

PREVENTING  
MILITARY  
INTERVENTIONS

A Policy Issue Paper

By

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### BACKGROUND

The occupation of Oakwood Hotel by protesting junior officers and men last July 27, 2003 placed the issue of military interventions at the forefront of public policy analysis specifically, how best to prevent them from recurring. This policy issue paper reviews the present policies adopted by the Arroyo Administration to prevent military interventions, and assesses whether these should be pursued or not.

### THE PROBLEM: MILITARY INTERVENTION

Military intervention is an act made by active members of the AFP, outside the conventions of the chain of command, with the intent of disrupting the political status quo, in the pursuit of their political cause.

Military interventions, not to mention its sometimes-bloody consequences, have debilitating effects on our economic and political stability. Given our present precarious social-economic-political state -- **we cannot afford another military intervention.**

There were common/significant causes extracted from the nine major military interventions our country has so far experienced. These causes are categorized into two, internal and external. Internal causes are those attributable to or directly affecting the military organization; while, external causes are those attributable to factors external to the military. The internal causes were: (1) corruption in the AFP; (2) inept AFP leadership; (3) political patronage in promotions; (4) lack of logistical support for men in the field; (5) low pay; and (6) poor medical/health services. While the external causes were: (1) corruption in government; (2) incompetent leaders in the administration; (3) failure of the administration to deliver basic services; (4) widespread poverty; (5) state-sponsored terrorism; and (6) electoral fraud by the administration.

### ASSESSMENT OF PRESENT EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The present policies being adopted by the Arroyo Administration to prevent military interventions are the recommendations made by the Feliciano Fact-Finding Commission (FFFC).

Based on the evaluation using the criterion of political viability, most of the present policies were assessed to be unresponsive to the underlying causes of the Oakwood Incident and therefore, **will not prevent future military interventions.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue with the implementation of the following FFFC recommendations, which were found to be responsive or useful:

- A. Creation of a cabinet-level agency (e.g. The Presidential Adviser on Military Affairs) directly under the Office of the President. It should have oversight powers and clear inter-department relationships with all concerned to prevent over-lapping of functions. This office will also conduct the appropriate policy researches to further flesh out the more complicated problems enumerated below as well as other internal causes not raised by this paper.
- B. The propositions regarding the RSBS, Procurement System, AFP Modernization, AFP Medical Services, and AFP Housing.

2. Review the other FFFC recommendations as to their responsiveness to the causes of military interventions.

3. Conduct policy researches on the following:

- A. Eradication of corruption in the AFP.
- B. Rehabilitation of RSBS.
- C. Strict application of meritocracy in the AFP promotions system.
- D. Uplifting of the standard of living of the AFP personnel through:
  - 1) Salary increase or non-monetary benefits such as, tax reductions/exemptions, reduction of RSBS contributions, rice subsidy, C-130 flights or ship passes for soldiers going on R & R, etc.
  - 2) Improvement of medical and health services.
  - 3) Mass housing.
- E. Streamlining of the AFP bureaucracy.

4. **Practice good governance** to address the external causes of military intervention.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AdMU	-	Ateneo de Manila University
AFP	-	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AO	-	Administrative Order
C-in-C	-	Commander-in-Chief
CMF	-	centrally-managed funds
CPP	-	Communist Party of the Philippines
CSAFP	-	Chief of Staff Armed Forces of the Philippines
DND	-	Department of National Defense
DOJ	-	Department of Justice
EDSA	-	Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue
FFFC	-	Feliciano Fact-Finding Commission
GCFI	-	Guardian Center Foundation Inc.
GHQ	-	General Headquarters
HQ	-	headquarters
ISAFP	-	Intelligence Service Armed Forces of the Philippines
JUSMAG	-	Joint United States Military Assistance Group
MAB	-	Mactan Air Base
MBD	-	Makati Business District
NICA	-	National Intelligence Coordinating Agency
NOVAI	-	Navy Officers' Village Association Inc.
NPA	-	New People's Army
NSC	-	National Security Council
NUC	-	National Unification Commission
PAF	-	Philippine Air Force
PMA	-	Philippine Military Academy
PN	-	Philippine Navy
RA	-	Republic Act
RAM	-	Reform the Armed Forces Movement
R&R	-	rest and recreation
RSBS	-	Retirement Separation Benefit System
SND	-	Secretary of National Defense
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme

## PREVENTING MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

### BACKGROUND: THE OAKWOOD INCIDENT

On July 27, 2003, the Filipino Nation became a witness to another socio-political phenomenon – the Oakwood Incident. More than 300 officers and men of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) holed themselves up in a posh hotel in Makati to protest against the Arroyo Administration for massive corruption; selling of arms and ammunition to the enemies of the state; state-sponsored terrorist acts; and widespread poverty.

This incident is the latest among numerous military interventions experienced by our country since the first one happened in December 1970, when then 1Lt Victor N Corpus raided the armory of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) en route to his eventual defection to the New People's Army. The Oakwood Incident also happened two and a half years after EDSA II and almost fourteen years after the bloody 1989 coup attempt. With the latest incident, a question now lingers in the minds of a lot of Filipinos – “Is our country forever condemned to have these military interventions?”

This policy issue paper reviews the present policies adopted by the Arroyo Administration to prevent military interventions, and assesses whether these should be pursued or not.

### SCOPE AND SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM

The effects of military interventions to our country, not to mention its sometimes-bloody consequences, are debilitating to our economy and gravely affect our country's political stability. During the 1989 coup attempt alone, in addition to the human casualties, the combined financial losses suffered by the economy ranged from P800 million to P 1 billion (Davide, 1990: 378 and according to Sec. Manuel A. Roxas II, it “brought down our economy to nearly zero growth” (PDI, 2003: 1). Davide further wrote, “the loss of lives, loss of confidence and damage to our international image are worth far more than the financial losses” (Davide, 1990: 378).

As for the Oakwood Incident, just four days after, the peso fell to a new four-month low while stocks also fell to its lowest level within the past four weeks thereby reflecting investors concerns over political and economic uncertainties (PDI Editorial, 2003: 8). According to columnist Armando

Doronilla, it “unleashed a new blizzard of uncertainty over the economic and political horizons” (Doronilla, 2003: 9). Although the incident was brief with no bloodshed or damage to property, “it contributed to the projection of the Philippines as an unsafe, unstable and crisis-prone country” (Feliciano, 2003: Introduction).

While it is also true that history had been kind to two successful military interventions (EDSA I and II), the conditions that followed these exercises were not marked with peace and progress either. On the contrary, post-EDSA I and II were remembered for the attempts to restore the toppled administrations such as the Manila Hotel Incident; the GMA-7 coup attempt; and the Black Saturday Mutiny to restore Pres Marcos, and the EDSA III Incident (although not a military intervention) to restore Pres Estrada. So, whether it is successful or not, a military intervention will produce a climate of political and economic instability which retards the country’s growth and will sow division among the people.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

### DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

The problem addressed in this paper is how best to prevent military interventions. While the issue addressed is whether to pursue the policies presently being adopted by the Arroyo Administration to prevent military interventions.

In addressing this issue we will extract the root causes of past interventions in the Philippines and we will compare these with the present policies to determine if they are, indeed, responsive. If not, alternatives will be proposed to fill-up policy gaps and come up with a more responsive and, ultimately, a more effective policy.

### ACTORS/STAKEHOLDERS

The following are the actors/stakeholders of this policy:

#### 1. Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)

The essence of any military intervention is obviously the military, in this case, the AFP. Thus, in this policy, the AFP and its personnel are the main recipients.

It is a safe assumption that no soldier in the AFP entered the service to become a rebel, much less a troublemaker who would want to drag his own country down. Obviously, the motivation to break away from the system is nurtured in the course of his career based on what he has witnessed or experienced. There are different motivations or causes cited by previous

participants and some have been common to the different interventions. This is where a responsive policy comes in and hopefully, addresses these causes so that the confusion about their roles never arises even under different circumstances.

## 2. President

The President is solely responsible for the implementation of this policy. As such, he is required to have a clear vision of what he wants his country to be. He also needs to have a high level of political will, unquestionable moral integrity, and an honest desire to serve the people.

The failure to implement this policy will open up his administration to interventionists and maybe rightly so, for he had failed to fulfill his mandate to serve, protect and uplift the lives of the people. But as what was discussed above regarding the dire economic consequences should this happen, the President, through the different government agencies, must ensure that this policy gets implemented.

Ultimately, the survival of not only his administration is at stake, but, more importantly, that of the State and Democracy itself. In fact, if we are to go by the events of the '87 and '89 coup attempts, even the President's own life is at risk.

## 3. Business Sector

One of the biggest losers in any military intervention (both successful and failed) is the business sector. That is why it should be highly interested in any move to eradicate the problem. It should also be more participative in overseeing that this policy gets the necessary support it needs to be implemented properly. And since the business sector itself is a party to the prevailing social injustice being experienced by the people, it must start subscribing to certain business ethics that will encourage benevolence within the sector and will also do away with the exploitation of the masses.

