

## **Counterinsurgency Transformation in the Philippines: From a Militarized Concept of Security to Human-Centred Security**

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### **Introduction**

The Philippines is one of the few countries in the world with a long running communist insurgency. The country is an archipelago composed of seven thousand and one hundred islands located in the western pacific. A member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>1</sup>. A former colony of Spain and later became a territory of the United States of America<sup>2</sup> by virtue of the treaty of Paris in 1898. Having gained independence from the United States after World War II it has embarked on state building. However the social structural imbalance, the legacy of colonialism, has remained a problem. The process of state building as outlined by Ayoob in an article proved to be an appropriate paradigm to aptly describe the post colonial situation of the Philippines<sup>3</sup> (Crocker, et.al. 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> The Philippines is a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The ASEAN is major regional organization in Southeast Asia and groups together the countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Singapore and Laos.

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines was a colony of Spain for almost 300 years and later became a territory of the United States of America by virtue of the Treaty of Paris that marked the end of the Spanish-American War. The Philippines was ceded to Spain for twenty million US dollars. In 1945, the Philippines gained independence from the United States of America.

<sup>3</sup> Moahammed Ayoob in an article entitled: "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure describe the process of state making in thord world countries as similar to those of the 16<sup>th</sup> century European powers where the accumulation of state power is central to state activities. This phenomenon is not unique to one state but is to some extent commonly shared by many third world countries emerging from colonialism and embarking on a process of state building. If compared to the growth and development of first world countries which had the chance to evolve several years back, the third world countries have to do it in the most expedient way in order to be at par with other developed state. One variable identified in this process are obstacles that has to be overcome. One of these is the pressure for developing states to conform to human rights standards which often provides difficulties in the process of power accumulation for states and necessary in order to solidify the centrifugal force needed to undertake the process of state making as described by Yousef Cohen as quoted by Ayoob. State making must include the following (Crocker, 2005, p. 96):

- (1) The expansion and consolidation of the territorial and demographic domain under a political authority, including the imposition of order on contested territorial and demographic space. (War)
- (2) The maintenance of order in the territory where, and over the population on whom such order has already been imposed (policing).
- (3) The extraction of resources from the territory and the population under the control of the state, resources essential not only to support the war-making and policing activities undertaken by the state but also to maintain the apparatuses of state necessary to carry on routine administration, deepen the state's penetration of society, and serve symbolic purposes (taxation).

The problematic legacy of colonialism in particular the social inequality and the relationship of dependence between the elite and the vast majority of the poor, persisted even during the post-independence period<sup>4</sup>. The country would have taken off economically in the 60s and early 70s but the political turmoil and two decades of martial law left the country lagging behind in terms of development. It is one of the few countries in the world with a long standing and resilient communist insurgency.

The Philippines confronted by two major insurgencies, one waged by the communist party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA) and supported by its legal front the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The geographical scope of operations of the CPP/NPA/NDFP is national and the main objective is the overthrow the government of the Philippines (GPH) and replaced it with a socialist government. The other insurgency is limited to the island of Mindanao and waged by various groups claiming to represent the so-called *Bangsamoro*.<sup>5</sup> This paper is however, limited to the discussion on the CPP/NPA/NDFP led insurgency and will not touch on the Mindanao problem. This paper will discuss briefly the history of this insurgency and furthermore describe the counterinsurgency approaches employed by the government of the Philippines (GPH), how these approaches changed overtime and how the changing paradigm of security influenced the approaches of the government. This paper will argue that the only plausible way to address the communist insurgency is to shift focus from a state centred conceptualization of security towards a human centred approach. The adaption of a human centred approach to security will facilitate the means to address the questions of inclusivity and the problems of inequality which is at the root of one of the world's most enduring communist insurgency.

