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# The Philippines: Implications of Marcos's Moves Against the Opposition



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An Intelligence Assessment

~~Secret~~

EA 83-10043  
March 1983

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# The Philippines: Implications of Marcos's Moves Against the Opposition

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An Intelligence Assessment

This assessment was prepared by [Redacted]  
[Redacted] the Office of East Asian Analysis. Comments and  
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*March 1983*

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**The Philippines:  
Implications of Marcos's Moves  
Against the Opposition** [Redacted]

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**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 9 February 1983  
was used in this report.*

Since last August President Marcos has systematically moved against radical opponents in labor, the Church, and the media. We believe the crackdown primarily reflects Manila's concern with the recent gains by the Communist Party of the Philippines's New People's Army and its front groups. According to Agency field reporting, Manila believes elements of the Church, labor unions, and the media have at a minimum indirectly supported the Communist Party's expansion, and in some cases actively joined with the insurgent cause. [Redacted]

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Marcos also probably believes the crackdown will enable him to exert better political control during the period leading up to the legislative elections next year and the presidential election in 1987. In our judgment, however, Marcos's insistence on determining the nature of the political opposition he faces in both elections will lead to continued gains by radical groups by causing further erosion of the political middle. More important to the United States over the next few years, Marcos's reluctance to permit real development of opposition parties and institutions in our judgment will inhibit an orderly succession. [Redacted]

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Marcos probably sees the crackdown as a tactical plus in the military bases negotiations with the United States. In addition to showing that the Philippines is in firm hands, the moves allow Marcos to play up the radical threat to bolster his demands for increased compensation for the bases. At the same time, the US-based opposition to Marcos will almost certainly point to Manila's "repressive" politics to try to forestall easy passage of an increased bases compensation package by the US Congress. For his part, after a successful state visit to the United States last year Marcos believes that Washington has reversed its policy of distancing itself from the Philippines over human rights issues. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]



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**The Philippines:  
Implications of Marcos's Moves  
Against the Opposition** [Redacted]

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**Marcos's Crackdown**

After lifting martial law in January 1981, President Marcos, despite retaining nearly all the powers he had held under martial law, permitted more lively domestic political activity. Students, dealt with firmly under martial law, became more openly critical of the government, and the press printed details of government squabbles previously not given full media treatment. For their part, the moderate opposition formed several new political parties in preparation for national and local elections. Labor unions responded with a sharp upsurge in strike activity; in 1981, for example, there were 260 strikes, compared with 62 the year before. [Redacted]

In the past six months, however, Marcos has moved against opposition labor unions, Church workers, and the press. The crackdown began with the arrest of labor leaders last August, followed by arrests of Church members allegedly linked to radical groups, and the closure of the triweekly opposition newspaper, the *We Forum*.<sup>1</sup> [Redacted]

**Labor Arrests.** The clampdown on labor unions began on 13 August with the arrest of leftist labor leader Felixberto Olalia, head of the radical May First Organization (KMU). Olalia's arrest was followed by the arrest of KMU Secretary General Crispin Beltran and Bonifacio Tupaz, President of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS). Although more than 60 people were arrested, only a few labor leaders were subsequently charged with subversion—the charge most frequently used by Philippine authorities against political opponents of the President. [Redacted]

In our judgment the arrests were aimed at unions influenced by radicals. The unions singled out for attack, KMU and TUPAS, represent the two largest leftist unions, together claiming a membership of over 300,000:

<sup>1</sup> See appendix for a chronology of Marcos's moves against the opposition. [Redacted]

- TUPAS is affiliated with the Moscow-controlled World Federation of Trade Unions, although US Embassy reporting does not believe it is under the control of the Soviet-oriented Philippine Communist Party (PKP).

[Redacted]

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We believe the arrests were prompted by Marcos's desire to ensure domestic order during his state visit to the United States in September and to send a signal to labor unions that neither disruptive strikes nor political activism would be tolerated. [Redacted]

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Although the arrests ostensibly stemmed from government charges that Communist insurgents, Muslim separatists, opposition politicians, and radical labor leaders were conspiring to embarrass the government through coordinated strikes, bombings, and assassinations, we believe it is more likely that the existence of a plot called Operation Skylark by Philippine authorities was a convenient excuse for moving against an increasingly active and well-coordinated leftwing labor movement. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Before the crackdown, Manila responded to increased labor activity by amending the labor code to include harsher penalties for striking workers; after the crackdown began, the National Assembly enacted legislation banning strikes in export industries. [Redacted]

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We believe increasing cooperation between leftwing unions did contribute to labor strife last year. According to data from the Ministry of Labor and Employment, strikes in 1982 lasted longer and tended to be more violent than in 1981 and were directed toward

