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## **USSR-Communist Party of the Philippines: Cautiously Increasing Contacts**

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**USSR-Communist Party of the Philippines: Cautiously  
Increasing Contacts**

Information as of September 1987 was used in this report.

In the last year, the Soviet Union has cautiously increased its contacts with the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines, the country's largest Communist party. The party, which grew from a split in the Philippine Communist movement in 1968, has historically been anti-Soviet and strongly self-reliant. Over the last several years, however, and especially during the last year, the party reportedly has decided to seek financial aid from other countries and to moderate its criticism of the Soviet Union. Perhaps because they are aware that there is still resistance within the party to establishing direct ties with Moscow, the Soviets have tried to establish indirect links to the party through its labor front group. We believe that Moscow has not moved to provide direct financial or military aid to the party or to its military wing, and that it is unlikely to do so in the near future. The Soviets are likely, however, to gradually increase indirect funding to the party through its labor front group or through third countries.

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**Increased Contacts**

[REDACTED] in the last year the Soviet Union has cautiously increased its contacts with the historically anti-Soviet Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). (1)

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--Soviet and Philippine party representatives reportedly discussed the possibility of expanded relations in February at a Soviet-arranged meeting in Hanoi between the party and the small pro-Moscow Philippine Communist Party. The Soviets reportedly said that they would offer the Communist Party of the Philippines moral and financial, but not military, support to help achieve the removal of US bases from the Philippines.

--Soviet and Philippine party representatives also reportedly met in June at a cultural conference in Cuba. The Soviet delegation reportedly agreed to help the party with aid shipped through Vietnam. They offered no specific details, however, and the Philippine delegation reportedly felt the assurances

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[redacted]

of support were merely lip service.

--A Soviet student front group reportedly invited a Philippine student representative who is also a party member to attend a meeting in Moscow in September 1987, reportedly to speak with Soviet party representatives.

[redacted]

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#### Changes in the Party's Attitude toward Foreign Support

Until recently, the Communist Party of the Philippines rejected the notion of accepting outside support because it wanted to be seen as a totally indigenous movement. The party was able to rely almost entirely on arms captured or stolen within the Philippines to supply its military wing. In recent years, however, there has been increasing evidence that the party has begun to seek arms outside the country-- arms captures have failed to keep pace with the insurgents' growing strength. In addition, the party appears to be considering better relations with the Soviets, whom the party had previously branded as revisionists:

--The party politburo reportedly decided after its March 1987 meeting to intensify diplomatic efforts overseas to obtain aid and will work to establish relations with all communist parties in order to broaden the 'anti-imperialist' camp.

--The party now reportedly regards the Soviet Union as 'socialist' rather than 'imperialist', although Moscow commits acts of aggression and military intervention in the affairs of foreign states that are 'imperialist' in nature. The party will try to foster better relations by publishing factual accounts of events that cast the Soviet Union and Vietnam in a favorable light.

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Despite this change in approach, resistance still

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exists in the party to expanded ties with the Soviet Union, especially among old guard party leaders. Party founder Jose Sison, Chairman Rodolfo Salas, and Secretary General Rafael Baylasis reportedly have vigorously opposed in the past any contact with Moscow, and the decision to consider the Soviet Union a socialist country was approved only by a narrow margin in the politburo. [Redacted]

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**Indirect Contacts**

Perhaps because they are aware that there is still resistance within the party to establishing direct ties with Moscow, the Soviets have also tried to establish indirect links with the party through its labor front group, the KMU. The Soviets have been courting the KMU through the World Federation of Trade Unions, a Soviet front group. The Federation invited KMU president Crispin Beltran to a labor meeting in Moscow in February, and has responded positively to reported KMU interest in becoming a Federation affiliate. Some Philippine labor leaders reportedly believe that the Federation helped to fund Beltran's Senate campaign earlier this year. The Soviets also reportedly have requested that pro-Soviet Philippine Communists coordinate their labor activities as closely as possible with the KMU--a move designed to curry favor with the KMU. [Redacted]

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The Soviets may also be using third parties to establish contacts with the Communist Party of the Philippines. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] the Vietnamese reportedly have been acting as a surrogate for the Soviets in providing funding for pro-Soviet Philippine Communists since 1981. [Redacted]

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**Avoiding Military Aid**

Although the Philippine media has abounded with reports of Soviet aid and training for the insurgents in recent months, it is believed that Moscow has not yet moved to provide military aid to the party or its military wing. The Soviets would be unlikely to risk damaging their relations with the Aquino government or intensifying Philippine military concern about the insurgency by sending military aid that could be traced to Moscow. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Outlook

Moscow is expected to continue to pursue contacts with the party and to encourage cooperation between the party and pro-Soviet Philippine Communists. The Soviets for now are likely to continue funding the party indirectly through its front groups or through third countries. Eventually the Soviets might consider supplying the insurgents with military aid through a socialist client state such as Vietnam, with which the insurgents reportedly have had contact. Most Vietnamese aid, however, probably would come from Vietnam's large stock of captured US weapons, with which the insurgents are familiar and for which they could obtain ammunition inside the Philippines. Such arms also would not be easily traceable to foreign sources.



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Moscow probably will be careful not to expand its relations with the party to the extent of alarming the Aquino government, with which the Soviets have cordial relations. The Soviets have taken advantage of good relations with the government and the freer atmosphere under Aquino to pursue their goal of the removal of the US bases in the Philippines, and have increased their contacts with labor unions and anti-US groups. Moscow also may believe that the party's influence is not yet great enough to make it worth jeopardizing relations with the Aquino government.



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**Footnote**

1. Doctrinal differences in the Philippine Communist Movement split the movement in 1968 into two factions--a pro-Soviet faction and the Maoist, anti-Soviet Communist Party of the Philippines. The pro-Soviet faction, with which Moscow maintains party-to-party ties, has renounced armed struggle and accepted amnesty from the Philippine government. It has drifted into relative obscurity. The Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New People's Army, have for the past twenty years waged war against the Philippine government. The party reportedly has 45,000 members; the army reportedly has 17-24,000 regulars and 40,000 militia.



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