### **The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines**

The local communist insurgency in the Philippines is led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), its armed wing the New Peoples' Army (NPA) and its legal and social front, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). The re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968 coincided in the period of not only domestic political turmoil but also a configuration of the geopolitical situation brought about by cold war politics and other factors.<sup>6</sup> Student activism provided the impetus for a situation conducive for revolution<sup>7</sup>. It was also a time

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<sup>4</sup> Patronage politics, private armies, warlordism, and the predominance and control of the elite of the economy and politics contributed immensely to the underdevelopment of the country.

<sup>5</sup> The government of the Philippines (GPH) is confronted by an insurgency problem that revolves around demands for "self-determination" from a group who call themselves the *Bangsamoro*. The start of this armed insurgency started almost in the same year as the Communist Part of the Philippines was re-established in 1968. The first visible and armed group to confront the GPH was the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with Nur Misuari as leader, an ethnic Tausog and a former academic from the University of the Philippines. The MNLF fought a bitter war with the government resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people both from the insurgents and the government side. In 1976 the government of President Marcos struck a deal with the MNLF but soon, the war resumed because of disagreements and mistrust on both sides. Again during the term of President Ramos, and through the mediation of Indonesia, GPH and the MNLF signed an agreement which paved the way for the establishment of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Succeeding Philippine Administration would described the ARMM as a failure and th country saw the emergence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a splinter group from the MNLF that later on gained prominence. The MILF signed a memorandum of agreement with the GPH during the incumbency of President Benigno Aquino Jr.. Aside from these groups there is also the presence of a group called, the *Abusayaff Group* (ASG). The ASG is listed as a terrorist group.

<sup>6</sup> The Cold War has intensified neo-colonialism and imperialism which became the breeding ground for insurgency and the 60s was also the time for student activism.

<sup>7</sup> P.N. Abinales has more detailed decription of student activism in the Philippines that partly explains its role in the growth of the communist party and the insurgency. (<http://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/kasarinlan/article/viewFile/507/528>)

that a sitting president can no longer run for office due to constitutional prohibitions and wishing to hold on to power made use of the current situation to justify the imposition of martial law. President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared Martial Law in 21 September 1972. Marcos suspended the constitution and replaced it with a new one and Marcos launched the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan*,<sup>8</sup> a political movement to back up his regime. (Official Gazette of the Philippines).

The social, economic and political structure of the Philippines is a historic legacy of hundreds of years of colonization. The Spaniards<sup>9</sup> promoted the *encomienda* system and later on the Americans made no attempt to restructure the social relations between the common people and the elite despite of America's professed adherence to the egalitarian principles of democracy. The American colonial administration sought the help of the elite in their pacification campaign. The *encomienda* system<sup>10</sup> was the means of land ownership established by the Spaniards. Under this system vast tracts of land were entrusted by the King or by his representatives to an *encomendero*<sup>11</sup>. This system of land administration facilitated tax collection. Furthermore the role of the *encomendero* as leader and head of their respective *encomiendas* facilitated the enculturation and assimilation of the native population. This social system eventually degenerated and promoted a relationship of dependence that later on would redound to exploitation. This socio-economic situations, poor governance, and poverty became the seedbed of the insurgency.

The professed egalitarian social system under democracy of which the Americans were considered the champion did not alter the unequal social and economic structure of Philippine Society. While the Americans were credited with bringing universal education to the natives, and popularizing the English language, the American administration made no attempt to reform the social structure. The principalia later became the class inheritors of the political and economic class of rulers and economic masters in the post colonial period.

The communist insurgency in the Philippines is rooted in the pre-war period. "The four-volume study *The Re-established Communist Party of the Philippines* published by the Intelligence service of the Philippines provides a good background on the history ...of the CPP/NPA." (Devesa, 2005. p.19). The re-established Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has its roots in the pro-Russian Communist Party founded by Crisostomo Evangelista. Agrarian issues were central to the communist insurgency waged by the old Communist Party this is partly the reason why the old pre-Martial Law Communist insurgency were heavily concentrated in Central Luzon where peasant exploitation was more pronounced.

