

Transforming, not reforming, the AFP¹

Ricardo C. Morales

Introduction

Even the most optimistic apologists will have to concede after the 27 July 2003 Oakwood mutiny that the Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP) is suffering from a deep-seated and long-term affliction. In the previous mutiny sixteen years ago the leaders of this incident were still schoolboys. Nothing substantial had been done during the interval about reform despite public pronouncements by the AFP leadership and the government. The mutineers cited corruption, micromanagement, and weak political leadership as among the causes of their dissatisfaction. Only the blind and the prejudiced will deny the dismal situation in the defense establishment. The Oakwood incident is only one outward sign of a fundamental and long-running flaw within the AFP that had been gnawing away at its foundations and which, if left uncorrected, will certainly result in its sudden and catastrophic collapse.

That coup removed, the AFP is quickly making itself one of the most resented sectors of Filipino society today. Not only has it been ineffective against the local insurgencies, it is also becoming a burden and a threat to society. It has been the source of several major destabilizing mutinies which erased hard-earned economic gains so crucial to a society mired in poverty. It has extracted pay increases from a funds-strapped government, confirming that blackmail works at the organizational level. Understandably, there is an outcry for reforming the AFP.

What is wrong with the AFP? How did this state of affairs come about? What can be done to correct it?

This paper will argue that the dismal state of the AFP is due to the debilitating culture within the organization that has emerged because of

the absence of a defeat experience. Deprived of this stimulus the AFP developed what Festinger (1957) identified as "cognitive dissonance." This condition exists when there is a discrepancy between perception and reality. Individuals or organizations suffering from cognitive dissonance rationalize to support or substantiate what they want to believe. They invent myths and engage in self-deception.

While it is not essential for organizations to experience defeat for reform to take place, the AFP failed to develop the leadership caliber that would have substituted for a defeat experience. The generally poor quality of top AFP leadership can be attributed to its method of selection which relies on seniority rather than merit. To reach the highest ranks in the AFP, one only has to be the youngest,² not the best, in his batch. Additionally, tenure is abbreviated. The average tenure of the Chief of Staff (CSAFP) and the major service commanders is eighteen months. Incompetence and corruption are the by-products of the AFP's culture of cognitive dissonance. If the AFP wants to totally eliminate internal restiveness, it must get rid of this flawed culture. Eliminating corruption and incompetence alone is insufficient.

Part one of this paper will present data to claim that the AFP has been in decline for at least two decades. Data will be presented to correlate the Philippine Army (PA) budget and the strength of the communist insurgency. Common sense dictates that the level of the Army budget impacts on the strength of the New People's Army (NPA).

The second data set is the officer-to-enlisted man ratio from 1970 to 2000. This ratio indicates the quality of leadership and discipline in the Army and is forwarded in an attempt to explain why the lack of a defeat experience developed a culture of cognitive dissonance in the AFP that in turn tolerated corruption and incompetence. Defeat or failure has triggered reform in many armed forces (Dixon 1976). It is a merciless eliminator of the weak and inefficient. The lack of defeat develops false complacency and allows decay to set in. Corruption and incompetence are not the causes of this decline but are only the symptoms of a flawed culture within the defense establishment. Failure to recognize this flaw in the past, and dangerously, to ignore it at present, can only lead to further failure.

Finally, this paper will try to recommend a way out of this mess. Given the present state of affairs, reform is no longer sufficient. What is required is organizational transformation that, if pursued long enough,

will result in cultural change. Cultural change is, at best, a hoped for outcome. Its exact form or character cannot be precisely predicted. What drives this transformation effort is the absolute certainty that maintaining the AFP in its present course will only lead to disaster.

Although only Army data is applied, the Army constitutes seventy percent of the AFP and carries the brunt of the counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign. Its vital signs may be taken as indicative of the AFP as a whole. Thus the terms "Army" and "AFP" will be used interchangeably. Furthermore, the lack of SPSG³-related data should provide areas for further study, but does not significantly weaken the fundamental arguments presented in this paper.

Historical Evidence

To fulfill its role in society the AFP has to do two tasks: it must do the right thing and it must do it in the correct manner. Doing the right thing means taking the most optimal course of action to accomplish its mission. Doing it correctly means striving for efficiency, economy, and effectiveness in doing the first task. The AFP is not doing the right thing and has been doing it inefficiently, ineffectively, and uneconomically – for a very long time.

