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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

19 March 1986

Moscow's Relations
with the Communist Party of the Philippines

Summary

[redacted] Moscow in recent years has had an informal and probably indirect relationship with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) and that, so far, the tie does not seem to have involved Soviet Bloc arms support for the NPA. Nevertheless, there are signs that the CPP may have quietly begun in late 1984 and 1985 to explore the possibility of expanded contacts with the Soviets. [redacted]

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We assume--and the signs so far suggest--that Moscow will seek normal relations with the Aquino government. Nonetheless, the fall of the Marcos government may well have an impact on the fortunes of the CPP/NPA which could alter Soviet policy:

- On the one hand, if Aquino's government succeeds in reversing the heretofore improving fortunes of the NPA, the CPP may feel compelled to seek Soviet support to prevent an erosion of its current position or to retrieve it from a decline.
- Conversely, if it appears that a CPP/NPA victory is in sight, Moscow's incentive to render aid to the party and its armed wing--probably through surrogates--would increase.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted], SOVA, Third World Division, Asia Branch.

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[redacted] Comments and inquiries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Third World Activities Division, SOVA, [redacted].

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[REDACTED]

-- The Soviets might also be prompted to aid the Philippine communists if Moscow fails to make any headway with the Philippine government and the latter resolves not to terminate US base rights.

In the near term, the Soviets are likely to pursue a two track policy that attempts to win favor with the Aquino government while they seek to manipulate the CPP through surrogates into becoming more susceptible to Soviet influence. [REDACTED]

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Possible Early Contact

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was formed in 1968 as a Maoist group that split off the pro-Soviet Partido Komunista Ng Pilipinas (PKP), which was then declining in membership and popularity among Filipino youth. For a number of years thereafter, the CPP remained small, ardently Maoist, and anti-Soviet. By the late 1970s--as the PKP dwindled to a party of no more than 7,000 members--the CPP and its armed wing had clearly grown, were less attached to Peking (if not more pro-Moscow), and were rapidly becoming a threat to the Marcos government. During the CPP's early years, Soviet media occasionally denounced its leaders as immature Marxists and Moscow continued to nurture its ties with its traditional ally, the PKP by providing financial support, scholarships, and hosting its leaders while at the same time seeking better relations with the Marcos regime. [REDACTED]

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CPP Attitude Toward Moscow

In the early 1980s, the CPP apparently was largely satisfied with its increasingly successful strategy for gaining power. Its approach involved a mixture of co-opting non-party members in legal and illegal united front groups while pursuing guerrilla warfare in the countryside.

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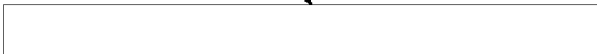
the party's operations were supported by taxes in "liberated areas," funds from Filipinos abroad, funds from church and leftist groups in Western Europe and the US, and an "arms grabbing" campaign in the Philippines.

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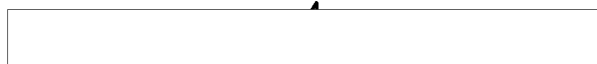
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Moscow's Views of the CPP

The Soviets continued to back Marcos until his regime fell. In mid-1985, they gave prominent play to a Moscow visit by the head of the PKP, which is still hostile to the CPP. The Soviets have also told Filipino officials--for what it is worth--that the CPP/NPA has sought their assistance and that Moscow



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[redacted]

flatly turned the request down. Soviet media have not published a commentary on the CPP/NPA in recent years, but one Soviet radio service referred to party members as "left extremists" in a January 1986 broadcast and, according to an interview published in a Philippine newspaper, a senior CPP cadre in mid-February noted that his party had recently come under "vicious criticism" from Moscow. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Evidence for an indirect Soviet tie with the CPP through surrogates is scattered and inconclusive, suggesting that if Moscow is taking such a tack, it is not yet expending much energy in the process. In addition to the reported indirect contacts through West European communist and the Sandinistas, [Redacted]

[Redacted]

In our view, one of the stronger candidates for a surrogate role is Vietnam, although the evidence for the connection is not conclusive.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