## 4. The People

At the end of the day, it is the Filipino people in general that stand to lose most from the failure of this policy. Aside, from the direct losses to lives and property that they may absorb as collateral damage, they also stand to lose much should the economy falter as a result of a failed military intervention.

Generally, the public have grown apathetic regarding this issue because they feel that, either way, they would still have to contend with the harsh realities of daily living. This was proven to them by both the successful and failed interventions.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVE

The goals of this policy are: (1) to maintain political and economic stability in our country; (2) to promote social justice to our people; and (3) to breed a truly professional AFP. While, the objective of this policy is to directly address both the internal and external causes of military intervention to prevent its recurrence.

## MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

This policy proposes the prevention of military interventions; therefore, the ultimate measure of effectiveness can only be the non-recurrence of such activities in the future. But since the future is infinite, this policy is time-bound within the term of the administration that chooses to implement it. Ideally, it should be implemented for as long as Democracy exists in our country. But given the kind of public administration and politics we have, it is very rare that a policy, even a good one, gets institutionalized.

## EVALUATION CRITERION

It can be deduced from the discussions above that any effort to prevent military interventions should address all its direct causes. The rationale being, if there were no more causes to justify military intervention then, this will be prevented from recurring. Considering the psyche of AFP officers and men, and the environment from which they operate, the cause is very important, for this is what they will risk everything, even their lives, for.

The potential interventionists in the AFP ranks are no mercenaries. Neither would a soldier join just for the fun of it. Therefore, without a valid cause, it is highly improbable that a military intervention could be launched. This, in theory, is the approach in preventing military interventions.

From the description of the approach to the problem, it is very clear that the sole evaluating criterion applicable is political viability specifically, responsiveness. As defined by Patton and Sawicki: "Responsiveness is related to acceptability and appropriateness and **involves the target group's perception of whether the policy or program will meet its needs**" (Patton, 1993: 216). It is with this criterion that the present efforts to solve the problem will be evaluated on. Likewise, if necessary, responsiveness will also be the basis in the formulation of other alternatives.

It is worth noting however, that based on the precedents set by EDSA I & II, **the potential solutions should not prevent future military interventions that may be necessary, in only extreme cases** (e.g. oppressive, corrupt and inept



administrations and administrations that resort to electoral fraud to stay in power), **to protect the people and the state**, as stated in the 1987 Constitution.

## MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

### THE ROLE OF THE AFP

In discussing military interventions, we must first know the specific limitations of the AFP and its defined role in the state. The role of modern armed forces is primarily to subdue or prepare to subdue the enemies of the state, particularly external aggressors. But since the Philippines is a third world country, the AFP has other equally important roles: (1) providing stability to the political status quo, demonstrated through its role in the maintenance of law and order, and counter-insurgency; and (2) assisting in national development efforts (Davide, 1990: 10-11). According to Conrado de Quiros: "the Army combined defense and police functions, mandated as it was to secure the state against external and internal attacks and to maintain peace and order" (de Quiros, 1990:26).

To appreciate the bounds within which the AFP is allowed to operate, we shall refer to its mandate as defined in the 1987 Constitution. As stated in Sec.3 of Art. II of the Constitution: "The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and State." The intention and spirit of this provision is to give constitutional mandate to the AFP to subvert an oppressive, corrupt and inept government, which is detrimental to the safety of the people and the survival of the state. Apparently, the framers of the 1987 Constitution deliberately inserted this because they were aware of the crucial role of the AFP in overthrowing Pres Ferdinand Marcos.

The delicate part however, is the subjective interpretation of this constitutional clause. As Davide wrote: "In essence, it is not the mission that pushes the military to intervene. Rather, it is how the officer corps defines and interprets the mission of the armed forces, which may give rise to the phenomenon of military interference in the political arena (Davide, 1990: 11)." According to Navy Capt Proceso Maligalig PN (Ret.), a participant in the 1989 coup attempt: "The military or 'warrior' class must step in to preserve and protect the State if and when the civilian counterpart fails or abdicates the responsibility for credible governance" (Coronel, 1990: 55).

All doubts about the interpretation, however, were clarified during EDSA II, when then AFP Chief of Staff Gen Angelo Reyes broke the chain of command and withdrew support from his Commander-in-Chief Pres Joseph Estrada citing this same constitutional provision. With the Supreme Court ruling and global recognition that followed, formally legitimizing the Arroyo Administration, military intervention is now justified, in extreme cases, as a means to change a democratically-elected administration. Intellectual honesty dictates that this is a

historical fact and a legal precedent. Hence, the parameters that applied during the decision of then Gen Reyes must also be applicable throughout time unless, this provision is changed or removed from the Constitution.

Another constitutional provision defining the role of the AFP is Art. XVI, Sec. 5 (1), where it states: "All members of the armed forces shall take an oath or affirmation to uphold and defend this Constitution." Again, this has been interpreted both ways. Those in the administration often recite this line to tame the AFP and make it do their bidding. On the other hand, the interventionists in the AFP use this line to call on the others to join them in invoking the Art II, Sec. 3 provision as stated above.

But again this has been clarified by the legitimization by the Supreme Court and the international community of the actions of then Gen Reyes.

## MILITARY INTERVENTION DEFINED

Military intervention is defined as an act made by active members of the AFP, outside the conventions of the chain of command, with the intent of disrupting the political status quo, in the pursuit of their political cause. According to an AdMU paper: "The term 'military intervention' is habitually associated with a coup d'état or a *cuartelazo* or a *golpe de estado*. These are, however, only types of military intervention - albeit the most extreme form" (AdMU, 2001). Military intervention can come in various forms: coup d'état, rebellion, mutiny, sedition, protest action (e.g. the Oakwood Incident), and even through a simple press statement, as in the case of the *Kawal* Incident.

From this definition, we can delineate military intervention from other incidents involving the military. For example, a large group of AFP personnel who protested against their commander for his autocratic style of leadership is not a form of military intervention in the sense that it was done for purely professional reasons. Martial Law is also not a form of military intervention since the military under this political set-up is still operating under the AFP chain of command.

## CAUSES OF MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

According to Davide: "Motives for military intervention are varied and complicated. No single factor can easily be pointed out as the sole cause for intervention. It is oftentimes a conjunction of motives" (Davide, 1990: 4). Thus, in extracting the causes that motivated some members of the AFP to intervene in Philippine politics, we will categorize them into two - internal and external. Internal causes are those attributable to or directly affecting the military organization; while, external causes are those attributable to factors external to the military (Davide 1990: 9).

## 1. December 1970 PMA Armory Raid

In December 1970, 1Lt Victor N. Corpus led NPA rebels in a raid of an armory inside the Philippine Military Academy (Corpus, 1989: write-up). They carted away hundreds of infantry weapons before disappearing into the communist underground (McCoy 1999: 198). He eventually surrendered to the government in 1976 (Corpus, 1989: write-up).

### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The misuse of the AFP by politicians against the interests of the people (Corpus, 1989: write-up).
- B. Graft and corruption in the AFP (McCoy, 1999: 197).

### EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The oligarchic structure of the Philippine society (McCoy, 1999: 197).
- B. The leftist influences on 1Lt Corpus by the communist youth group, *Kabataan Makabayan*, (which he joined after graduating from PMA) and its ideologue, Jose Ma. Sison (McCoy, 1999: 197).

## 2. February 1986 EDSA I Mutiny

On February 22, 1986, then Minister of National Defense Juan Ponce Enrile along with General Fidel Ramos and the members of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) barricaded themselves inside the Ministry of National Defense building in Camp Aguinaldo and, thereafter, withdrew support from Pres Ferdinand Marcos. This triggered the so-called “people power”, which eventually toppled the Marcos Administration on Feb 26.

According to Escalante, while many wished “to perpetuate a romanticized, scented image of EDSA I”, it “never was a revolution. It was a pocket mutiny that grew into a localized revolt, drawing the participation, cumulatively, of perhaps no more than five percent of the population (Escalante, 2000: 1).”

EDSA I was the first successful military intervention in the history of our country.

### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Graft and corruption in the AFP (Davide, 1990: 120; and Coronel 1990: 51).
- B. Political patronage in the AFP promotions system (Davide, 1990: 120; McCoy, 1999: 232; and Coronel, 1990: 56).
- C. Lack of logistical support for the officers and men in the field (Davide 1990: 120).
- D. Low pay of AFP personnel (Coronel, 1990: 51).
- E. The schism between the officers belonging to the camp of Gen. Fabian Ver and those who did not (Coronel, 1990:51 and de Quiros, 1990: 41).

#### EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The electoral fraud committed by Pres Marcos during the February 7, 1986 Snap Presidential Elections (Davide, 1990: 124).
- B. Corruption and inefficiency in government (de Quiros, 1990: 41, 44, 45).
- C. The alleged attempt to eliminate Enrile and RAM members by the forces of Gen Ver (de Quiros, 1990: 42; McCoy, 1999: 231; and Davide, 1990: 119, 122).
- D. The deteriorating political and economic conditions after the Ninoy Aquino assassination in 1983 (Davide, 1990: 122; and Escalante, 2000: 15).
- E. The consolidation of power by Pres Marcos through the subservience of the Batasang Pambansa; muzzling of the press; the weakening of the judiciary; and the total control of the military (Davide, 1990: 55 and de Quiros, 1990: 40).
- F. The widespread social unrest due to dire economic conditions (de Quiros, 1990: 38).

### 3. July 1986 Manila Hotel Incident

In July 1986, Marcos loyalists occupied Manila Hotel, the symbolic center of party politics, to proclaim former Senator Arturo Tolentino, Marcos' vice-presidential running mate, as Acting President of the new government (McCoy, 1999: 266-267). At least 490 military officers and men, and some 5,000 civilian Marcos loyalists were involved in the rebellion. They surrendered 37 hours later (Davide, 1990: 135-141).

#### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Discriminatory treatment of AFP personnel connected with the Marcos regime (Davide, 1990: 204).

- B. The “soft-stance” of the Aquino Administration against the CPP-NPA (Davide, 1990: 136).
- C. The presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet (Davide, 1990: 136).

EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The counter-revolutionary fervor of Marcos loyalists (Davide, 1990: 137).
- B. Widespread social unrest (Davide, 1990: 136).

#### 4. January 1987 GMA-7 Incident

On the early morning of January 27, 1987, AFP personnel loyal to deposed Pres Marcos struck various military and civilian targets that culminated in the siege of the GMA-7 compound in Quezon City (Davide, 1990: 158-165).

After almost three days, the rebels led by Col Oscar Canlas PAF agreed to lay down their arms. One rebel soldier died and thirty-five people were injured during the incident. GMA-7 was also estimated to have lost at least P3 million in direct damages (Davide, 1990: 161, 165).

INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Discriminatory treatment of AFP personnel connected with the Marcos regime (Davide, 1990: 161, 204).
- B. The “soft-stance” of the Aquino Administration against the CPP-NPA (Davide, 1990: 161).
- C. The presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet (Davide, 1990: 164).
- D. The ill treatment of the AFP by the Aquino Administration (Davide, 1990: 163).

EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The counter-revolutionary fervor of Marcos loyalists (Davide, 1990: 164).
- B. The worsening political situation caused by the killing of protesting farmers in the so-called “Mendiola Massacre” on January 22, 1987 (Davide, 1990: 158).

#### 5. April 1987 “Black Saturday” Incident

On 18 April 1987, 13 enlisted personnel, all members of the Guardian Brotherhood, led by TSgt Ernesto Librado, forced their entry through Fort Bonifacio and went straight to the military stockade to free 42 military detainees,

most of whom participated in the January 27 GMA-7 incident. They then raided an armory before barricading themselves inside the Headquarters Philippine Army building in Fort Bonifacio (Davide, 1990: 168-169).

The siege lasted 20 hours before the rebels agreed to surrender leaving one rebel dead and seven wounded (Davide, 1990: 168-170).

#### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The “soft-stance” of the Aquino Administration against the CPP-NPA (Davide, 1990: 170).
- B. The presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet (Davide, 1990: 170).

#### EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The counter-revolutionary fervor of Marcos loyalists (Davide, 1990: 168).
- B. Corruption and inefficiency in government (Davide, 1990: 170).
- C. The volatility of the political situation brought about by the alarming power outages; water shortage; escalation of insurgency-related incidents; successive bombing incidents in Metro Manila; and the upcoming national and local elections (Davide, 1990: 167).

### 6. August 1987 Coup Attempt

On the early hours of August 28, 1987, more than 2,000 officers and men, spearheaded by then Col. Gregorio Honasan and the RAM, simultaneously attacked various military and civilian objectives around the country, including the Malacañang Palace, in a coup attempt against the Aquino Administration.

While most of the targets (except Malacañang) were initially occupied by the rebels, the failure of subsequent reinforcements to arrive; and the lack of support from the private sector forced them to capitulate (Davide, 1990: 175-200).

The bloody end of the coup attempt came 36 hours later leaving 53 people dead and more than 200 wounded (Coronel, 1990: 83). Damage to property surpassed millions of pesos, to include the burning of the General Headquarters building in Camp Aguinaldo (Davide, 1990: 200).

#### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Graft and corruption in the AFP (Coronel 1990: 52, 81).
- B. Political patronage in the AFP promotions system (Coronel, 1990: 51; and Davide, 1990: 204).
- C. Inept AFP leadership (Coronel, 1990: 52, 81).

- D. Lack of logistical support for the officers and men in the field (Davide 1990: 204).
- E. Low pay of AFP personnel (Coronel, 1990: 51, 80; Davide, 1990: 204; and Miranda, 1987: 1).
- F. The “soft-stance” of the Aquino Administration against the CPP-NPA (Coronel, 1990: 70; Davide, 1990: 205; and Miranda, 1987: 1).
- G. The presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet (Coronel, 1990: 52, 70, 80; and Davide, 1990: 205).

#### EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Corruption and incompetence in government (Coronel, 1990: 51, 70, 81).
- B. The political instability and social unrest brought about by the dim prospects of agrarian reform; the spate of bombings in Metro Manila; the 80-centavo increase in oil prices; the conduct of *Welgang Bayan* by militant labor groups and student organizations (Davide, 1990: 176).
- C. The failure of the government to deliver basic services especially in the rural areas (Davide, 1990: 470, 532).

### 7. December 1989 Coup Attempt\*

On November 29, 1989, a dozen men of the 14<sup>th</sup> Scout Ranger Company led by Capt Jaime Junio prematurely attacked and destroyed a military communications facility in Tagaytay City (Yabes, 1991: 166-168) in what is to be the unofficial start of the biggest and bloodiest coup attempt in Philippine history.

Starting in the early hours of December 1, almost 3,000 rebel forces led by at least 7 generals, 21 full colonels and 441 other officers (Davide, 1990: 439-440) simultaneously attacked Villamor Air Base, Fort Bonifacio, Camp Aguinaldo, PTV-4, North and South Harbors, Sangley Point, and Mactan Air Base (MAB) in Cebu. The Manila Domestic, Legazpi and Bacolod Airports were also briefly occupied by the rebels with the intent of flying in reinforcements. By daybreak, rebel T-28 *Tora-Tora* planes bombed/strafed Malacañang Palace and Camp Crame (Davide, 1990: 260-369).

But soon after the rebel air assets were destroyed and more government reinforcements arrived in Metro Manila, the tide began to turn. On December 2, the rebel Scout Rangers were forced to seek refuge at the Makati Business District (MBD) while the rebel Marine forces decided to leave Villamor Air Base to proceed and capture Camp Aguinaldo. However, after several futile attempts to penetrate the camp's defenses, the battered rebel Marine forces were forced to surrender on December 3 (Davide, 1990: 260-369).

By December 3, the positions previously occupied by the rebel forces were retaken by government troops until only the MBD and MAB in Cebu remained in rebels' hands. Eventually, the Scout Rangers in MBD agreed to "return to barracks" on December 7, while the rebel forces in MAB led by Gen Jose Comendador surrendered on December 9 (Davide, 1990: 284, 368).

In all, the coup attempt claimed the lives of 99 persons, of which 31 were from government side, 17 from the rebel forces, and 51 civilians. 570 persons were also wounded in the skirmishes (Davide, 1990: 376).

#### INTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Graft and corruption in the AFP (Coronel 1990: 52, 81; Davide, 1990: 470; and Guingona, 1989: 27).
- B. Inept AFP leadership (Coronel, 1990: 52, 81).
- C. Political patronage in the AFP promotions system (Davide, 1990: 470; and Coronel, 1990: 51, 56).
- D. Lack of logistical support for the officers and men in the field (Davide 1990: 470).
- E. Low pay of AFP personnel (Coronel, 1990: 51, 80; Davide, 1990: 470; and Miranda, 1987: 1).
- F. The "soft-stance" of the Aquino Administration against the CPP-NPA (Coronel, 1990: 70; and Davide, 1990: 471).
- G. The presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet (Coronel, 1990: 52, 70, 80; and Davide, 1990: 471).

#### EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. Graft and corruption in government (Coronel, 1990: 53; Davide, 1990: 470; Guingona, 1989: 27; and Salonga, 1989: 71).
- B. The failure of the government to deliver basic services especially in the rural areas (Coronel, 1990: 53; Davide, 1990: 470; and Salonga, 1989: 71).
- C. Widespread poverty (Davide, 1990: 470).
- D. Uneven treatment of human rights violations committed by the AFP and the CPP-NPA (Davide, 1990: 470).
- E. Absence of good government (Coronel, 1990: 52; and Davide, 1990: 471).
- F. The failure of the government to effectively address the economic problems of the country (Davide, 1990: 471).
- G. The lack of genuine reconciliation on the part of the government with the different sectors opposing it (Davide, 1990: 470).
- H. The failing economy under the Aquino Administration as shown by the double-digit inflation; high interest rates; severe transport crisis;



power failures; fuel price increases; inadequate infrastructure; etc. (UP, 1989).