Budget vs. Enemy Strength

The AFP has failed to transform its resources into battlefield victory. It is an inefficient user of public resources. If this were otherwise, then an increase in the Army's budget must result in a reduction of rebel strength. The historical relationship between the Army budget and NPA guerilla strength shows that military operations have a minimal effect on the communist insurgency. Consider the following graph:

From a high of about 25,000 in 1987, NPA guerilla strength suffered a precipitous drop to around 6,000 in 1995 - a reduction of seventy-five percent. This dramatic decline so elated the defense establishment that it prematurely declared the insurgency over and transferred responsibility for internal security to the national police.

During this period, the Army's budget remained steady, growing only by a modest two percent per year during the fifteen-year interval.⁴ The correlation coefficient is -0.406; but this weak link is misleading if one considers the steady rise in NPA strength beginning 1995. If the

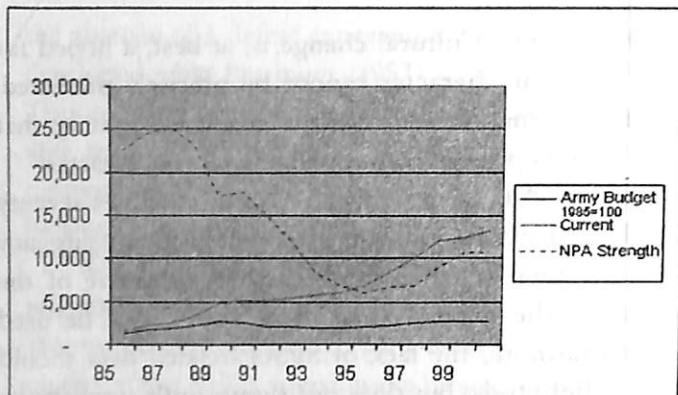


Figure 1. Army budget (000) vs. NPA guerilla strength. Source: PA

entire period is divided by 1994 – the year NPA strength began to recover – a different and alarming picture emerges. The year 1994 is selected because it marks the communists' implementation of a rectification campaign. The dynamics has changed between the two periods. The AFP COIN doctrine, on the other hand, has remained unchanged.

The correlation coefficient for the period 1985 to 1994 was a weak -0.232 , which means that Army operations had minimal influence in reducing NPA guerilla strength. But from 1995 to 2000, the coefficient dramatically reversed to a significant positive 0.798 , which implied Army operations increased NPA guerilla strength. If this logic holds true, then in order to eliminate the NPA, all that has to be done is to eliminate the Army budget – an evidently absurd proposition!

There are two prominent explanations for this sudden reversal and both are presented here not to confuse the reader, but to illustrate how there can be different interpretations of the same phenomenon.

The common explanation is that after 1995 the Army was increasingly preoccupied with the security situation in Mindanao. During the period 1995 to 2000, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) became more aggressive and the Abu Sayaff Group initiated a series of atrocities, starting with a raid on the town of Ipil in April 1995. Responding to this renewed threat dispersed both the Army and AFP efforts against the communists, allowing them to recover.

The alternative explanation goes back to the period of 1987 to 1994. The sharp decline in NPA strength during that interval was due to at least four major developments. First, Marcos was deposed and democracy restored. Second, the Soviet empire collapsed, discrediting communism

as a viable ideology. Third, the NPA suffered a self-destructive internal witch hunt which resulted in the torture and execution of hundreds of its members (Jones 1989). Finally, the AFP implemented an effective campaign strategy which struck at the guerillas' weakest point – its mass organizations in the villages.

Only the last development can be attributed to the AFP.⁵ After years of applying essentially reactive Vietnam-type campaigns like Letter of Instruction (LOI) *Mamamayan* and LOI *Katagan*, the AFP finally adopted Campaign Plan *Lambat Bitag* (originally *Balikwas*) in 1988.⁶ This proactive campaign was carried out using Special Operations Teams (SOT),⁷ a strategic component that integrated the proposal of outsider Victor Corpus⁸ with a counter-organization tactic developed by two Army captains.