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TUPAS are members of a radical labor coalition formed in 1981, Solidarity (PMP), whose potential strength was demonstrated when it was able, despite a last minute change in plans, to turn out 15,000 workers in 1982 for a May Day rally. Press reports indicate that the KMU was also active in organizing strikes in the Bataan Export Processing Zone, including a walkout of 10,000 workers that shut down the zone for two days last year. [redacted]

Even more worrisome to President Marcos, in our judgment, has been the increased role of leftist labor unions in blatantly political activities. Moderate opposition politicians claim the KMU has stepped up organizational efforts in urban centers throughout the country and that it has links with various Church, student, and leftwing organizations in Manila, the Visayas, and Mindanao. In Negros Occidental Province last September, for example, the KMU, along with other student and labor groups, was credited by the US Embassy with organizing the large turnout and leftist tilt of an opposition rally by moderate politicians. [redacted]

**Strains in Church-State Relations.** Church-state relations, already strained at the beginning of 1982, grew worse throughout the year. In July, Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile ordered the military to conduct an investigation of the activities of radical clergy, according to US Embassy reports. The September arrest of Father Gore, an Australian missionary and an outspoken defender of sugar workers, on subversion charges in Negros Occidental capped months of increasing confrontations between Church workers and the Philippine military, including arrests of priests and nuns and raids on social action centers. The military pursued its case in the press and the courts, as the government sought to justify its crack-down on religious radicals in the face of complaints by Filipinos about military abuses in the countryside (see box). [redacted]

Conflicts between Church and military officials occur most often in rural areas, where the Armed Forces of the Philippines is fighting the NPA. The increased militarization of the countryside has resulted in frequent civil rights abuses, according to US Embassy reporting, and has put local Church officials at direct odds with the military as parishioners look to the

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### *The Role of the Radical Clergy*

*A recent assessment of religious radicalism by the Philippine military underscores their belief that the CPP has successfully infiltrated most religious organizations, including the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the Association of Major Religious Superiors, the Basic Christian Communities, the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Secretariat, and the National Secretariat for Social Action. In our judgment, however, the total number of religious radicals in the Church remains small.* [redacted]

*The military's moves against religious subversives thus frequently ensnare innocent Church workers.* [redacted]

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clergy to investigate and mediate disputes. Conflicts thus stem both from the military's resentment of Church workers' interference and from the military's attempts to separate the Church's legitimate social work among the rural poor from the political work of the Communist Party.<sup>2</sup> [redacted]

Routinely, difficulties between the military and the Church at the local level are handled on a case-by-case basis by Church Military Liaison Committees.<sup>3</sup> As the confrontation heated up late last year, however, high-level meetings between the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and Defense Minister Enrile were held in an effort to defuse the situation. These efforts failed when the CBCP, according to reports from the US Embassy, became enraged at Enrile's turning the November meeting into a media event, during which he interrupted and embarrassed the bishops. Although Cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila still appears willing to work with the government to resolve disputes, the CBCP in late January drafted a pastoral letter highly critical of

<sup>3</sup> The Church Military Liaison Committees were formed in 1973 to facilitate cooperation between the two institutions. The committees are made up of representatives from various religious denominations and several Defense Ministry offices. [redacted]

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*Juan Ponce Enrile: Minister of National Defense since 1972, Enrile is a close friend of President Marcos and was the principal architect of martial law, during which he presided over an unprecedented buildup of the Philippine Armed Forces. Capable, energetic, and ambitious, he is frequently mentioned as a possible successor to the President [redacted]*



*Jeanette Harris (C)*

*Cardinal Jaime Sin: As Cardinal of Manila since 1976, Jaime Sin is the leader of the Philippine Catholic Church. Basically conservative, he has resisted pressures from a growing radical segment of the Church to oppose the government more forcefully. Through a policy of "critical collaboration," he supports most government policies but remains a vocal spokesman for human rights [redacted]*

the government and announced it would no longer participate on the Church Military Liaison Committees, effectively killing that organization. Instead, in a move we believe is designed partly to circumvent Enrile, the Church will expand its public affairs committee, which will be empowered to confer with all branches of government, including the Defense Ministry and the Armed Forces. [redacted]

**Shackling the Press.** Marcos's arrest of the publisher of the opposition newspaper *We Forum* late last year shocked and dismayed even government supporters, according to the local press, and has become a cause celebre for the moderate opposition. The newspaper's defense team of 40 lawyers includes some of Manila's best known attorneys and reads like a "Who's Who" of the moderate opposition. Even some military officers complained to US Embassy officials that the case is putting increased pressure on the military to convince the public two years after martial law was lifted that it is not still living under a military regime [redacted]