I. Political instability (Davide, 1990: 221).

\*Author's Note: The Noble rebellion in Mindanao, which happened a few months later, is basically an extension of the 1989 coup attempt and, therefore, had the same internal and external causes.

## 8. January 2001 EDSA II Mutiny

On January 16, 2001, the members of the prosecution panel walked-out at the height of the impeachment trial of then Pres Joseph Estrada when they lost the Senate voting (11 to 10) to open the controversial "second envelope". The prosecution had claimed that the said envelope contained vital pieces of evidence to link Pres Estrada to the charges of corruption.

This triggered massive protest actions along the EDSA-Ortigas area by civil society groups that eventually, on January 19, forced then Chief of Staff Gen Angelo Reyes, along with the commanders of the three branches of service of the AFP, to withdraw their support from their Commander-in-Chief (Estrada) and bestow it on then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. As a result, Pres Estrada was forced to abdicate the presidency on January 20.

EDSA II was the second successful military intervention in Philippine history.

INTERNAL CAUSES: None.

EXTERNAL CAUSES:

- A. The political instability and economic uncertainty brought about by the charges of corruption against Pres Estrada (Symonds, 2001).
- B. The perception that Pres Estrada has lost his mandate from the people (Billington, 2002). (This observation was attributed to then Commanding General of the Philippine Army, Gen Diomedio Villanueva PA.)
- C. The perceived economic difficulties if Pres Estrada remains in power (Symonds, 2001). (This statement was attributed to Philippine Stock Exchange governor Vivian Yuchengco.)
- D. The incompetence of Pres Estrada to govern (Sheridan, 2001).

## 9. July 2003 Oakwood Incident

On the early morning of July 27, 2003, more than 300 officers and men of the AFP occupied the Oakwood Hotel in Makati City to protest against the

Arroyo Administration for massive corruption; selling of arms and ammunition to the enemies of the state; state-sponsored terrorist acts; and widespread poverty.

The siege lasted 22 hours and was peacefully resolved only after an agreement was reached where the government will spare all the participants (except 5 members) from prosecution in exchange for their “return to barracks”.

INTERNAL CAUSES (Taken from the interviews with the Oakwood participants):

- A. Graft and corruption in the AFP.
- B. The selling of arms and ammunition by the AFP to the enemies of the state resulting in the never-ending war with the insurgents and secessionists at the cost of thousands of lives of civilians and AFP personnel.
- C. The complicity of Sec. Reyes and Gen Diomedio Villanueva in the “escape” of Abu Sayyaf members through the military cordon during the so-called Lamitan Siege in June 2001.
- D. The “revolving door” policy of choosing the AFP Chief of Staff, which resulted to having 6 unproductive Chiefs of Staff in the 3 years of the Arroyo Administration.
- E. Political patronage or “*bata-bata*” system in the promotions of senior military commanders (committed particularly by Secretary Angelo Reyes).
- F. Incompetent AFP Commanders resulting in the lack of strategic direction of the AFP.
- G. The incompetence and political motivation of then Secretary of National Defense Angelo Reyes.
- H. The incompetence and political motivation of then ISAFP Chief Gen Victor Corpus.
- I. Lack of logistical support for the officers and men in the field.
- J. The issuance of arms and ammunition by AFP commanders to politicians.
- K. The turnover of captured MILF camps back to the MILF.
- L. The abuse and misappropriation of AFP resources by its commanders.
- M. The misuse of the AFP by politicians against the interests of the people.
- N. The bankruptcy of RSBS.
- O. Very poor medical and health services.
- P. Low pay of AFP personnel.
- Q. Lack of housing facilities for AFP personnel.
- R. Lacking or deteriorating military equipment.
- S. The increase of the number of generals, which will further reduce the resources at the front lines.

EXTERNAL CAUSES (Taken from the interviews with the Oakwood participants):

- A. Graft and corruption in government.
- B. State-sponsored terrorism as detailed in the paper entitled "The Greenbase Exposé" (Trillanes, 2003).
- C. The failure of the Arroyo Administration to deliver the promises made at EDSA II.
- D. Widespread poverty.
- E. The failing economy as manifested by the runaway budget deficit, rising level of unemployment, falling value of the peso, and the rising costs of commodities.

RECAPITULATION:

CAUSE	MILITARY INTERVENTIONS								
INTERNAL	PMA	EDSA I	JUL '86	GMA	APR '86	AUG '87	DEC '89	EDSA II	JUL '03
1. CORRUPTION IN THE AFP	X	X				X	X		X
2. INEPT AFP LEADERSHIP		X				X	X		X
3. POLITICAL PATRONAGE IN PROMOTIONS		X				X	X		X
4. LACK OF LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR MEN IN THE FIELD		X				X	X		X
5. LOW SALARY		X				X	X		X
6. MISUSE OF AFP BY POLITICIANS	X								X
7. POOR MEDICAL/HEALTH SERVICES									X
8. DISCRIMATORY TREATMENT OF MARCOS LOYALISTS			X	X					
9. SOFT STANCE OF ADMINISTRATION VS CPP-NPA			X	X	X	X	X		
10. PRESENCE OF LEFTISTS IN THE AQUINO CABINET			X	X	X	X	X		
11. COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY FERVOR			X	X	X				
EXTERNAL									
1. CORRUPTION IN GOV'T	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
2. INCOMPETENT LEADERS IN THE ADMINISTRATION							X	X	X
3. FAILURE OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO DELIVER BASIC SERVICES	X					X	X		X
4. POLITICAL INSTABILITY		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
5. ECONOMIC INSTABILITY	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
6. WIDESPREAD POVERTY	X						X		X
7. STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM									X
8. ELECTORAL FRAUD BY THE ADMINISTRATION		X							

## ANALYSIS:

From the table above, we can see that the most common internal cause of military interventions is the corruption in the AFP, which was raised five times. While, four causes were tied at four each and these are: inept AFP leaders; political patronage in promotions; lack of logistical support to the men in the field; and low pay.

The perceived soft-stance of the Aquino Administration towards the CPP-NPA; and the perceived presence of leftists in the Aquino Cabinet; were also raised five times, and while they were applicable only to the Aquino regime, this should highlight the aversion of the AFP to “weak” and left-leaning leadership.

As for the external causes, we can see that among those that ran high with the participants were: political instability (8 times); corruption in government (7 times); and economic instability (7 times). Other, common causes were: failure of the incumbent administration to deliver basic social services to the people (4 times); incompetent leaders in the administration (3 times); and widespread poverty (3 times).

We should take note that the high frequency of political and economic instability indicate that these may actually be precipitating factors or the opportune moments to launch a military intervention and not necessarily underlying factors themselves.

Another observation is that of all the interventions, only the January 2001 EDSA II was launched for purely external causes.

In all, our country has so far experienced 9 major military interventions. Of these, seven failed and only two succeeded (EDSA I and II). All were incidentally launched with at least a similar motive of “national interest” at a time when there is political instability and/or economic uncertainty. It is also a fact that while all the failed military interventions were destructive to the country, the successful ones, though not really constructive either, were welcomed and accepted by the general public and the international community.

The successes of EDSA I and II are very significant. These defined the bounds within which military intervention is necessary, justified and acceptable as a means to replace an administration. Specifically, if an administration: (1) resorts to electoral fraud (as in the case of EDSA I); or (2) is **perceived** to be corrupt (as in the case of EDSA II).

Even then candidate for president Ramon Magsaysay planned for a coup should he be cheated by Pres Elpidio Quirino (de Quiros, 1990: 27) apparently justifying a military intervention should the integrity of the essence of democracy – the elections – be tampered with. De Quiros further wrote: “Equally importantly, Magsaysay’s contemplated coup in particular offered a theoretical pillar for ‘interventionist politics’: extra-constitutional methods were justifiable by the need to extirpate a corrupt government (de Quiros, 1990: 27).”

## OTHER THEORIES ON THE CAUSE OF MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

### 1. Politicization of the AFP

Outside of those cited above as causes of military interventions, many theorize that the politicization of the AFP due to the expanded roles given during Martial Law is the root cause (Davide, 1990: 60; de Quiros, 1990: 48; Feliciano, 2003: 132; and Miranda, 1987: 1).

“But if this were so”, asked an Oakwood participant, “then why was it that only a small fraction of the military participated in interventions when the whole AFP had been exposed to the same politicization/socialization processes?” Moreover, all of those who participated in the Oakwood Incident grew up in their careers in an AFP that has reverted to its traditional roles and none had been part of the so-called “Martial Law AFP”. These arguments somehow make this theory passé.

Assuming that this theory were true, a “depoliticized” AFP may not necessarily be what is good for our society. For in the hands of a tyrannical president, this “obedient” AFP will also ensure a perpetual, oppressive rule. Should this be the case, a civilian uprising is most likely to happen.