By 1991, the communists had conducted a reassessment and in 1994 launched a rectification campaign. NPA units dispersed, avoided engagements with government troops, and concentrated on consolidating their mass bases. The fruits of these corrective measures began to be felt in 1995 when guerilla decline flattened, and then began to recover. By 2000, their strength was up to 11,000.

The NPA recovery after 1995 indicates that the AFP's once highly touted campaign strategy had already lost its effectiveness. Even during the best of times (1987-1994) this contribution was only a little better than twenty percent of the outcome.⁹ After 1995, as the above data indicate, Army operations were already counterproductive: whatever the Army was doing had the unwanted effect of strengthening the communists. It was no longer doing the right thing.

Officer-to-Soldier Ratio

The officer-to-soldier ratio is an index of an organization's state of leadership and discipline. The higher the ratio of officers to soldiers or enlisted personnel (EP), the better led that organization. Even the Chinese People's Liberation Army with its supposedly ironclad proletarian values could not entirely eliminate the requirement for officers.¹⁰ Counterinsurgency requires a higher ratio of officers because of the dispersed nature of operations and the larger socio-political (non-military) considerations involved. There are more judgment calls in counterinsurgency than in conventional war. The historical trend of the ratio of officers to soldiers in the Army is revealing.

The PA has been suffering a steady decline in its Officer-to-EP ratio for the last three decades. Consider the following table:

Year	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Total Army	13,500	22,812	61,062	50,240	68,833	62,037	54,401
Officers	2,002	3,872	4,499	4,318	5,064	4,632	4,261
Ratio EP/O	7	6	14	12	14	13	13

Table 1. Army total strength, Officer Strength and EP-Officer Ratio, 1970 to 2000.

Source: OG1, PA.

From the halcyon era of the 1970s when the ratio was a heavenly 7:1, the number of enlisted personnel in proportion to officers steadily increased to 13:1 in 2000. The Philippine Army table of organization prescribes a ratio of 10:1.¹¹ This ratio was broken in 1975-1980 when Army strength leaped 167 percent, but officer strength only grew a modest sixteen percent. Officer training never caught up with soldier training.

Several corrective measures were attempted. During the early 1990s, the Army tried to remedy the shortage by expediently shifting technical officers – engineers and signalers – to the infantry branch. This further complicated the problem because it weakened the losing branches and provided sub-optimal contributions to the gaining branch (infantry). These transferees were not trained for infantry jobs. In 2002, the CSAFP directed that all newly commissioned officers in the Air Force and Navy serve a few years with the Army. For reasons still unclear, this directive was never implemented.¹²

Amazingly, in a clear demonstration of a self-inflicted damage, the Army General Headquarters (GHQ) shut down the only other alternative to training more officers – its NCO academy. In 1991, the then PA Commanding General, in a typical knee-jerk impulse, ordered the school closed because of a hazing case. Already suffering a lack of officers, the Army further deprived itself of the only other source to augment its company-level leadership gap. The school would only reopen in 2001.

In mid-2002, a plan was hatched in GHQ to increase the Army by 20,000 more personnel. This plan does not include provisions for officers.

If a sensible ratio would be maintained, this increase would require at least 1,800 more officers. The AFP does not have the capacity to produce this number of officers. The Philippine Military Academy (PMA) produces only about eighty-seven a year for the Army and the other officer sources another eighty-eight – in a good year – for an annual average of 175.¹³ In short, these additional 20,000 soldiers will be an unsupervised and unled rabble. It will have dire consequences on our society.

The lack of officers, especially lieutenants who are the doers and fighters of any army, is most severely felt at the company level. In 2002, the Army was suffering from a 2Lt shortage of about 700, and the figure was increasing. Many rifle companies had only two officers; very few had three or more. During that time, no major reconfiguration of the officer procurement process has been done to remedy the shortage.¹⁴ The severe shortage of officers results in unaccomplished or poorly performed missions, abuses, and a general breakdown in discipline and efficiency. All of the solutions adapted proved inadequate and temporary. The Army, by neglecting its leader-to-follower ratio, has not done the thing right.