We believe Marcos intended to send a strong signal to the press to toe the line when he ordered the arrests of publisher Jose Burgos, ex-Senator and columnist Francisco "Soc" Rodrigo, and other members of the *We Forum* staff.<sup>3</sup> Although they were charged with subversion and libel, we believe the real crime of the *We Forum* was publishing a series of articles challenging the veracity of Marcos's war record. Although articles critical of the government appear regularly in Manila dailies, personal attacks on the President and his family are rarely tolerated and, according to conversations with US Embassy officials, editors know they must present a balance of progovernment and antigovernment views to remain in business. [redacted]

<sup>3</sup> We also believe Marcos meant to send a message to the US-based opposition. The articles appearing in the *We Forum* were reprinted from the *Philippine News*, a US-based Philippine opposition newspaper. [redacted]

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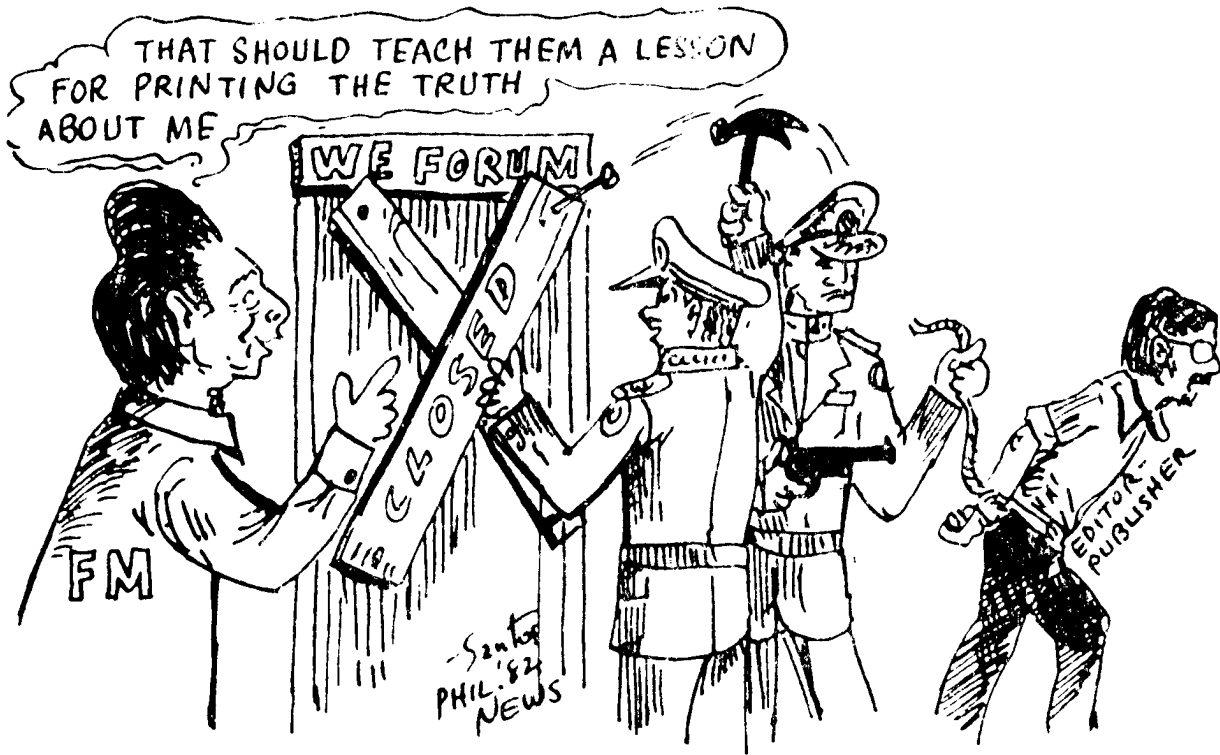
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This political cartoon captures the sentiments of US based opponents to President Marcos regarding his closure of the opposition newspaper, We Forum [redacted]

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In the past, particularly with the large Manila dailies that are owned or controlled by allies of Marcos, offending columnists could be fired as a result of pressure from the presidential palace. Because the *We Forum* is independently controlled, however, Marcos did not have this option, and the paper was closed. Although this was the first closure of a newspaper since martial law was lifted, we believe the action was largely a case of Marcos's reacting to a personal attack rather than a sharp departure from previous policy toward the press. Compared with the major newspapers in Manila, which have more than 300,000 daily circulation, the 50,000-circulation triweekly *We Forum* did not threaten the government's control of the media, in our judgment (see political cartoon). [redacted]

liberalization Marcos promised would occur before National Assembly elections next year. Recent warnings by Marcos on television to the *Bulletin Today*, a large Manila newspaper, not to print libel, the interrogation of six Manila journalists by the National Intelligence Board, and recent news reports indicating that several military officers will press libel charges against a weekly news magazine indicate that the President intends to keep a tight lid on the press. [redacted]