A clear illustration of this scenario is the AFP during the Martial Law years. Contrary to the premise of this theory, the AFP during that time was not politicized even though it was given direct political power. It was precisely because of its professionalism, which in the definition of Prof. Carolina Hernandez is the “respect for the chain of command” (Davide, 1990: 13), and the “pro-constitution” stand of the AFP then that Pres Marcos was able to perpetuate his rule. This blind loyalty to the chain of command made possible the execution of covert illegal operations (e.g. illegal arrests, coercions, tortures and summary executions) under the pretext of national security even if it was patent that these were against the interests of the people they were supposed to protect.

### 2. The Contagion Theory

According to Davide: “The ‘contagion’ theory states that a successful coup breeds other coups, either in the same government or in neighboring states. From the definition, it is obvious that the coup may occur either at the inter-governmental or the intra-military levels” (Davide, 1990: 19-20).

In a way, this theory partly explains why the soldiers who went to Oakwood Incident firmly believed that what they were doing was right. Apparently, they were comparing their actions to those made by Gen Reyes and company. But this is how far the theory goes since it cannot possibly be used in the formulation of alternatives because the successes of EDSA I and II are historical precedents, which we cannot change or erase. At the same time, we

cannot be fatalistic and just fully submit to the theory's proposition that a successful coup will breed other coups or military interventions.

## ASSESSMENT/OUTCOME OF PAST AND PRESENT EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

There were three significant policies implemented by the previous administrations to address military interventions: (1) The Davide Commission recommendations; (2) General Amnesty for the offenders; and (3) salary increase for AFP personnel. The present policies, on the other hand, are the recommendations put forth by the Feliciano Fact-Finding Commission (FFFC).

### THE DAVIDE COMMISSION

In the aftermath of the failed coup of December 1989, Pres Aquino issued Administrative Order No 146 creating a Presidential Commission to conduct a fact-finding investigation of the 1989 rebellion. Its members were Hilario G. Davide Jr, as Chairman; Carolina G. Hernandez, Ricardo J. Romulo, Delfin L. Lazaro, and Christian S. Monsod, as members (Davide, 1990: preface).

On January 3, 1990, Congress approved R.A. 6832 entitled: "An Act Creating a Commission To Conduct a Thorough Fact-finding Investigation of the Failed Coup D'Etat of December 1989, **Recommend Measures To Prevent The Occurrence Of Similar Attempts At A Violent Seizure Of Power**, And For Other Purposes." It was signed into law by Pres Aquino on January 5, 1990, and took effect on January 12, 1990 (Davide 1990: preface).

After several months of research, collation of testimonies, discussions, and analyses, the Davide Commission, as it was eventually called, came up with its final report.

The following are its recommendations (Davide, 1990: 510-530):

#### *A. "Damage Control" and Short-Term Prescriptions to Address the Immediate Problem of Preventing Another Coup Attempt*

- 1) Administering a justice and rehabilitation program to military participants.*
- 2) The strengthening of security measures on those under detention, especially where there may be sympathetic guards, i.e. Muntinlupa.*
- 3) The intensification of efforts to capture key renegade soldiers with a special unit of trusted officers directly responsible to the CSAFP.*

- 4) *A reinvestigation of the "God Save The Queen" plot and prosecution of all those implicated in it.*
- 5) *A review of the subsequent actuations of those involved in the Manila Hotel Incident, both military and civilian, who pledged never to engage in similar adventurism again, if spared from prosecution.*
- 6) *An intensive follow-up investigation by government police agencies and the Justice Department of civilians implicated in the December 1989 attempt.*
- 7) *Speedy action on appeals over decisions of AFP courts martial.*
- 8) *The early passage of a comprehensive law on the establishment of the National Police.*
- 9) *The immediate implementation of a comprehensive program to provide timely rescue and medical assistance to troops wounded in combat.*
- 10) *A review by the military of its decision to disband the Scout Ranger Regiment.*
- 11) *An immediate audit of the value formation program of the military and, with the help of civilian experts, the formulation of an intensive program (essentially constructive indoctrination), and the training of field commanders to carry it out.*
- 12) *The immediate removal or reassignment of officers of less than 100% percent loyalty from sensitive positions in the military hierarchy, i.e. intelligence, operations, logistics, and training functions.*
- 13) *The immediate disbandment of GCFI and all other organizations not authorized by the military.*
- 14) *The observation of a systematic selection process for the new Chief of Staff that generates the least controversy about the choice.*
- 15) *Just as in the civilian government, a crackdown by the military on some "big fish" corrupt officers.*
- 16) *An immediate stop to unfair and/or humiliating treatment and criticism of military officers by Congress and other public officials, especially those before the Commission on Appointments.*

- 17) *Speedy and firm disciplinary action and/or prosecution against members of the military involved in human rights violations as well as of civilian law enforcement personnel involved in victimizing military personnel.*
  - 18) *The purchase or charter by Congress of its own transportation facilities and a prohibition on their use of military equipment and aircraft.*
  - 19) *The expansion of the government's public information program, which has considerably and commendably improved since December 1989, with more participation by local government officials.*
  - 20) *The provision of sufficient resources and support to the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military.*
- B. *An Agenda for the Remaining Twenty-One Months of the Aquino Administration.*
- 1) *On the part of the Executive Department, a review of key policies and programs in the light of results, an acceptance of shortcomings where these exist, and a performance review of appointive officials.*
  - 2) *On the part of the President, a categorical declaration of her position with respect to the issue of re-election.*
  - 3) *On the part of the President, the immediate convening of the National Security Council and an initiative to invite all political parties to enter into a compact, to which people's organizations and citizen groups would also subscribe, to defend and preserve our democracy, abjure the use of force and violence to effect change, commit to the holding of free, orderly, honest, peaceful, and credible elections in 1992, and arrive at solutions to our national problems through an honest and open debate of issues and programs.*
  - 4) *On the part of the political opposition, a positive response to the call for a united front against unconstitutional means to change the government and for upholding democratic processes.*
  - 5) *On the part of the Legislative Department and the President, the establishment of a special full-time commission to implement a post-insurgency program for the military that will modernize, professionalize, and bring it within the mainstream of national life.*
  - 6) *On the part of the Legislative Department, the immediate enactment of laws to ensure the democratization of the electoral process and the validity*



*and public acceptance of its results, with particular reference to the critical 1992 synchronized election.*

- 7) The supremacy of civilian authority over the military should be established by the appointment, as soon as practicable, of civilians with the capability, integrity and leadership to head the Department of National Defense (DND), the National Security Council (NSC), and the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA). The NICA should have its own intelligence capability that can complement as well as validate military intelligence information.*
- 8) The institutionalization of necessary improvements in the military in the areas of promotion and assignments, purchasing and auditing, educational benefits abroad, and compulsory attendance at military command schools.*
- 9) The President and the Commission on Appointments must work out a system by which recommendations for promotions can be categorized in practice to avoid the exploitation of the confirmation process for political purposes.*
- 10) If justice is going to be a living principle of governance, the budgets of the Judiciary and the Department of Justice (DOJ) must be increased in order to upgrade the physical facilities, recording, investigative and prosecutive capability, and staffing of the system.*
- 11) The business sector, as the engine of growth of the economy, is the key sector, in addition to the government, in avoiding a severe economic crisis that could invite military adventurism. This is the time to stake its resources for democracy as the only political system under which it can survive and thrive, and thereby help others overcome their poverty.*
- 12) The non-governmental and people's organizations are intermediating institutions, which can help unify a factionalized society. By mobilizing communities and resources to improve the lives of the poor, they help the grassroots create a stake in democracy.*
- 13) The church occupies a unique position in Philippine society, acting as an arbiter on moral issues even in the realm of politics, i.e. the condemnation of the election fraud by the Marcos administration in February 1986, although inhibited by the constitutional mandate of separation church and state, the boundaries of which may shift from time to time.*

- 14) *The resolution of the dilemma faced by the media in crisis reporting lies more in the media itself rather than government regulations.*

C. *Recommendations Over the Long-Term*

- 1) *Love of Country as the Highest Value.*
- 2) *Social Justice. The full implementation of the social justice provisions of the Constitution.*
- 3) *Citizen Army. The full implementation of the citizen army concept and the designated role of a small, modernized and professional military in a democratic society.*
- 4) *Decentralization. The decentralization of the national government as a precondition for the efficient delivery of government services.*
- 5) *The Constitution. After an appropriate period, to give the present Constitution an opportunity to be tested, formal consultations should be conducted at the grassroots on the desirability of constitutional amendments and of the specific proposals advanced by the different sectors. The people must be prepared to make amendments if it is clear that the fundamental law has proven to be irrelevant or inapplicable to the times.*
- 6) *Choosing Democracy. If a coup d'état starts in the minds of men, then it is the collective will of a unified people that can prevent and overcome it. The people must choose democracy.*

ASSESSMENT:

The Davide Commission, in its investigations, captured the true causes of past military interventions. It is also very comprehensive in its study of the origins of the AFP, and even the phenomenon of the coup d'état. Furthermore, the Commission was very detailed on its narrative of the previous military interventions.