These two historical data sets – the relation of the budget to NPA strength and the ratio of leaders to followers – are not the statistics of choice at the higher levels of the AFP. That is reserved for the kill ratio or the firearms exchange ratio. One reason for this negligence is an obsession for day-to-day operational and urgent tasks, while ignoring the long-term but important programs. This fault emerges in the Oakwood mutineers' complaint of micromanagement. Many higher commanders have the habit of interfering in tactical situations because they doubt the competence of subordinate commanders. Again, this lack of focus and balance is an outcome of the cognitive dissonance culture. The organization has not been doing the right thing for a very long time, and worse, does not even realize it. Some of its decisions were actually counterproductive.

Why were these symptoms ignored? Why did the AFP leadership, many of them trained in the most prestigious defense institutions in the world, fail to appreciate the steadily mounting evidence of impending collapse?

A Flash of Brilliance

The AFP is actually capable of excellent accomplishments. The effects of EDSA on the AFP should be noted especially during the

period 1986 to 1989. During this period there was a burst of fresh intellectual effort within the AFP. The rebirth of democracy brought feelings of hope and direction to the organization. Reform was a rallying cry that precipitated EDSA and there was hope that it was now going to be implemented. The new campaign and tactic were only a few of the innovations, but there were also encouraging changes in organization, intelligence, and operations.¹⁵

Unfortunately, misled elements in the AFP continued to launch destabilizing efforts and by 1989, much of the goodwill earned by EDSA was replaced by suspicion and resentment. The AFP had reverted to its old form. Many of the succeeding leaders of the AFP were the antithesis of reform. One of them gloated in public that his appointment was like a hole-in-one in golf – a stroke of sheer luck! But the lessons of that period should not be ignored. In the right atmosphere, the AFP is capable of outstanding achievements.

As to corruption, there is so much evidence of it that it would be pointless to give examples here. Suffice it to say that corruption is of such magnitude that it prevents the AFP from accomplishing its mission.

The Absence of a Defeat Experience.

What circumstances created this culture?

The absence of a defeat experience is at the root of the AFP's flawed culture. Defeat is a ruthless Darwinian mechanism that eliminates the weak and retains the strong.

Defeat in the hands of Napoleon compelled the Prussian reformers – Clausewitz, von Stettin, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau – to re-examine and discard Frederick the Great's outmoded methods and establish the tradition of military excellence that Germany has since been known for (Dupuy 1977). During that period this small but crucial core of reformers was:

"...confronted with the task of rebuilding an armed force from the bottom up after an utterly disastrous war and at a time when the army was the object of popular hatred and suspicion" (Craig 1964).

Germany's defeat during two world wars does not diminish the fact of its military excellence that remains to this day. During WWII it was Hitler's interference in purely military affairs that led to Germany's eventual defeat (Manstein 1994).

For the US, Vietnam and the failed Iranian rescue mission in 1980 provided the main reason for reform (Tunnegun and Macedonia 1993).

Lessons from the 1973 Yom Kippur War keeps the Israeli Defense Forces in a constant state of operational excellence. Defeat compels organizations to engage in profound and honest self-criticism and promotes outstanding achievement. Institutions that fail can be discarded and replaced by organizations and procedures that work. Most importantly, defeat promotes innovation and excellent intellectual effort. Defeat, in other words, is healthy for organizational growth.

The AFP has not suffered defeat, or fails to recognize failure. Setbacks are rationalized as not sufficiently disastrous so that they can still be mitigated or ignored. The culture of cognitive dissonance that developed within the organization encouraged commanders and their staff to ignore any fact inconsistent with official policy. And as a matter of policy, the AFP never loses disastrously. This is made painfully clear by the ludicrous practice of regularly awarding a Medal of Valor, the highest Philippine military decoration which requires individual action "above and beyond the call of duty," every single year. Incredibly, the rebels outbungle the AFP. The communist and secessionist rebels have scored a handful of successes here and there, but these have never caused a shift in the military balance. This condition is a conflict trap: the rebels are too weak to defeat the AFP, and the AFP is too inept to defeat the rebels (Collier 2002). This situation has smoldered for thirty four years during which an estimated 160,000 lives were lost.¹⁶

The isolation of combat to remote areas and the irregular operational tempo of the insurgencies have promoted an unwarranted sense of complacency within the AFP. Many officers felt confident that there were always some rear and safe areas beyond the reach of rebel activity where troops could rest and refit. Adding further to the sense of security is the observation that rebel strength never exhibited an irreversible increase.