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**Marcos's Motives**

We believe Marcos's crackdown is aimed primarily at stemming an increasing tide of dissent in the Philippines and at the increasing ability of the radical left to attract support. [redacted]

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Before it was closed, the *We Forum* was an important symbol to Marcos's political opponents that legitimate forms of dissent would be tolerated. We believe its closing, however, undercuts confidence in the political

[redacted] Although the government is not in danger of being toppled by the rebels, Ver

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admitted that Manila is losing the propaganda war with the NPA and complained that the media was not presenting a balanced view. In our opinion, the crack-down also reflects Marcos's intent to control the pace and extent of political liberalization preceding the 1984 legislative elections and a need to manipulate domestic political opposition to his best advantage, with the review of the Military Bases Agreement<sup>5</sup> with the United States about to begin.

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**Increasing Insurgent Activity.** According to the Philippine press, the NPA is now able to field platoon-size units. Attacks by 50 to 60 men are not uncommon, whereas previously the NPA typically operated in squads of 10 to 12 men.<sup>6</sup> In several instances, much larger units have been operating. For example, according to press reports a unit estimated at between 200 to 300 guerrillas in January briefly took over a coastal town in Davao del Norte Province, Mindanao, escaping with arms, medicine, supplies, and uniforms. The US defense attache in Manila believes this indicates a growing sophistication in the NPA's operational capabilities. In addition,

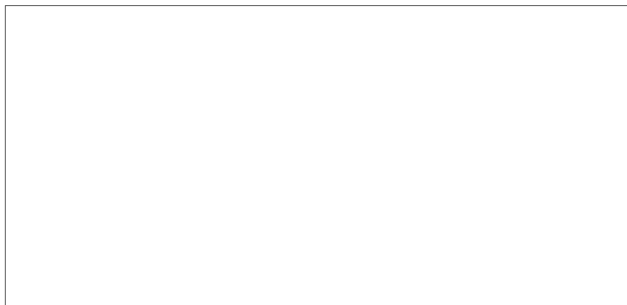
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the raid was conducted with the backup of Muslim rebel forces in the area—the first indication of significant operational cooperation between the two groups.

Certain areas, such as Mindanao, have had sustained high levels of NPA activity since the beginning of the year, according to the US Embassy (see map). The deteriorating security situation in Davao prompted Manila to redeploy its forces in the southern Philippines to cope with the increased rebel activity in northern and eastern Mindanao.

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since January six battalions have been sent to the troubled region. Moreover, the NPA is selectively trying to kill local government



officials, including barangay<sup>7</sup> captains, town councilmen and mayors, and military intelligence personnel, according to Gen. Fidel Ramos, head of the Philippine Constabulary.

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there has been a steady increase in the mass base of the NPA.

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the CPP's National Democratic Front has improved its organization and recruitment work among labor, student, and professional groups and has also enlarged its party apparatus in the Bicol region of southern Luzon, another area of NPA strength. According to recent polling data, the attitude of the local Philippine public toward the NPA tends to support the NPA in regions where insurgent activity is high. Of those who held an opinion of the Communist Party, 83 percent of Mindanaoans and 50 percent of Visayans had a positive attitude toward it, compared with only 11 percent in Manila and 18 percent on Luzon.<sup>8</sup>

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More worrisome to us is growing—although still sketchy—evidence that the CPP may be seeking external support for its operations.

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In addition, a Spanish cleric with many years' experience in the Philippines told US Embassy officials that the CPP had developed a relationship with Moscow. In our judgment, arms shortages have been a major constraint on the insurgency's military activity to date. Even without external support, however, the NPA could obtain supplies for continued large-scale operations against the government by hitting military weapons and supply depots with some regularity.