Impressive as it is, the Davide Commission, however, was not clear in its methodology as to how it arrived at its 40 recommendations. As a result, when matched with the actual causes the Commission itself extracted from the 1989 coup participants, it came up with unresponsive recommendations. There were also some recommendations that were virtually impossible for any government agency to implement.

A possible explanation to this is that Chairman Davide and the other Commissioners, while they conducted an extensive research into the causes of

past military interventions, already had their own biases as to how these interventions should be handled and it clearly reflected on their recommendations. The only alternative to this explanation is the fact that the Commissioners were not trained as policy analysts and thus, failed to identify more responsive recommendations.

#### OUTCOME:

The failure to come up with more responsive propositions to address the underlying causes of the problem is the main flaw of the Davide Commission. As a result, since 1990 or the year it came out with its final report, there had been two major military interventions, EDSA II and the Oakwood Incident. Hence, in terms of effectiveness in preventing military interventions, the Davide Commission recommendations failed.

#### GENERAL AMNESTY

McCoy wrote: "After his inauguration in July, President Ramos established the National Unification Commission (NUC) to negotiate the surrender of all rebel forces – Muslim, communist, and military" (McCoy, 1999: 303). By July 1993, Unification Commissioner Haydee Yorac recommended an absolute and unconditional amnesty to all military rebels (McCoy, 1999: 304). Finally on March 1994, Pres Ramos issued an amnesty for all rebels (McCoy, 1999: 314). This was subsequently approved by Congress on the following year.

#### ASSESSMENT/OUTCOME:

While this policy was not directly responsive in addressing any of the causes cited above, it may have released the air of hostility between the Ramos Administration and the RAM. In this regard, this policy succeeded since no military intervention occurred during the Ramos Administration. Although, it did not prevent the occurrence of EDSA II and the Oakwood Incident, almost all of those granted amnesty such as the members of the RAM and the Marcos loyalists never involved themselves again with the succeeding military interventions. Hence, in terms of pacifying or convincing the participants to return to mainstream society, it was a success. But, in terms of effectiveness to prevent interventions in the long term - this policy, however, was still a failure.

The possible reason for its failure in the long term is that a policy of amnesty will only promote peace with a specific generation of offenders but if the underlying causes of the offense are not addressed, then it is but a matter of time when a new generation will arise and pursue the same causes raised by those before them.

## SALARY INCREASE OF AFP PERSONNEL

In the aftermath of the 1989 coup attempt, Davide wrote “in Congress, bills were rushed to grant pay increases to soldiers. Across-the-board salary increases for the whole AFP were unprecedentedly granted (106% for a Master Sergeant, to 36% for a General)” (Davide, 1990: 200). After that move, there had been three more pay increases to soldiers, of these; two were initiated by Pres Ramos, and one was initiated by Pres Estrada, which was signed into law last 2001 (R.A. # 9166). This was fully implemented in January 2004.

### ASSESSMENT/OUTCOME:

According to the Oakwood participants, any significant salary increase will always be a boost on the morale of the AFP rank and file and will also send a clear message that the Administration is looking out for their well-being. Being so, it could definitely help dissuade soldiers from being recruited.

To illustrate, from the time Pres Aquino made the “unprecedented” salary increase up until before the Oakwood Incident, the issue about salary was never brought up by the AFP personnel. For this matter, the policy was responsive and had a semblance of success.

On the other hand, this policy failed to prevent EDSA II mainly because, as cited above, there were no internal causes raised at EDSA II; while, the Oakwood Incident occurred not because it failed as a policy but because the other causes could have weighed considerably more than the issue of salary.

Just the same, the salary problem was raised by the Oakwood participants because the soldiers did not significantly feel the latest increase. The reason being, R.A. # 9166 was implemented on a piecemeal basis spread over 3-years after the signing into law and therefore, negating whatever morale-boosting effect it had intended when it was crafted.

## FELICIANO FACT-FINDING COMMISSION (FFFC)

### 1. Rationale

As a response to the Oakwood Incident, Pres Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo created the FFFC, through Administrative Order # 78 (Feliciano, 2003: Annex B), on 30 July 2003. According to the said AO, the FFFC was tasked to “**evaluate all the facts and circumstances surrounding the rebellion, its roots, and the provocations that inspired it, and submit its findings and recommendations to the President.**”

In the furtherance of this mandate, the FFFC, in Rule 2, Section 1 of its own Resolution No. 001, defined their objectives as follows (Feliciano, 2003: Annex C):

A. To make a thorough investigation of all the facts and circumstances surrounding the failed rebellion or failed coup d'état of 27 July 2003, its root causes and provocations, and

**B. To recommend measures to prevent similar occurrences.**

2. Assessment: On the findings of the FFFC as regards the true causes/provocations of the Oakwood incident

According to its findings, the following were the root causes/provocations of the Oakwood Incident (Feliciano, 2003: 132-135):

- A. *The politicization of the military amid the erosion of civilian political institutions that had oversight powers over the military, particularly during and since the imposition of martial law, is a cause of military adventurism. The AFP's role as a partner in national development efforts led them to assume roles that used to be played by civilian authorities.*
- B. *Failure on the part of the government to enforce the law deprives the law of its power to deter, particularly among those who had engaged in previous coup plots against the government but who were granted unconditional amnesty in 1995 without prior punishment.*
- C. *The key role of the AFP in the campaigns against communist insurgency and Moro secessionism creates civilian government dependence upon the military. In addition to the clearing of areas of insurgents and defending such cleared areas, soldiers are required to discharge the tasks of consolidation and development that properly belong to civilian authorities. Not only is the military's political power enhanced, but their politicization is also thereby increased as they confront the problems of these communities on a prolonged basis.*
- D. *Enlistment by civilian persons, including politicians, of military support for their personal and political ambitions contributes to military politicization and adventurism. Former President Marcos (and not the AFP) initiated the enlargement of the role of the military during his incumbency, particularly during Martial Law. Civilian persons, including politicians, also sought and encouraged the military breakaway of February 1986 and January 2001, giving thereby the AFP great political leverage over the civilian leaders who appear to rely on the military for political survival. When adequately motivated, military adventurers could exploit this situation to destabilize and overthrow the government.*

- E. *At the same time, officers and troops under diligent and respected commanding officers did not join in the 27 July mutiny, suggesting the critical role played by this breed of military leaders in dealing with the coup virus.*
- F. *Grievances about graft and corruption in the military, such as the RSBS, the Modernization Fund, and the procurement system provide a fertile ground for the recruitment of officers and men for military intervention and even overthrow of government. The expression of grievances resonates to the wider polity who share these sentiments, even as they do not approve of the means used and the solution proffered by the Magdalo group.*
- G. *The Commission believes that the discovery or disclosure of the plot led the rebels to prematurely to launch 'Oplan Andres', a plot larger than the Oakwood incident. Failure to attain the force requirements of Plans Alpha and Bravo compelled the rebels to launch Plan Charlie.*
- H. *Moreover, members of PMA '94 and '95 were 'frustrated' when the dialogue about their concerns they expected would take place during the dinner hosted by the President on 23 July, did not take place. PMA '94 and '95 had the opportunity to talk to (Gen) Abaya at the 'White House'. They talked about their class being unjustly linked to a plot against the government as well as about their commitment to fight graft and corruption ever since their graduation from the Academy. When the dinner with the President arranged for 23 July did not include a dialogue about their concerns, the invitees went down 'frustrated'.*
- I. *Finally, the order by the President aired on national television for the arrest of the coup leaders as 'rogue soldiers' was a precipitating factor behind the Oakwood Incident. At the time of the President's order, the leaders of the plot were already missing from their respective units.*

#### ASSESSMENT:

As we compare the root causes/provocations listed by the FFFC with those enumerated by the actual participants of the Oakwood Incident, we can see that only the complaint of graft and corruption in the AFP, matched. The only explanation to this is the fact that, according to the Oakwood participants, the FFFC never bothered to ask them as to what motivated them into going to Oakwood. Instead, the FFFC used the testimony of Ambassador Roy Cimatú to take note of some complaints raised during the negotiations. In addition, they also interviewed several dozens of officers who were not involved in Oakwood in the first place.

During its interviews with a few of the participants, what were asked by the FFFC were issues about “spontaneity” and the costs of the “armbands”. Even those complaints raised on national television and captured by the general public were perfunctorily brushed aside by the FFFC.