Deprived of the stimulus of defeat, the AFP's collective intellect began to atrophy. There was no compulsion to question and improve on current practice. Criticism was bad and was discouraged. More insidiously, officers who rose to the highest positions were co-opted by the inner circle of corruption run by the comptroller cult, which slowly became the wielders of real power within the AFP.

The only regular assessments being done in the AFP are the program review and analyses (PRA), a financial assessment sponsored by the comptrollers which is always well attended, mainly because of the sumptuous meals associated with it. Setbacks are rationalized

as temporary and unimportant. In the case of NPA recovery above, preoccupation with the Mindanao situation is the official explanation. Important decisions were delayed and eventually sidelined. Problems were ignored or their resolution passed on to the succeeding set of commanders. Decisions just happened. For example, a large tract of real estate in Cavite was lost to institutional rivals because AFP representatives failed to attend the hearings. Failure was tolerated and standards lowered. Mediocrity gave way to incompetence, and the AFP's values and belief system - its culture - deteriorated.

But not all in the AFP share this culture and belief system. Individual officers are outraged and frustrated by the continuing series of failures. There are elements that recognize defeat and impending failure for what they are. In fact, it was apprehension of an impending communist victory in 1985 that provided the impetus for the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) which led to the February 1986 EDSA revolt.

In 2003, it was fear of an imminent societal collapse caused by massive corruption and widespread incompetence that drove a few junior officers to launch the abortive Oakwood coup. If anything positive can be derived from that incident, it is that the coup attempt was a strategic defeat. It means that from 1990, when the Davide Commission concluded its investigation of the December 1989 coup attempt, up to the present, nothing has changed. Therefore, if these conditions are not changed, it is not a question of if, but of when the next coup attempt will occur.

Corruption and incompetence have been commonly identified as the main problems confronting the AFP. This is a superficial interpretation of the problems within the defense establishment because corruption and incompetence are only the symptoms of a deeper, long-term flaw within the AFP and the defense establishment as a whole. These two evils are not the result of a single individual's action or a wrong decision or policy adopted by a board. Widespread corruption and incompetence are evidence of a systemic malaise, a defective culture allowed to germinate and take root over several decades and eventually adopted as an organizational value.

The Argument that the AFP is a Reflection of Filipino Society

The argument has been advanced that the culprit, if this is the case, is Filipino society at large, since the defense establishment is simply a microcosm, a reflection, of that society. This argument is flawed. Membership in the AFP is entirely voluntary and selective, while membership in Filipino society is accidental. The AFP was created by Congress for a specific purpose. It is not a collection of like-minded individuals who enjoy wearing foliage-colored attire and share a fondness for weapons. Society recognizes this distinction because it applies a separate set of rules for members of the military.

Consider the relationship between the armed forces of India and its society. Indian society is more fractured and contentious than Filipino society. It is wracked by insurgency and terrorism, by religious and sectarian strife, and yet the Indian armed forces have proven to be an institution for stability and continuity in their society. The Indian armed forces have never launched a coup d'état and have never dabbled in politics (Kundu 1998). In terms of GDP per capita, India is still poorer than the Philippines.

The fact that less developed, politically turbulent, multi-ethnic India has a less restive armed forces than the Philippines is proof against the argument that the AFP can only be reformed after Filipino society itself has been reformed.

Reorganizing the AFP

The usual way of doing things no longer works. The AFP must transform itself or risk becoming irrelevant.

The first challenge is to accept that the AFP has to change. Change is no longer an option; it is an absolute necessity. The AFP has to realize that it is about to be defeated. The way that it has been doing things will lead to worse disasters. It already has. On its present course, the AFP will increasingly isolate itself from the rest of society. Most ominously, it will lose the counterinsurgency wars that it is currently fighting. Accepting the necessity for change is the easier challenge. This is not a difficult challenge to overcome, but it is important.

It is also equally important to understand that there is a purpose for this change. It is being undertaken in order for the AFP to be fully

capable of fulfilling its role in society. It is being done in order to defeat the insurgencies and to accomplish any other mission given to it. Change is not being pursued for the sake of change alone.