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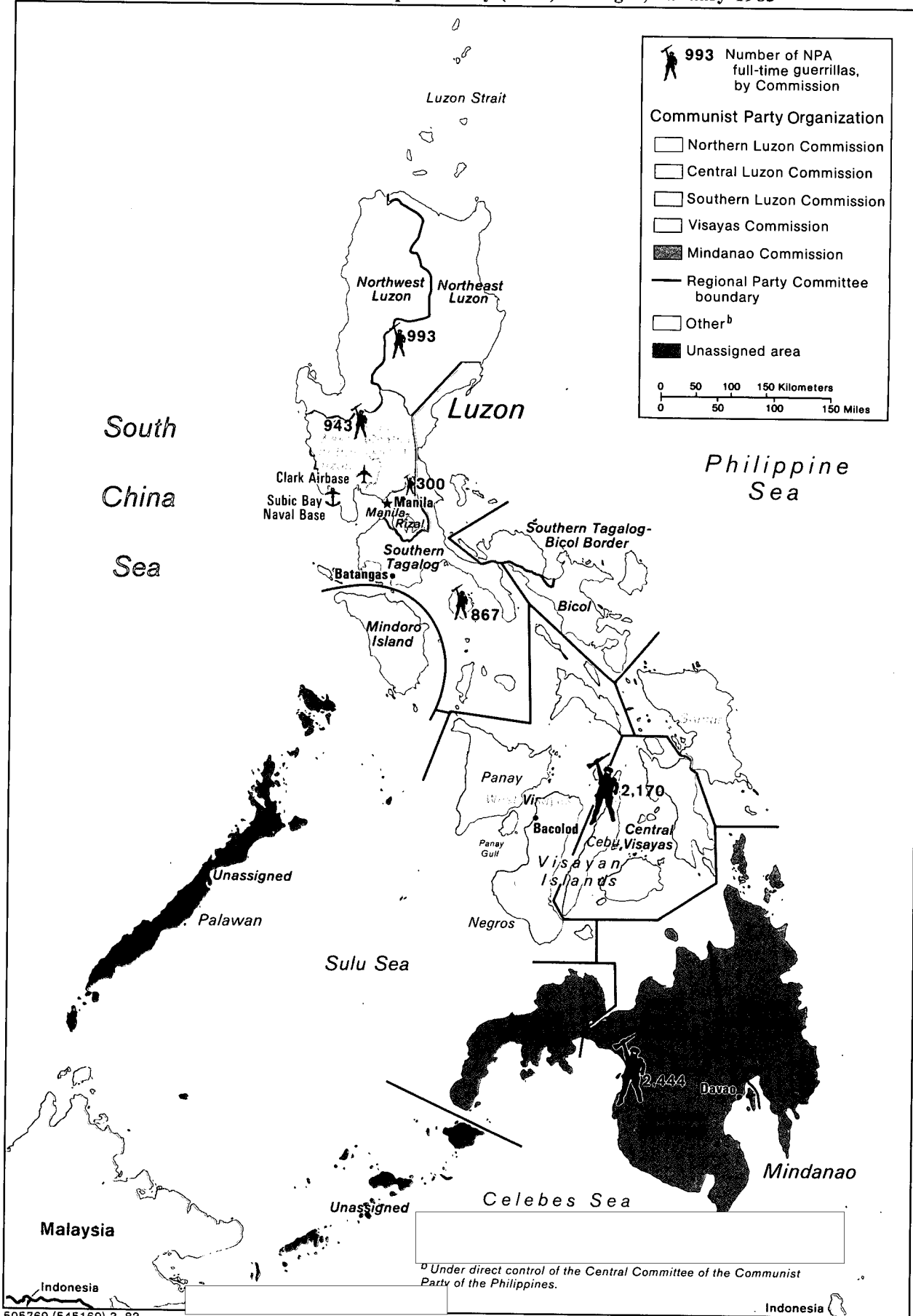
<sup>7</sup> A barangay is the smallest political unit in the Philippines and is roughly equivalent to a municipal precinct in the United States.

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<sup>8</sup> The total number of respondents holding positive opinions of the CPP was much smaller but still significant, in our judgment, because of the tendency for surveys in authoritarian countries to be biased in favor of the government. Thirty percent of all respondents in Mindanao, for example, had a positive opinion of the Communists.

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Revised Philippine Estimates of New People's Army (NPA) Strength, January 1983<sup>a</sup>



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We believe Manila has not been able to curb the growing level of NPA activity, despite recent arrests of several Communist Party leaders,<sup>9</sup> the killing of several others in clashes with the military, and the high-level attention paid the problem. The CPP has survived the capture of its top leadership before, and we believe it will probably suffer only short-term setbacks from the recent arrests. [redacted]

Comprehensive counterinsurgency programs designed by Manila have not worked. A military task force sent to the troubled Bicol region last June was supposed to provide a model for the government's counterinsurgency operations nationwide, but it had only mixed success and has since been quietly abandoned, according to US officials. In some areas of the Bicol, poor discipline by the military further alienated the local population,<sup>10</sup> although in other areas the military successfully secured roads and prevented the NPA from collecting taxes. [redacted]