The *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP)<sup>12</sup> contributed to the anti-Japanese war effort by forming guerrilla units called *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa mga Hapon* (HUKBALAHAP). But their anti-Japanese

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<sup>8</sup> *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* in Tagalog, in English, New Society Movement. An umbrella coalition of political parties formed to support the regime of Ferdinand E. Marcos. Formed in 1978.

<sup>9</sup> The Philippines was a colony of Spain for almost three centuries.

<sup>10</sup> The *encomienda* system was established by the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century where a conquistador or a colonist was given charge to a piece of land with all its native inhabitants. The *encomienda* also serves as a reward. This system facilitated the collection of taxes or tributes from the native inhabitants and at the same time offering them in exchange protection and Christian instruction.

<sup>11</sup> The person or official entrusted or commissioned by the King of Spain to manage a certain portion of land in colonial territories.

<sup>12</sup> The *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* or Communist Party of the Philippines was founded in 7 of November 1930 headed by Crisanto Evangelista. This is the old party considered the predecessor of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines. The former was pro-Soviet. During World War II, the PKP-1930 (This acronym is used to distinguish it from the Communist

war efforts were spurned by the Americans and their Filipino allies, after the war the HUKBALAHAP entered into an armed struggle. The popular leadership of President Ramon Magsaysay in the 1950s saw an end to the armed struggle of the HUKBALAHAP. Magsaysay's prop-people stand and his efforts to address the agrarian issues laid out by the insurgents paved the way for ending the armed struggle of the HUKBALAHAP and the mainstreaming of the *Partido Komonista ng Pilipinas* (Ferrer and Cobangbang, \_\_\_\_). However the death of Magsaysay and the lack of consistency of interest to pursue his legacy by his successor dealt a severe blow to the successful COIN program.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was "re-established" in 26 of December 1968 in the Province of Pangasinan.<sup>13</sup> It was re-established under the leadership of a certain Amado Guerrero who claimed to be a former member of the Partido Komonista ng Pilipinas (the pro-Russian old communist party). Some scholars believed that Amado Guerrero was the alias of Jose Maria Sison. Sison was formerly a member of the PKP and the Kabatang Makabayan (the communist youth movement).<sup>14</sup>

The book *Philippine Society and Revolution*, became sort of a Bible for the local communist movement. It "drew heavily on Maoist thought and characterized Philippine Society as semi-colonial, semi-feudal." It identified three basic problems of the Philippines, these are: imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism. The only way to solve this problem is through a democratic revolution and by way of a protracted people's war that aims to surround the cities from the countryside (Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks, 2011, p. 3). It follows the strategy outlined by Mao Zedong. And because it is a protracted war the CPP/NPA/NDFP do not envision a quick victory but rather even expects that the struggle may take some longer time before it can accomplished its goals. The protracted war consists of three stages, namely, first the strategic defensive, strategic stalemate, and Strategic Offensive (The Philippines: A Country Study, 1993, p.281).<sup>15</sup>

Many scholars recognized the multi-factor causality of Philippine insurgency. The unresolved issues form part of the resilience of this movement. As Pena (2007) aptly stated in a thesis:

"It is widely known that the Communist insurgency in the Philippines is a deeply rooted and multifaceted problem. It includes

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Party of Today) organized the Hukbalahap the Tagalog acronym for People's Army Against Japan. This armed group was headed by Luis Taruc.