The second and more difficult challenge is to determine how this change is going to be accomplished. The time for reform is over. It is important to realize that mere reform will no longer work in the case of the AFP. The patient is too critically ill, the disease too far advanced for mere palliatives or soothing salves.

In order to transform itself into a competent, professional, and responsive force that is a source of national pride, the AFP has to undergo organizational transformation. It has to change not only the way it does things, but the way it thinks and solves problems and, more importantly, its values and beliefs. This will not happen overnight; in fact, it will not even happen in five years. It will not be a short and easy process, but it will be an exciting and rewarding experience. Cultural change is a dependent variable that emerges as a consequence of organizational transformation. In other words, the AFP should change the way it is doing things and eventually a new culture will emerge.

For organizational culture to change, the AFP has to start doing things in crucial areas that will send an unmistakable message throughout the organization.

These areas are:

- *Organizational reform.* No message would be more powerful than restructuring and rewiring the AFP, especially the integration of Department of National Defense (DND), GHQ, and the major service headquarters into a single command entity. This major shift will involve three components: relocation of all the major service headquarters to Camp Aguinaldo, consolidating the various staffs into two main divisions and the integration of DND and the consolidated GHQ into one single agency. The physical transfer of the major service headquarters to GHQ will provide the essential shake up to overcome organizational inertia. The consolidation of the staff functions will provide the correct balance and focus between short and long term concerns. The major service commanders, to be called chiefs of staff or inspectors general for their respective branches, shall be responsible for administration and logistics (personnel, training, logistics). GHQ shall be responsible for operations (intelligence, operations, civil-military). All other staff members will be

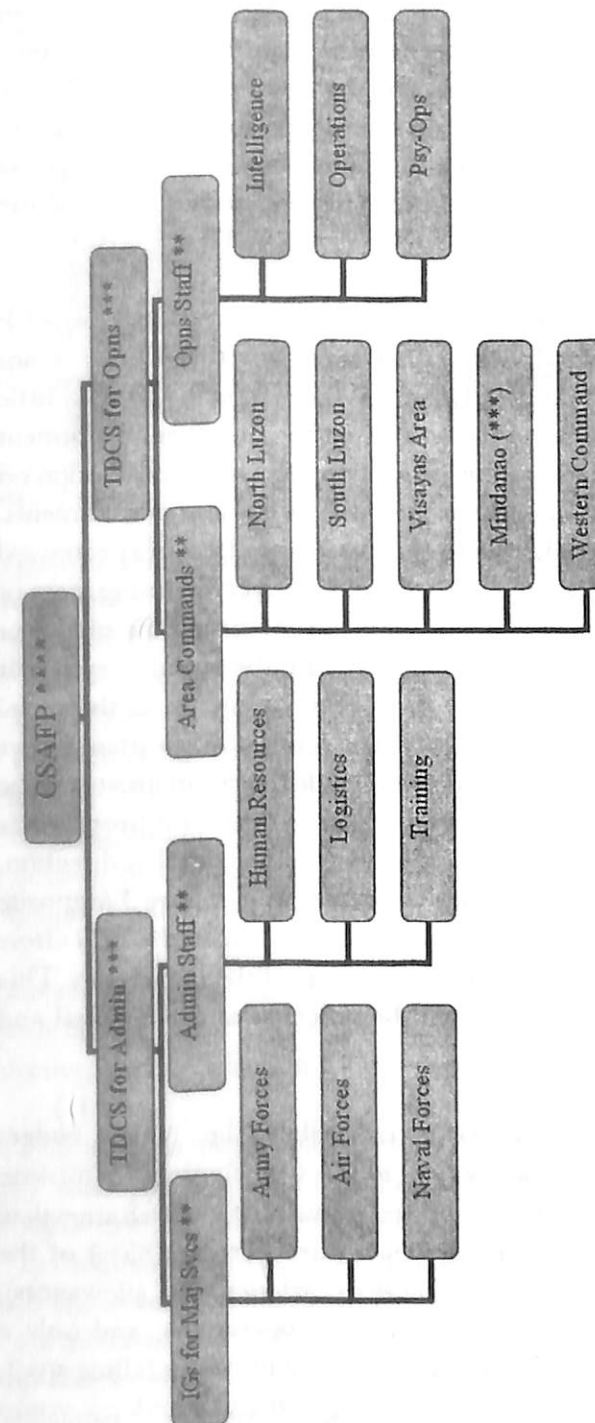


Figure 2. Proposed AFP Re-organization.

absorbed into the most relevant staff division. This consolidation will achieve economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Significantly, this change will relieve much of the restiveness among the junior ranks. The message it will send will be: Now, we're starting to really do something. No other change will have a greater impact on the entire defense establishment as this one move. Figure 2 shows a proposed AFP reorganizational structure (previous page).