**Preelection Maneuvering.** We believe that with legislative elections only a year away and presidential elections scheduled for 1987, Marcos is determined to control political activity leading up to these events.<sup>11</sup> In addition to clamping down on the press, delays in establishing rules for party accreditation are in our judgment part of his preelection strategy. According to press reports, the National Assembly, which is a rubberstamp body for the President, was supposed to decide on questions of party accreditation in January 1982. According to the US Embassy, however, a government-party caucus has only recently completed its recommendations for a new election code, but it is still not clear when the National Assembly will act on the proposed changes. According to the US Embassy, some of the basic decisions may not be made final until early next year. Delaying these decisions, in our

<sup>9</sup> Among those captured were Noel Etabag and Isagani Serrano, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines; Edgar Jopson, considered by Philippine military authorities to be a leading organizer for the party's front activity, was killed. [redacted]

<sup>10</sup> Three army privates and a junior officer were charged with killing five civilians in Camarines Norte Province in the Bicol last July. [redacted]

<sup>11</sup> Marcos's ability to control domestic political activity will be complicated by slow economic growth and Manila's financial problems. [redacted]

judgment, will only add to the difficulties faced by Marcos's opponents in organizing effectively before elections are held next year. [redacted]

We believe the President nonetheless is interested in bolstering his regime's claim to political "legitimacy" derived from the participation of some of the leading moderate opposition groups in the electoral process. Because the moderate opposition boycotted the presidential election in 1981, however, Marcos must devise a formula for ensuring that opposition parties will participate in the electoral process. According to US Embassy reporting, the new changes in election rules are designed to pave the way for credible elections and entice the opposition into participating. Marcos floated another trial balloon to the opposition late last year, offering early presidential elections in exchange for opposition participation in national elections. [redacted]

In suggesting synchronizing elections for the National Assembly in 1984 with local and presidential elections, set for 1986 and 1987, respectively, Marcos, in our judgment, was well aware that without party accreditation or sufficient time to organize the moderate opposition would pose no threat to his rule. [redacted] the President's offer to the opposition went well beyond that. [redacted]

[redacted] Marcos may have offered his moderate opponents a few seats on the Executive Committee, which oversees the day-to-day management of the government, if they would participate in a national election. The "balloon" burst when the moderate opposition political umbrella, the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), put conditions on election procedures designed to ensure their fair conduct—conditions that Marcos dismissed out of hand. For their part, UNIDO leaders—concerned about their credibility—have rejected similar overtures from the President for a broader dialogue. [redacted]

**US-Philippine Relations.** In our judgment, Marcos's desire to control the nature of the political opposition he confronts is also being shaped in part by the

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schedule for the military bases negotiations. On the one hand, we believe Marcos does not want to permit even the appearance of a beleaguered regime and risk weakening his bargaining position with the United States. On the other, we believe he wants to ensure that the nationalist rhetoric that accompanies many opposition rallies can be used to his best advantage in Washington. As to fearing a backlash from the United States, a Philippine Government assessment prepared for Marcos after his trip to Washington last September indicated that Washington no longer felt the need to distance itself from the Philippines over human rights issues. [redacted]

**Looking Ahead**

We believe tightening of political controls will not significantly reduce the insurgent threat in the next few years and may, in fact, contribute to further gains by radical groups. We believe restrictions on political activities have already led to a noticeable leftward tilt in the rhetoric of moderate political opposition parties, such as the Pilipino Democratic Party/Laban (PDP/Laban) and UNIDO. For example, slogans criticizing the US-Philippine relationship and calling for the dismantling of US bases have been appearing at moderate opposition rallies with greater frequency. In some cases, such as the UNIDO rally in Bacolod, Negros, last September which attracted perhaps as many as 80,000 people, the moderate opposition was able to turn out large numbers only by riding the coattails of leftwing labor and students and Church groups. According to the US Embassy, moderate opposition politicians have been complaining for years that they are losing ground to the left. The arrest late last year of a regional PDP leader at an NPA safehouse, moreover, points to the more worrisome problem of continuing Communist Party penetration of existing political groups. [redacted]

We believe that a further tightening of political controls by Marcos and a delay in the development of authentic opposition political parties will play into the hands of radicals who are seeking to discredit both the Marcos government and his traditional political opponents. We believe Manila is also overlooking fundamental causes of the party's success in recent years—economic grievances and the government's limited

socioeconomic development programs<sup>12</sup> and political presence in remote areas of the country. In our view, the threat posed by the left is primarily dependent on its continued ability to win the battle for popular support in the rural areas—a war Manila has been unable so far to devise a strategy to counter. [redacted]

**Implications for the United States**

As the United States approaches the military bases review, which begins in April, we believe the political crackdown will permit Marcos a great deal of flexibility. He will retain control of domestic politics while in our judgment being able to point to the radical threat to his regime to try to extract greater concessions on military compensation issues. [redacted]

[redacted] Marcos's opponents are giving him the pretext he needs to exploit this issue. According to the US Embassy, a broad-based coalition calling for the unconditional removal of US bases in the Philippines was formed in Manila in mid-February. We believe Marcos will attempt to use the anti-American and antinuclear rhetoric of the Philippine left to pressure the United States on sovereignty issues and establishing war reserve stocks for Philippine use at the bases.