The use of foreign surrogates--possibly East Germans, Central American communists, or the Vietnamese--would have the advantage of placing distance between the CPP and the Soviets, who have not wanted to compromise their relations with the Philippine government. Surrogates would also have the advantage of being more acceptable to elements of the CPP that remain hostile to Moscow, either because of its continued support for the party's PKP rivals or because of the Soviets' "superpower status," or other perceived offenses. Moreover, from Moscow's perspective, fraternal ties between the CPP and a pro-Soviet surrogate could pave the way for better relations with the entire "Socialist bloc," including the USSR, if and when the CPP comes to power. [redacted]

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Conclusions and Prospects

Before the fall of Marcos, the main focus of Soviet policy in the Philippines was the pursuit of a relationship with the regime in power, in an effort to diminish US influence in the islands and promote the ouster of the US military presence. Moscow appears to have viewed the CPP as having been too independent for too long, too tainted by its Maoist past, and too infected with a history of animosity toward Moscow to be a ready vehicle for Soviet policy in the Philippines. As a result, Soviet policy toward the CPP, in the ancien regime, appears to have been one of attempting to turn the party to an association with Moscow's domestic and foreign clients, who presumably would instruct it on how to become respectable internationalists and serve Moscow's bidding. [redacted]

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How far and how fast Soviet policy may evolve will depend, in our view, on the actions of the Aquino government and the CPP/NPA. [redacted]

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CPP Policy Toward Moscow. [redacted]

[redacted] In the last year or so of the Marcos regime, the CPP was interested mainly in political recognition from the Soviet Union; this, however, may have been in anticipation of a future request for financial support and arms. If the CPP now falls on hard times--or believes it needs an infusion of arms to prevent the NPA from suffering a setback or to push it to final victory--its incentive to seek financial and arms aid beyond its normal channels of support will increase. Under those circumstances, we see a request for support from the Soviet Union as a distinct possibility. [redacted]

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Soviet Policy Toward the CPP. In the short term, we suspect that Moscow will continue to pursue a two track policy of seeking

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[redacted]

an accommodation with the regime in power while attempting to bend the CPP, through the use of surrogates, toward a more cooperative attitude with the "Socialist bloc." [redacted]

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In the longer run, however, if Moscow finds that the initial burst of good will that Aquino's government has evinced toward the US turns sour and that an end to US base rights in the Philippines emerges as a realistic possibility, then Moscow will have little reason to step in and offer the insurgents help. As it did with the Marcos government, the Soviets will attempt to cultivate leaders and associates of the Aquino regime, regardless of their ideological bent, to achieve their goal. [redacted]

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On the other hand, if Moscow perceives that it is left in the cold by Aquino and that the US-Filipino tie has been enhanced with the passage of time, then its incentive for aiding the insurgents will increase. At a minimum, the Soviets could reason that such aid, which would undoubtedly be conveyed through surrogates, would promptly be known to the Filipino government and might--the Soviets could reason--press Aquino to tend more to their interests. At most, the aid might eventually help put into power a regime that would undoubtedly oust the US from its bases in the Philippines and that might be beholden to the Soviets for their final victory. [redacted]

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DDI/SOVA/TWA/A/ [redacted] (18 Mar 86)

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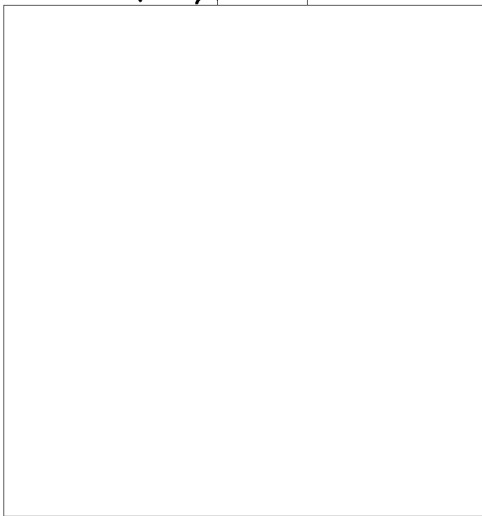
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
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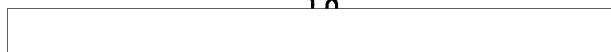
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