<sup>13</sup> A detailed narrative is found on the work of Lt Col Ben Dolorpino

<sup>14</sup> "The Kabataang Makabayan was founded in 1964 as a comprehensive organization of patriotic and progressive young men and women, ranging in age from 15 to 35, from the ranks of students, workers, peasants, professionals and other sectors. The KM mission was to continue the unfinished Philippine revolution against foreign and feudal domination and to support the working class as the leading class in the new democratic revolution. The KM vision extended to a socialist future." (Jose Maria Sison, <http://josemariasison.org/?p=11962>)

<sup>15</sup> "The armed conflict on the Communist front is the longest-running Maoist insurgency in the world (Corpus, 1989, pp. 27-28). Led by the New People's Army (NPA) – the armed force of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which was re-established as a Maoist party on 26 December 1968 – it was launched on 29 March 1969 in Central Luzon. Its primary task is 'to wage a protracted people's war' (PPW) to overthrow the government and replace it with a 'national democratic' system with a socialist perspective. It is a 'people's war' because, together with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) – formed in 1973 as an umbrella for its mass organizations – the rebels aim to win over the majority of the population in overthrowing the status quo. It is 'protracted' because they recognize that it will take time to build bases in the countryside before they can eventually take the cities and seize power. There are three major stages in this PPW: the strategic defensive, the strategic stalemate, and the strategic offensive. The PPW has been in the strategic defensive stage since the late 1960s." (Read more from Verdades M. Santos, [http://www.ephilippines.org/uploads/1/8/1/9/18191455/the\\_communist\\_front.pdf](http://www.ephilippines.org/uploads/1/8/1/9/18191455/the_communist_front.pdf))

political, economic and psychosocial, and security issues as part of its complaints against the existing government. The LCM spearheaded by the CPP/NPA/NDP, has long worked to arouse discontent among the local people by exploiting the issues of poverty, ignorance, disease and injustice. The LCM mobilizes these people, particularly peasants and workers, by agitating around the issues of U.S. imperialism, semi-colonialism, and semi-feudalism in Philippine Society. In this way, they cause disillusionment and create a sense of helplessness and hopelessness among the people." (p.7)

Despite of the setbacks that tended to weaken and challenged the local communist movement it has proven itself resilient. Although currently the local communist movement is no longer a threat to the survival of the state, it is still a security concern. Several contributory factors were identified by scholars to explain the resiliency of the communist led insurgency. First among these is the social and economic structure of society banqueting by hundreds of years of colonization which until this time defines the relationships of those who control the national wealth and the vast majority who are often on the margin of the social and economic activities of the country. Secondly neo-colonialism, imperialism and the geopolitics that defines the parameters of the unequal relationship between the United States and its former colony<sup>16</sup>. Thirdly the challenges to nation-building.<sup>17</sup> These factors provided the fertile ground for the Maoist ideology to thrive. Other scholars like Soliman Jr., (2005) also identified some of the contributory factors for the resiliency of the local communist insurgency. First, Soliman attributed this to the voluntarism and dedication of the cadres. Second, the good guidance it received in 1972-1974 characteristics of the people's war in the Philippines. And third, it has something to do with the weaknesses of the strategies of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and some of the strategic blunder of ending the *Lambat Bitag* campaign in 1995. (p.8). Furthermore Soliman Jr. (2005) identified some major defects in the AFPs strategy that provided opportunity for the CPP/NPA/NDP to regroup. First, the strategy used by the AFP was merely search and destroy strategy. Second, the strategy was conventional in character. Third, the offensive were sporadic and piecemeal. Fourth the deployment of the AFP troops to Mindanao, and fifth the country is archipelagic and the topography provided situations where the AFP was lured to spread itself thinly (pp. 8-9).

Government neglect of the rural areas provided the CPP/NPA/NDP the fertile ground to sow the seed of discontent and spread their ideology. The cadres of the CPP/NPA/NDP are well adept at community organizing which facilitated their influence and control of the mass base. They built their mass support through community organizing and the mobilization of fisher folks, peasants, women's groups and other cause oriented groups. Moreover the CPP/NPA/NDP were aware of the Maoist dictum that the fish survives on water so likewise the revolution thrives on the support of the masses. The ineptness of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at community organizing and the role they played in the martial law regime deprived them of the much needed support to succeed in their COIN operations.

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<sup>16</sup> Until 1998 the United States maintain military bases in Subic Bay in Bataan Province and Clark airbase in Pampanga Province.