[redacted]

At the same time, we believe Marcos may be underestimating the negative effects of the widespread crackdown on obtaining US Congressional approval for the new financial package that will emerge from the bases review. In our judgment, the US-based opposition to Marcos will lobby hard against a large compensation

<sup>12</sup> The National Livelihood or KKK program, which was started in 1981, is an attempt by Manila to address economic problems at the local level, but it is modest in scope and has been criticized by political opponents as a patronage vehicle for the First Lady, whose Ministry of Human Settlements runs the program. [redacted]

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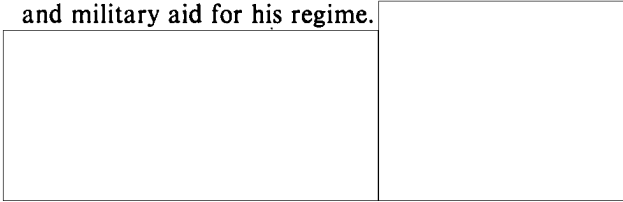
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package and will point to Marcos's political "repression" to try to forestall increased financial support and military aid for his regime.



Beyond the bases review, we believe the retreat from political liberalization that the crackdown represents is of greater importance. Without the development of political institutions independent of the President, the succession process when Marcos departs the scene is likely to be turbulent. If Marcos dies before his term expires, he could avoid bequeathing political unrest to his successor only by first bequeathing the instruments of control. As it is, the power of the Executive Committee to carry out its constitutional mandate and oversee a peaceful transition is a large unknown.



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## Appendix

### Chronology of the Crackdown

1982

**13 June**

Sisters Zenaida Pineda and Pilar Verzosa, nuns of the Religious of the Good Shepherd, are arrested in Batangas and reportedly "framed" by the PC on murder charges.

**21 June**

New leftist labor umbrella group—the National Coalition for the Protection of Workers' Rights—is established in Manila, with Felixberto Olalia as president.

**July**

The Philippine military reportedly orders an investigation of the radical activities of the Church.

**1 August**

Olalia, head of the leftwing KMU labor union, openly calls for revolution at a mass rally in Davao, Mindanao.

**8 August**

Two priests and three layworkers are arrested for possession of subversive documents in Nueva Vizcaya Province; they are released in the custody of local Church officials pending further action.

**13 August**

Olalia and 13 other labor union officials, including National Federation of Labor President Cipriano Malonzo, are arrested for alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow the government; Olalia is only one held and officially charged with subversion.

**18 August**

Crispin Beltran, Secretary General of the KMU is arrested. Olalia's son Roland and Bicol labor leader Manuel Valenzuela are detained and then released.

**31 August**

Two thousand students, laborers, and sympathizers demonstrate in support of Felixberto Olalia. TUPAS President Bonifacio Tupaz, who is also Secretary General of the leftwing Solidarity alliance, is among the demonstrators.

**1 September**

Tupaz is arrested along with 22 others, six of whom are later released.

**2 September**

Catholic Social Action Center on Samar is raided by military authorities acting with advance high-level approval.

**3 September**

Six more labor leaders are arrested in connection with alleged subversion plot; Manila press headlines fact that Army reinforcements are being sent to Manila Electric Company to guard against subversive threat.

**11 September**

The opposition newspaper *We Forum* reports that 29 Catholic priests from Albay Province, Luzon, issued a statement attacking the government for human rights abuses.

**14 September**

President Marcos departs Manila for his state visit to the United States. An antigovernment rally of 1,000 people takes place at the Manila Cathedral.

**20 September**

Father Orlando Tizon and four other suspected CPP members are arrested during a military raid.

**23 September**

Bishop Alberto Piamonte of Iloilo tells American Embassy officials that police recently raided a social action center on the island of Panay.

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**24 September**

Father Gore, an Australian missionary active in organizing sugar workers in Negros, is arrested for the murder of the mayor of Kabankalan last March.

**25 September**

Rally of at least 10,000 workers, students, and moderate opposition politicians held in Bacolod, Negros, Occidental, protesting human rights abuses by the military, and alleged government repression of the Church, press, labor, and students. [redacted]

[redacted] estimate crowd at 80,000. Large turnout is attributed to organizational efforts of KMU and National Federation of Sugar Workers labor unions. UNIDO rallies later in the fall draw crowds of up to 40,000, according to US Embassy reporting.