- *Sharing the counterinsurgency burden.* If there is anything the AFP should realize after three decades of struggle, it is that COIN is not an exclusive military problem. There has been much talk but little substance in applying a holistic solution, of getting the other government departments and agencies into the effort. Forcing a military solution on a multi-faceted problem has gotten the AFP into many predicaments. Among the most ignored side effect is the socializing effect of a protracted counterinsurgency campaign on the troops. The overwhelming mass of the rank and file, including the officers, come from the middle and lower strata of society and have a natural empathy with the guerillas and their mass of supporters. This has made them keenly sensitive to the social and political reasons for the insurgency. The series of coup attempts is a testimony of this phenomenon. Oakwood made the communists realize that they have neglected the military sector as a target for propaganda and recruitment and have accordingly initiated efforts in this direction. This is a dangerous trend that needs close watching. Figure 3 (opposite page) compares the present AFP-only versus a coordinated COIN effort which limits the AFP to the armed component of the insurgency. This division and dedication of effort will be reflected at the regional and national levels.

- *Fiscal reform.* Exercise austerity, rationalize the AFP's budget and prioritize expenditure according to its contribution to mission accomplishment. Seek out corruption and punish the guilty. Rationalize the budget pattern. On the average eighty-five percent (85%) of the Army's budget goes to personnel services (salaries and allowances), fourteen percent (14%) to maintenance and operations, and only a miniscule one percent (1%) for capital outlay. Equipment is falling apart. Mobility, communications, and ordnance capability plunged.

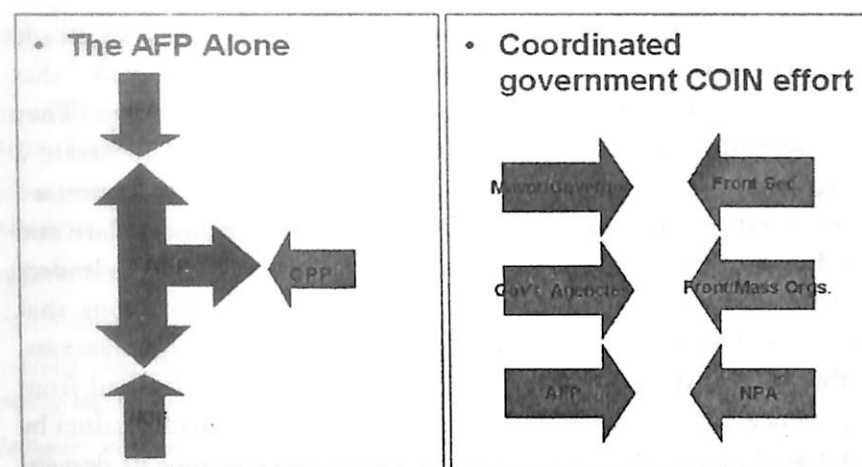


Figure 3. Full government participation in the COIN effort.

- *Legislative collaboration.* Establish collaborative working relationship with Congress. This body must squarely face up to its responsibility for national security by its decisions on the AFP budget and the laws that it passes. When the Senate terminated the US bases in 1991, it left the door open for China's occupation of the Spratlys. In the region, the Philippines has the distinction of having the lowest defense budget, yet it alone is confronted with an insurgency.¹⁷ It does have an internal security legislation. If Congress refuses to allocate sufficient funds for defense or to provide more laws giving more teeth to the COIN campaign, it must accept a lower level of national security.
- *Raise the bar of excellence.* Recognize setbacks and take them seriously. Punish failure. Cease the annual Medal of Valor charade. Stabilize top leadership tenure. Selection will favor merit over seniority.

This is by no means a complete list but it identifies a starting point, a trail head. The purpose of all these is for the AFP to be able to fight and win – nothing more, nothing less.