<sup>17</sup> The experience of nation-building is not of course unique to the Philippines. Like the rest of the developing countries, the new states had to grapple with the legacy left behind by colonialism and embarked on the process of state Building, however on a more express manner, unlike the European States which have solid years of experience to back them up. Some of these challenges include the process of pacification, i.e., the process of convincing all groups, sectors of the community to accept the sovereignty of the state, then the task of tax collection and efficient administration.

The decades of the 70s and early 80s saw the CPP/NPA/NDFP gaining momentum in activities and growth. The growth of the CPP/NPA/NDFP was used as pretext for the declaration of Martial Law and subsequent military operations. The human rights violations arising from military actions, government corruption and neglect, as well as abuses committed by paramilitary groups against the civilian population in the countryside became a stimulus for the growth of the CPP/NPA/NDFP. In 1988 the communist guerrillas numbered to 25,800 (de Castro, 2010, p.142).

The CPP/NPA/NDFP lost the strategic opportunity to be involved in the 1986 People Power Revolution<sup>18</sup> that toppled the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos. Their non-involvement resulted in the marginalization of the organization, thus even their demand for belligerency and proposal to hold a coalition government with the Corason Aquino government was rebuff except for the opportunity to sign with the succeeding administration of Ramos and Estrada a joint declaration called the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights (CAHRHIL).<sup>19</sup> Thus from 25,800 in 1988 it was down to 14,470 in 1992 and in 1997 the membership was estimated at 6,800 (de Castro, 2010, p.142). Today the Armed Forces of the Philippines put the membership of the communist guerrilla movement to around 4,000.

There were series of peace talks between the GPH and the CPP/NPA/NDFP. But there was no substantive agreement reached. The peace talks were on an off and on situation and some political analysts said that the communist guerrillas were really not interested in reaching an agreement but simply were trying to delay the process in order to regroup. The release of the political prisoners in 1986-87 periods and the ensuing ceasefire provided the CPP/NPA/NDFP with the opportunity to regroup and reorganize. However, internal dissensions within the group, and the purges of the late 1980s and early 90s proved catastrophic for the guerrilla movement. The situation onwards reduced the group back to the level of the fifties. The *Kampanyang Ahos*<sup>20</sup> was a setback for the

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<sup>18</sup> The People Power Revolution in 1986 is the mass movement that overthrew the Marcos regime. It was a military revolt that was supported by the Church and by the mainstream political opposition. It was largely a peaceful revolution. The thousands of people that poured in EDSA prevented the military of Marcos from firing and eventually, Marcos resigned and Cory Aquino was sworn in as President of the Philippines and subsequently She declared a revolutionary government that provided a transition to the new constitution of 1987.

<sup>19</sup> The only substantive agreement signed by the government of the Philippines with the CPP/NPA/NDFP

<sup>20</sup> “ ‘Kampanyang Ahos’ was a gigantic anti-communist and anti-people crime, not just a tactical error and not even merely an ideological-political-organizational matter internal to the Party. “Kampanyang Ahos” was not a “bloody purge”. It was a bloody crime committed by the likes of Benjamin de Vera, Ricardo Reyes and Nathan Quimpo, who erroneously ascribed the setbacks being suffered then by the revolutionary movement in Mindanao to enemy infiltration rather than to the militarist line they were pursuing. Because of their purely militarist line, they did not pay attention to mass work, land reform, and other programs that benefit the masses such as literacy and numeracy, health and sanitation, promoting sideline occupations, etc. Because of this, they had alienated the masses and lost their support. Their putschist line in the cities led them to carry out indiscriminate killings in Davao City and other urban centers which gave the reactionaries the justification to form right-wing paramilitary groups such as the Alsa Masa. Because of the loss of mass support, the New People’s Army was suffering many casualties in battles. The Alsa Masa was also able to wreak havoc on the mass organizations in the cities and in the countryside. But instead of recognizing that it was their militarist line that was the cause of these setbacks, they attributed these to supposed “deep penetration agents” or DPAs. “Kampanyang Ahos” was carried out supposedly to get rid of enemy infiltrators. Instead it victimized many good comrades, allies and members of the revolutionary mass organizations. Their petty-bourgeois subjectivist wish for a “speedy victory” and aversion to painstaking work and bearing the necessary sacrifices in the struggle led them to play around with “left” revolutionism.” - Luis Jalandoni, spokesperson of the NDFP speaking to Juan Escandor