### 3. Assessment: On the FFFC recommendations

The following are the FFFC recommendations (Feliciano, 2003: 135-147):

- A. *Due diligence by commanding officers – Commanding officers in the field need constantly to warn their men against recruitment for destabilization plots against the government by adventurers in the military. Former military rebels who have turned their back on military adventurism could be used to conduct regular dialogues within the AFP for this purpose. The adoption of a program of this nature should go a long way towards neutralizing the coup virus.*
- B. *Effectively address legitimate grievances – The government and the AFP need to address the legitimate grievances of the military against corrupt officers, officials, bureaucrats, and practices.*

#### *On the RSBS Problem*

- 1) *Liquidate the RSBS in an orderly manner.*
- 2) *Return the soldiers’ contributions.*
- 3) *Initiate an AFP Service and Insurance System.*
- 4) *Implement fully the recommendations of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee.*

#### *On the AFP Procurement System: Conversion and Other Problems*

- 1) *Simplify the AFP procurement procedures.*
- 2) *Control commanders’ discretionary powers over the Centrally-Managed Funds.*
- 3) *Reduce the amount of CMF in GHQ/service HQ hands.*
- 4) *Strictly implement control measures over supplies.*
- 5) *Set tenure limits for AFP finance and procurement officers.*
- 6) *Establish an autonomous Internal Affairs Office (IAO).*

#### *On the AFP Modernization: Funding and Consequential Problems*

- 1) *Vigorously pursue recovery of the JUSMAG and NOVAI properties.*
- 2) *Pursue recovery of the “squatted” land in Fort Bonifacio.*
- 3) *Substantially increase AFP’s share in Fort Bonifacio’s sale proceeds.*

- 4) Reinforce Office of the Ombudsman by increasing funding and other support.

*On the State of the AFP Medical Services*

- 1) Part of the funding of the AFP Modernization Program generated from the sale of Fort Bonifacio land should be dedicated to the modernization and upgrading of medical services, in accordance with the original statutory intent.
- 2) Consolidation of existing hospitals into fewer units could probably provide better medical services.
- 3) The suggestion that doctors be hired as doctors and compensated according to their level of expertise and experience and not according to rank, probably merits consideration and trial and validation.
- 4) A government counterpart to the premium paid by soldiers to PHILHEALTH insurance should enhance the benefits, which the military can receive.
- 5) Dedication of more efforts and funds to the improvement of the AFP medical services.

*On the Problem of Benefits for Soldiers Killed in Action*

- 1) Strengthening of the record system of the personal data of soldiers and their dependents.
- 2) Computerized information systems to provide accurate and updated data.

*On the Inadequacies of AFP Housing for Officers and Enlisted Personnel*

- 1) The AFP budget should provide for increased allocation of funds for the AFP On-Base Housing Program as well as its Off-Base Housing Program.
- 2) The “overstaying” of retired military personnel in AFP housing should be stopped and rectified.
- 3) The number of privately owned quarters in all military bases should be reduced, if not totally eliminated.
- 4) Strict implementation of existing criteria for the awarding of government quarters to officers and enlisted personnel in the active service must be ensured.

C. A civilian Secretary of National Defense – This Commission reiterates the recommendation of the Davide Commission to have a civilian appointed to the position of Secretary of National Defense (SND). Beyond the need to institutionalize civilian authority over the military, the appointment of persons who have not had long and deep ties to the military, and who have not



*held positions in the military establishment that itself needs to be reformed, is essential if a reform program is to succeed. Although military officers acquire a civilian status upon retirement, they are likely to bring the rigidity of hierarchy, seniority, camaraderie, and other aspects of the military culture into the office of the SND that would obstruct reform.*

- D. Return NICA to its original mandate – Likewise, echoing the Davide Commission recommendation, this Commission recommends the appointment of a civilian head for the NICA. Moreover, NICA should be returned to its original mandate, that is, to coordinate all intelligence agencies, military and otherwise. The President must have a source of intelligence additional to the ISAFP. This should provide the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) with a parallel intelligence source in the event that information gathered by the ISAFP is not made fully available to the C-in-C, for any reason whatsoever.*
- E. Enforce the law against all violators – Erring officers, troops and civilian partners in coup plots must be treated in accordance with law to control and reverse the culture of impunity. As already noted, former rebel soldiers that were punished for their participation in the coups of the 1980s tended to have abandoned military adventurism. To remedy the recurrence of ‘negotiation in mutual ignorance’ of applicable laws, this gap must be addressed in officer education and training.*
- F. Observe or respect the military’s political neutrality – Civilian political leaders must restrain themselves from enlisting military support for their personal and political agenda as this can only further politicize the military and grievously endanger the constitutional system. This is a theme that should constantly be recalled to politicians and political parties.*
- G. Provide ‘negotiators’ with clear terms of reference – Government ‘negotiators’ in similar incidents should be given clear terms of reference by the authorities to avoid misperceptions that could promote another coup plot in the future. In this regard, strict adherence to the law as recommended in (E) above need not deter rebel soldiers from ‘negotiating’ with government. In a ‘negotiation’ of a similar nature, it is incumbent on the government ‘negotiators’ to demonstrate to and persuade the other side that it is to their common interest to ‘negotiate’. The law itself embodies the basic principle that punishment must be tailored to the degree of participation in the offense to be penalized.*
- H. Create an office under the Office of the President to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission (Feliciano, 2003: 146)*

#### ASSESSMENT:

Since the FFFC failed to extract the true causes of the incident as shown above, it is not expected to propose the right solutions. True enough, according to the Oakwood participants, most of the FFFC recommendations were unresponsive in addressing the causes raised in the Oakwood Incident.

Still, the FFFC came up with some detailed propositions (for the problems on RSBS, Procurement System, and the AFP housing) that seemed sensible and could be adopted. Also, the proposition to create an office under the Office of the President to oversee the implementation of policies could still be pursued.

It seems that both the Davide and the Feliciano Fact-Finding Commissions are reflective of the “research-based” executive policy making process in our country. Every time a serious crisis occurs, the knee-jerk reaction by the President is to form a fact-finding body to evaluate the facts; to determine the cause; to make necessary recommendations; and, if necessary, to form a narrative of events. Usually, the nucleus of this body is composed of lawyers or retired justices. But the problem arises when the recommendations made by these fact-finding bodies are adopted automatically as national policies. This is not to undermine the competence of the members, but the recommendations made by fact-finding bodies are only meant to be starting points of further policy researches or definitive studies for the formulation of policy alternatives and should not be mistaken for the policy itself. These policy researches should only be conducted by qualified/trained policy analysts.

#### 4. Probable Outcome

The failure to come up with more responsive propositions to address the underlying causes could be the main flaw of the present efforts to solve the problem. With this, it is expected that the problems will further deteriorate and in a matter of time, a new group may likely launch another military intervention to the detriment or the possible demise of the administration it will be launched against. In short, based on the assessment above, **the FFFC recommendations will fail to prevent the recurrence of military interventions in the future.**

### DESCRIPTION OF OTHER ALTERNATIVES

Guided by the criterion of responsiveness; utilizing tools for identifying alternatives (e.g. literature review, development of typologies, passive collection and classification, etc.); and incorporating previous propositions assessed to be responsive or useful, the following alternatives were formulated:

## ALTERNATIVES TO ADDRESS THE INTERNAL CAUSES

### 1. Eradicate corruption in the AFP

Based on the data gathered, corruption in the AFP is the main cause of at least five military interventions; thus, its eradication is a must in any alternative that aims to prevent interventions in the future. More than the direct losses of the government in terms of resources, corruption breeds a culture that countervails the nobility of the military profession.

Eradicating corruption will greatly increase the level of professionalism in the AFP. Moreover, this will release the resources to where they are supposed to be spent (e.g. acquisition/upgrade of equipment, logistics support in field operations, intelligence collection, capital outlay, off-base/on-base housing, improvement of medical services, etc.).

The problem of corruption in the AFP is very complicated. It comes in various forms and occurs in all areas of operations and all levels of the organization (Trillanes, 2001: 15). For this reason, it is difficult to prescribe a panacea for its eradication. Hence, it merits a separate policy research in itself.

### 2. Rehabilitate the Retirement Separation Benefit System (RSBS)

The bankruptcy of the RSBS is also a major source of morale problems in the rank and file of the AFP. A retiring soldier deserves nothing less than a peaceful and comfortable life after devoting three decades to the service of his country, often at the expense of a normal family life. To be deprived or delayed of the receipt of retirement benefits due him is simply unforgivable to the ordinary soldier.

Like corruption however, the problem of the RSBS is complicated. Hence, a separate policy research is required to flesh out the problem and provide the appropriate solutions. The propositions made by the FFFC as regards the RSBS problem could be adopted for this purpose.

### 3. Strictly apply meritocracy in the AFP promotions system

Two of the major causes of military interventions are the predominance of inept officers in the AFP leadership, and the prevailing political patronage in the AFP promotions system. One way to extirpate these is the strict application of meritocracy.

It works this way: the foremost trait in the military organization is leadership. According to what is being inculcated to cadets in the Philippine Military Academy, "Leadership is the art of influencing men in order to accomplish the mission." From this definition, we can deduce that leadership is a skill, which sadly, not all of those in the AFP possess.

In the AFP however, there is a way to determine who has the necessary leadership qualities for higher command, this is called “service reputation”. It is incorporated in the AFP promotions system and is based on the subject officer’s reputation reflected by his unit/ individual performances as well as previous work relations with superiors, peers, and subordinates. Next to seniority, it should precede the other criteria in the system such as: geographical assignments, awards, schooling, billet assignments, etc. In other words, through seniority, we can determine who are the candidates for promotion whereas through “service reputation” and the other criteria, we can determine who among these candidates deserve to be promoted or not.