In the business world, the market determines the winner. Companies which fail to adapt to changing consumer tastes and spending patterns go out of business. Those which recognize a shift transform their companies in order to remain profitable (Albrecht 2003). Our defense establishment can learn from their experience.

During the past thirty-two years, the AFP has been in steady decline. The tactical disasters and restiveness within the ranks that afflict the organization today have taken decades to develop. They cannot be eliminated overnight. The organization failed to create a self-correcting mechanism that would have recognized and reversed this deterioration. Instead, a culture emerged that tolerated failure and allowed incompetence and corruption to be institutionalized. Its leaders were either corrupt or incompetent, or both. If organizations that recognize and adapt to impending change are learning organizations, then the AFP is an unteachable organization. It has not learned from its experience, but because of enemy errors it cannot be made extinct by defeat. Caught in this situation, Filipino society will continue its descent into poverty and despair. If the AFP's current and upcoming leaders recognize this challenge and manage to drag the organization from the edge of the abyss, it will become unrecognizable. The AFP of the future will be totally different from the AFP of today. It will take between five and ten years for that superb organization to emerge because culture takes time to develop.

In 1994, Lt. Gen. Romulo Yap, appreciating that he had only a year as Commanding General of the Philippine Army, hit upon the idea of formulating an Army vision. Accordingly, he gathered those whom he believed to be the best and most promising among the Army officers and out of this effort emerged the Philippine Army vision: Capable, Professional and Responsive, a source of national pride. This vision expressed what the Army wanted itself to be and it would have been an important point of reference had not some bootlickers changed "responsive" to "modern" in order to coincide with the initials of his successor. Today, this vision is largely forgotten, but it carries immense importance because it was the first conscious effort by the Army to define itself.

In a liberal democracy, into which Filipino society wishes to shape itself, the Clausewitzian trinity of the people, the government, and their army has yet to be surpassed.¹⁸ That is the ideal that the AFP should strive for.

Notes

¹ The author acknowledges the insights provided by Commodore Carlos L. Agustin (Retired) in the preparation of this paper.

² This is so because the older and brighter ones would have been subjected to mandatory retirement at 56 before the position becomes vacant.

³ Southern Philippines Secessionists Group

⁴ In constant 1985 pesos.

⁵ To claim that Marcos' removal was due to the AFP is not valid because changing regimes is not one of the AFP's missions.

⁶ *Mamayan*: citizen; *Katatagan*: steadfast; *Lambat Bitag*: Net Trap; *Balikwar*: Reversal

⁷ Captains Alex Congmon and Eduardo Gurrea pioneered the SOT tactic in Northern Mindanao.

⁸ Corpuz defected to the NPA in 1971 before disillusionment caused him to surrender in 1976. After being incarcerated under Marcos, he was released in 1986 and reintegrated into the AFP.

⁹ Based on the -.232 budget-NPA strength correlation in 1985-1994, p.158, above.

¹⁰ <http://www.lupinfo.com/country-guide-study/china/china381.html>

¹¹ The A7-5 Table of Organization of the PA is referred to here.

¹² Related to the author by an attendee of a GHQ conference on the subject, early 2002.

¹³ From 1992 to 2002, an average of 175 2Lts per year were commissioned into the Army. Sources were as follows: PMA - 50%; CAD - 27%; OCS - 15%; MNLF - 8%. Source: OG1, PA.

¹⁴ Reconfiguring the PMA into a one-year all-military curriculum in order to more cost-effectively produce officers has met with objections from many alumni, mainly on sentimental grounds.

¹⁵ The Army adopted an operational evaluation system that rated unit efficiency; electronic warfare was introduced.

¹⁶ Philippine Daily Inquirer, 29 January 2003, quoting a report by the Intelligence Service, AFP indicates fatalities of 43,338 in the communist insurgency. For the Mindanao conflict the figure of 120,000 taken from E. Barandiaran (WB 2002), is used here although some sources provide figures below 100,000. Many deaths associated with the Mindanao conflict remain unreported.

¹⁷ Averaging 1.5% of GDP, CIA Factbook 2002.

¹⁸ Some experts attribute this idea to Summers, who, in turn attributes Clausewitz. See Summers, pp. 26-27.

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