- See more at: <http://bulatlat.com/main/2002/05/12/ndf%e2%80%99s-jalandoni-speaks-on-%e2%80%98kampanyang-ahos%e2%80%99/2/#sthash.lt74jDp4.dpuf>

CPP/NPA/NDFP<sup>21</sup>. Hundreds of members suspected of being deep penetration agents were summarily tried and executed. The arrests of leading figures of the CPP/NPA/NDFP caused panic that led to the internal purges. The CPP/NPA/NDFP suffered from internal factionalism and the relentless counterinsurgency activities of the GPH. Succeeding geopolitical realities like the end of the cold war also reduced foreign support and the US listing of the NPA as a terrorist organization resulted in the freezing of some of its foreign assets and hampered the transfer of funds from abroad. The chances for a negotiated agreement with the GPH have been thrown into a limbo since then. Though at the moment back channelling negotiations are undertaken for the resumption of the negotiations.

Table 1: Peace Initiatives of the Government of the Philippines From 1986 to 2003<sup>22</sup>

Milestones	Events
March 1986	Release of Political Prisoners and President Corazon Aquino pledge to pursue peace talks with the CPP/NPA/NDFP
May 1986	Preliminary talks between the GPH and the CPP/NPA/NDFP began focused on discussions about ceasefire and guarantees
June 1986	Peace Panel from the GPH was formed to negotiate with the CPP/NPA/NDFP
January 1987	Formal Peace talks begin but short-lived because of incompatible proposals from both sides. But both recognized the need to respect International Humanitarian Law
June 1987	Peace Talks Collapsed
1992	The Administration of President Fidel Ramos made an attempt to come up with a comprehensive solution to the insurgency problem. Which led to the Hague Joint declaration on 1 September 1992. However factionalism among the communist insurgents turn the negotiation on the downturn.
March 1988	The only substantive result of the negotiation was the signing of the <i>Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL)</i> .
1998-2001	The administration of President Joseph Estrada was responsible for approving the CARHRIHL but it was subjected to the conditionality of the constitution and the legal procedures of the country.
2001	Under the Arroyo Administration Norway hosted the negotiation
2003	Norway facilitated the negotiation between the GPH and the CPP/NPA/NDFP

<sup>21</sup> Once the peace talks with the government collapsed the CPP/NPA/NDFP moved to internationalized the movement and tried to mobilized foreign support. But the geopolitical changes, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and other Communist countries, the movement failed. It was noted that 1998 saw the arrests of leading figures of the CPP/NPA/NDFP which triggered suspicions among the cadres of deep penetration agents as a result the CPP/NPA/NDFP launch two purges, namely the Operation Missing Link in Southern Tagalog and Operation Olympia in Manila. There were splinters within the organization which to some extent weaken the movement. (The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and talks. Crisis Group Asia Report N 202 February 2011, pp. 6-7).

<sup>22</sup> The data is reckoned from 1986 after the People Power Revolution to 2003 after the GPH and the CPP/NPA/NDFP signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human and International Humanitarian Law.

### **Government Approach to the Communist Insurgency**

The following is a brief description on the approaches employed by the succeeding governments of the Philippines in relation to the local communist insurgency. There is no solid party system in the country that could guarantee the continuity of these counterinsurgency programs. Hence the author shall briefly describe the different approaches employed by the presidents of the Philippines during their term of office. An understanding of these various approaches will give insight as to the evolution of the paradigms used by the administrations and also gain an insight into the strengths and the weaknesses of these approaches. This would partly explain the success and the failures of the counterinsurgency approaches.