**26 September**

General Fabian Ver, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, warns that he has a list of six priests and nuns identified by the military as planning subversive activities.

**27 September**

Church Military Liaison Committee is called into session to consider the charges against Father Gore.

**28 September**

Charges are formally filed against Father Gore and Father O'Brien in connection with the murder of the mayor of Kabankalan. Gore denies involvement and 4,000 people demonstrate on his behalf.

**29 September**

Marcos returns to Manila from the United States.

**1 October**

Five thousand demonstrators—including students, union leaders, church workers, and members of the legal opposition—gather in front of the Manila Cathedral, where they burn effigies of President Marcos and President Reagan.

**3 October**

The Superior of the Columban Fathers of the Philippines issues a statement denying Father Gore's alleged involvement in subversive activities.

**10 October**

Social Action Director Father Edgar Kangleon is arrested on Samar. He later confesses to joining the Communists.

**11 October**

Father Zacarias Agatep, a dissident priest who joined the NPA, is killed in a skirmish with government troops in northern Luzon.

**21 October**

Father Gore is released on bail to the delight of 3,000 supporters.

**21 October**

Cardinal Sin speaks to the Manila Rotary Club about Church-state relations. He refrains from accusing the government of a Church crackdown but implies that recent government actions against the Church are "hardly a coincidence."

**25 November**

The Philippines Union for Human Rights—composed of Protestant ministers and Catholic priests and nuns—in a seven-point statement addressed to the government says there is no hope for national reconciliation if the government continues to violate human rights and urges Manila to stop harassing Churchmen, tribal people, and labor unions.

**29 November**

Meeting between the military and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines becomes a media event staged by Defense Minister Enrile, to the embarrassment of the bishops, and further strains Church-state relations. The release of Father Kangleon becomes a sticking point during the talks.

**1 December**

The US Embassy reports that Manila begins legal efforts to terminate the house arrest of former Senator Eva Kalaw, executive vice president of UNIDO; Kalaw, who had participated in recent UNIDO provincial rallies, is a codefendant in alleged 1980 plot to overthrow the government.

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**6 December**

Trial of Father Gore continues; 2,000 supporters demonstrate outside court in Negros.

**7 December**

Jose Burgos, Jr., publisher of the opposition newspaper *We Forum* is arrested on subversion charges along with 10 others.

**9 December**

Cardinal Sin, in discussions with the US Ambassador, indicates continued willingness to work with the government to resolve disputes.

**10 December**

Human rights rallies in Negros draw large crowds.

**12 December**

An effigy of President Marcos is burned at a rally of 5,000 Church and human rights workers in Cebu City, Cebu. Father Luis Hechanova, [redacted]

[redacted] is the main speaker.

**13 December**

"Shock" and "dismay" by local politicians and the news media in Cebu characterize reactions to arrests of the *We Forum* staff.

**17 December**

Subversion trial for *We Forum* defendants begins.

**21 December**

President Marcos, in a televised address, warns the *Bulletin Today* against printing libel. Marcos is responding to the *Bulletin's* publication of a letter from political detainees at Bicutan prison which alleged denial of due process and physical and psychological torture.

**25 December**

Cebu politician Ribomapol Holganza, his son, Dr. Filemon Alberca, and a handful of NPA commanders are arrested in an NPA safehouse in Cebu.

**1983****6 January**

Defense Minister Enrile directs the country's top military officials to draw up a list of nuns, priests, and lay workers suspected of antigovernment activities.

**11 January**

Philippine-language version of *We Forum* secretly resumes publication.

**14 January**

UNIDO rally in Pampanga Province draws crowd of 2,000, far less than 10,000 anticipated.

**23 January**

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, in a draft pastoral letter to be read throughout the country on the first Sunday of Lent in mid-February, warns Marcos that his policies are providing "fodder to revolutionary groups" and says they will no longer participate in meetings of the Church Military Liaison Committees; a new Public Affairs Committee will handle future problems in Church-state relations.

**29 January**

Five thousand opponents of President Marcos stage a rally in Manila; government authorities had previously denied a permit for the rally but allowed it to proceed anyway.

**31 January**

Twenty-nine Filipino journalists ask the Supreme Court to stop the military from interrogating them. The class action suit is filed one month after six journalists are called before the National Intelligence Board to answer questions about stories they had written that were critical of the government.

**3 February**

Cardinal Sin, in a speech before a Church breakfast fellowship group, charges the government with stifling dissent, harassing the clergy, and intimidating the population.

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