The problem arises when a “patron” meddles with the system and pushes for the promotion of a protégé, a relative or a friend, ahead of those who deserve it. In time, this practice bred a culture of political patronage where the officers who know how the system works, consciously seek patrons to ensure their promotion. Eventually, it politicized the whole system or what is referred to in the AFP as “militics”. This affects the morale of the rank and file, as the good officers get by-passed by the inept ones who have “connections”. This also results in the loss of respect for the undeserving senior officers. In due course, most of the important positions in the AFP are filled up with this kind of inept/politically indebted officers.

#### 4. Uplift the standard of living of the AFP personnel

If the morale were high among the men not only will it be difficult for anyone to recruit them for any military intervention, it will also increase their enthusiasm in going about their work. Although morale cannot be quantified, to the lowly soldier it simply translates to: rest and recreation (R & R) to spend time with the family; and money to spend for the family. The common denominator in both is the family. R & R is not much of a problem since this can be given periodically by the unit commander. But often this is not being availed of by the soldiers since even the transportation expenses to go home, is also a problem. So, if the government can only provide the additional benefits to the soldiers for their families, as enumerated below, then the morale of the soldier will be greatly boosted.

It is conceded that there would be financial constraints in the implementation of these particular propositions but after stressing enough the extreme importance of the success of the overall policy, these propositions should be financially supported.

##### A. Salary increase or giving of non-monetary benefits

The issue of salary figured as one of the major internal causes in some of the past military interventions; therefore, raising the salary of AFP personnel will

be directly addressing this cause. Although apparently, this was not one of their driving motivations; still, the salaries given to the officers and enlisted personnel of the AFP are clearly not commensurate to the service they are giving to their country and this, definitely, affects their morale.

An alternative to a salary increase is giving of additional non-monetary benefits such as: tax reductions/exemptions, reduction of RSBS contributions, rice subsidy, C-130 flights or ship passes for soldiers going on R & R, etc.

#### B. Improvement of medical and health services

It is acknowledged that the general state of medical and health services in the country is pathetic. But for a soldier to escape death in the battlefield but die inside a military hospital because of lack of supplies, equipment or worse, because of incompetence – is truly a catastrophe that spreads quickly within the ranks.

A marked improvement in the medical and health services will greatly impress upon the soldiers that the administration is concerned for their well-being and this will be gladly reciprocated through a more enthusiastic, selfless service to the country.

#### C. Mass housing

It is a known fact that most of the AFP personnel are homeless. Some are even squatting in areas near bases where they are assigned. So, providing every soldier his own home will definitely be a big morale-booster.

There are huge tracts of land located in military reservations across the country that can easily address this problem. In addition, the FFFC recommendations as regards AFP housing could still be pursued.

### 5. Streamline the AFP bureaucracy

Most of the meager budget of the AFP is used up by the maintenance costs of having a bloated bureaucracy. This hinders the flow of funds to the front lines or operating units where they are needed. As a result, soldiers assigned to the field units who experience difficulties in actual combat operations due to shortages in logistics get demoralized when they get to visit the administrative offices where resources are lavishly spent or given out.

This problem was exacerbated by the recent signing of R.A. 9188, increasing the number of generals in the AFP. This meant additional administrative offices and therefore, additional demands for resources.

The following are some of the proposed activities of the streamlining:

#### A. Consolidation of offices/units with redundant/overlapping functions.

- B. Dissolution of resource-heavy but unproductive offices/units.
- C. Reduction of generals in the AFP Table of Organization.
- D. Dissolution of the General Headquarters (GHQ) and the adoption of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concept.

The realization of the above is expected to free up the necessary resources that is being consumed by the top-heavy AFP bureaucracy. These resources in turn, can now be channeled to the operational units where they are most needed and also to fund morale and welfare programs as cited in number 4 above.

6. Create a cabinet-level agency (e.g. The Presidential Adviser on Military Affairs) directly under the Office of the President.

An office with a direct access to the President, similar to what was recommended by the FFFC will ensure the proper implementation of the proposed reforms. It should have oversight powers and clear inter-department relationships with all concerned to prevent over-lapping of functions. This office will also conduct the appropriate policy researches to further flesh out the more complicated problems enumerated and other internal causes not raised by this paper.

#### ALTERNATIVE TO ADDRESS THE EXTERNAL CAUSES

Practice good governance.

Good governance, according to Kinuthia-Njenga, is “perceived as a common good that cuts across many segments of the development scene” (Kinuthia-Njenga, 1999). The World Bank defines it as the “manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (Kinuthia-Njenga, 1999). According to the UNDP: “Its dimensions are the rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, participation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision” (UNDP, 1999).

Furthermore, good governance ensures that all policies or decisions emanating from an incumbent administration will be for the best interest of the country or the majority of the people.

With these definitions of good governance, all the major external causes namely: corruption, failure to deliver basic services, state-sponsored terrorism, poverty, and political and economic instability; are covered. Hence, only the practice of good governance will effectively address them.

Indeed, according to an AdMU paper: “The quality of civilian governance is the variable essential to its survival and sustainability. There is simply no substitute for good, effective and responsive political and economic performance” (AdMU, 2001). Likewise, according to Dr. Wilfredo Villacorta, “the best way to prevent the recurrence of a coup is to institute fundamental reforms that will bring justice and progress in society” (Villacorta, 1989: 54).

#### POLITICAL FEASIBILITY:

For good governance to be tested for political feasibility is paradoxical. Ideally, it should be politically feasible for it is the essence of government itself – to serve the people and to serve them well. However, given the state of political affairs and the bureaucracy in our country today, good governance had been reduced to nothing but a political slogan.

First to resist this is the oligarchic elite, who will defy anything that will threaten its hold over the country’s riches. Next, are the politicians who, like the oligarchy, are deeply entrenched in the status quo where they enjoy vast powers and resources at the expense of the people who voted for them. Another sector that would resist good governance is the corruption-ridden bureaucracy.

The only answer to this collective resistance is for the President to have moral integrity and political will. Moral integrity is the guarantee that there will always be “purity of intent” in every policy made. While, political will is the assurance that such a policy will be implemented. Armed with these two, good governance can be done.

Then again, any President, who will say that the practice of good governance is not politically feasible, does not deserve to rule this country.

### CONCLUSION and POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Military interventions greatly affect our country’s economic and political stability, and international image. More than this, lives are often caught in the crossfire. Simply put, we cannot afford another one.

Military interventions are set off by underlying causes within the organization, government and society in general; hence, the only way to prevent its occurrence is to address these underlying causes. But based on the assessment made above, most of the present policies, as stated through the Feliciano Fact-Finding Commission recommendations, are not responsive to the underlying causes of the Oakwood Incident and therefore, **implementing the FFFC recommendations alone will not prevent future military interventions.**

On the other hand, other possible alternatives enumerated above directly addressed the underlying causes and therefore, may have better chances of success. But crucial to their proper implementation is the demand for an unbending political will and moral integrity from no less than the President.

In view of this conclusion, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Pursue the implementation of the following FFFC recommendations, which were found to be responsive or useful:

- A. Creation of a cabinet-level agency (e.g. The Presidential Adviser on Military Affairs) directly under the Office of the President. It should have oversight powers and clear inter-department relationships with all concerned to prevent over-lapping of functions. This office will also conduct the appropriate policy researches to further flesh out the more complicated problems enumerated below as well as other internal causes not raised by this paper.
- B. The propositions regarding the RSBS, Procurement System, AFP Modernization, AFP Medical Services, and AFP Housing.

2. Review the other FFFC recommendations as to their responsiveness to the causes of military interventions.

3. Conduct policy researches on the following:

- A. Eradication of corruption in the AFP.
- B. Rehabilitation of RSBS.
- C. Strict application of meritocracy in the AFP promotions system.
- D. Uplifting of the standard of living of the AFP personnel through:
  - 1) Salary increase or non-monetary benefits such as, tax reductions/exemptions, reduction of RSBS contributions, rice subsidy, C-130 flights or ship passes for soldiers going on R & R, etc.
  - 2) Improvement of medical and health services.
  - 3) Mass housing.
- E. Streamlining of the AFP bureaucracy.

4. Practice good governance to address the external causes of military intervention.

These propositions, extensive as they may seem, do not preclude any military intervention that may occur later on due to reasons outside of those analyzed for example, one that is motivated by religious fanaticism. While this or any other reason may be unlikely at the moment, it should be noted nonetheless.

Finally, the responsibility for the success or failure of the overall policy to prevent military interventions rests solely on the President. As emphasized, the consequences of failure are severe. For this reason alone, it is incumbent upon



him to ensure that nothing hinders its implementation. But more than this, I would like to believe that the President who would implement this policy is not doing it out of the fear of a military intervention but for the honest desire to serve the Filipino people.

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