opportunity to favor reserve officers in giving assignments. Due to the patronage system, RAM officers plotted a *coup d'etat* against Marcos in order to install Enrile into the presidency in which he was to share power with a military junta. But the plan was overtaken by the 1986 snap revolution in which RAM had no choice but to allow the transfer of power to Corazon Aquino.

On Transformation of Culture

The corporate culture of the Philippine military had evolved within four periods: a) the American colonial administration (1901-1934); b) the commonwealth government (1935-1945); c) the Philippine Republic (1946-1972) and d) the Marcos dictatorship (1972-1986). The first three periods provided the evolution of professional military culture which upheld the doctrine of civilian supremacy over the military. During these periods, the soldiers were trained as the protector of the civilians, they were confined to the barracks and prevented from intruding in civilian affairs.

The fourth period was characterized by a systematic manipulation of the military culture in order to transform the professional military into a subservient instrument of a dictatorship. Under this period, the military was politicized and its education was used to corrupt its upbringing. Democratic institutions were obliterated to remove restraints against the Marcos regime. Discipline was replaced by greed as the primary motivation for service. Material rewards supplanted duty and obligation. Marcos's decrees replaced legislation by Congress and the military's torture-interrogation activities took most of the functions of the weakened court system. Through indoctrination and experience, a neutral military culture became partisan and its interests became symbiotic with the Marcos dictatorship.

From a corrupted military, the RAM emerged. It had developed its own sub-culture nurtured by its special treatment and special assignments. From its experience as the unbridled manager of violence under Marcos, the RAM became arrogant and self-confident of its capacity to suppress civilians. Aware of manipulations in its corporate culture the RAM members kept silent because they were said to have profited from the patronage of Marcos that allegedly flowed through Sec. Enrile. When their interests were threatened by the rise of Ver, however, they fought Marcos accusing him of doing the things which they actually were supposedly enjoying. When the RAM Boys began to intervene in politics, the act became habitual as they continued to plot one coup after another.

The cry for reform and the act of intervention are contradictory. They reflect confusion arising from an adulterated military corporate culture. The legitimate demand for reform became a cover of the illegitimate act of intervention.

The absence of parliamentary institutions that could restrain the military led it to commit excesses. The same factor however left it unprotected from the caprices of Marcos and Ver. Under this circumstance, the military had two options: to accept further corruption of its culture and remain the dreaded instrument of the dictatorship or to fight back to regain professionalism. The RAM Boys took the second option. Unfortunately, a corrupted military will not fight just to restore its professionalism. It fights to take power for itself. It cannot yield its power to other

social forces which it learned to distrust and tried to decimate during the period of dictatorship. The democratization process undertaken by the Aquino government therefore is the same process which Marcos suppressed by declaring martial law. It is difficult for the RAM to accept what it was called to obliterate for years. After having played a prominent role as enforcers of the policies of Marcos, it is difficult for the RAM members to revert into the limited traditional role of the military.⁵⁶

Although the Marcos-inspired transformation of the corporate culture of the military has a universal impact on the autonomy, professionalism, cohesion, and pride of the military profession, only a fraction participated in all the coup attempts led by the RAM. Intergenerational cleavages among career officers and the division between career officers and reserve officers prevented wider military participation. Nevertheless, mere inaction is already seen as support to a military intervention.⁵⁷ But the existing cleavages among officers is not too crucial in the defeat of a coup. A more difficult problem for the RAM is its apparent inability to gather support from political forces (e.g. political parties, labor unions, religious groups). Political forces can delay the progress of a coup thus giving ample time for the "wait and see" military units to take sides. The subsequent balance of forces may turn unfavorable to those undertaking a coup.⁵⁸

There are other factors which tend to prevent the success of a military intervention in the Philippines. Disunity among officers is exacerbated by the presence of many fraternities in the military.⁵⁹ Coup plotters must also contend with the prevailing political atmosphere under the present administration. President Aquino is still popular and democratic institutions are being restored to their former vitality. The availability of alternative means in redressing grievances diminishes the potency of a coup as a means of introducing political changes.

56

Carolina Hernandez, *Ibid.*

57

Edward Lutwak, *OZ*, cit. p. 36.

58

Ibid. pp. 58-59.

59

Aurora Javate-de Dios, "Intervention and Militarism," *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, eds. Aurora Javate-de Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (Quezon City, Publishers, Printers, 1988), p. 305.

Back to Barracks

It is now difficult for most RAM Boys to return to a disciplined barracks life. They have accumulated so much for their own to protect against democratization.

The Aquino government has limited options in returning professionalism within the military. Mere reindoctrination will not be sufficient for an organization with a sullied culture. They should also be provided with a favorable experience that would help in recasting their perceptions about civilian rule. The government should project an image of honest and effective administration. The democratization process after Marcos should be continued and the military should be reintroduced to a life under the rule of law. In short, in order to regain the professional culture of the military, reeducation coupled with a provision of honest and disciplined role models are necessary. These factors will guide the evolution of the military culture toward professionalism so that they will give up the praetorian orientation which they have acquired under the Marcos regime.

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