**Ramon Magsaysay Administration (1953-1957).** Ramon Magsaysay emerged as one of the popular presidents of the Philippines. Magsaysay was well-loved by the masses and were able to relate and identify with him. He successfully ended the rebellion of HUKBALAHAP by initiating programs that would address the root causes of the insurgency. Magsaysay made efforts to educate the military and address inefficiency and corruption in government. The president also initiated programs to address land reform issues as a result successfully persuaded the communists to go mainstream. But his untimely death stalled the reforms that would have eliminated the root causes of the communist insurgency. The deteriorating social conditions, the configuration of cold war politics, and the moral and economic situation of the country became the breeding ground for the subsequent re-establishment of the communist party of the Philippines.

**Ferdinand E. Marcos (1965- 1986).** Was elected into office twice but at the end of his term he imposed Martial Law in 21 September 1972. The student unrest and the communist subversion became the pretext for the imposition of martial law. He addressed the communist subversion by using military means and imitated the search and destroy strategy employed by the Americans in Vietnam. It was during the term of Marcos that the local communist insurgency expanded. As Hernandez puts it: "It was during this period that the growth of the communist insurgency and Muslim Separatism was nurtured. From about 1,100 in 1971 with an armed component of 310, the CPP-NPA grew to 7,200 members with a mass base of 480,000 in 1983." (Hernandez, 2006, p.3). In the early phase of the armed conflict the government employed the "right hand and left hand approach".<sup>23</sup> It sought military victory against the insurgents eventually the approach evolved into the policy of "search-destroy-hold-consolidate" approach.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently The government introduced the *Oplan Katatagan*. It was under this program that the Civilian Home Defense Units (CHDF)<sup>25</sup> was established to safeguard the gains of the military in villages that were cleared of insurgents. But this approach was not as effective as expected because of several factors. Among these are the ineptness of the military to engaged in non-traditional roles. At the same time the local communist insurgents spread themselves out in the rural areas and engaged in a protracted warfare whose aim is to stretch the resources of the military. The primary role of the *Oplan Katatagan* was to defend the state and the regime rather than address the needs of the population and their

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<sup>23</sup> The "Right hand and left hand approach" refers to a strategy employed by the government in response to armed conflict. Right hand refers to the pursuit of military victory and the left hand refers to institutional responses to address the root cause of insurgency.

<sup>24</sup> This process involve the identification of villages that were under the influenced or controlled by the communist guerillas. Pursuit and clearing operations were undertaken and afterwards programs and projects are initiated to address the development needs of the community.

<sup>25</sup> A paramilitary group consisting of civilian volunteers. The existence of which were considered controversial because of the lack of discipline and other problems arising from this program.



communities. Hence, the counterinsurgency approach by the Marcos regime failed to achieve its objectives of defeating the communist insurgency.

**Corazon Aquino Administration (1986-1992).** After the people power revolution in February of 1986 which overthrow the Marcos Dictatorship, Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency and initially establish a revolutionary government which subsequently in 1987 through a constitutional assembly promulgated a new constitution for the republic. The 1987 constitution retained the presidential style of democracy with the government having three separate powers providing for check and balance. There were marked improvement from the past and safeguards were provided to prevent the emergence of dictatorship. Making it difficult for martial law to be declared. The Aquino administration inherited the problems and legacy of the Martial Law years such as human rights violations, fractious and politicized military, poverty and inequality and insurgencies such as the communist insurgency, the Moro secessionist movement in southern Mindanao and in the cordilleras. To address the problem with the communists the Administration of Corazon Aquino held preliminary talks with the CPP/NPA/NDFP which culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees for the representatives of the CPP/NPA/NDP and a Memorandum of Agreement on the 60 day ceasefire from December 10, 1986. However these talks resulted to no substantive agreement as there was common mistrust between parties. Thus after the collapse of the talks President Corazon Aquino issued proclamation No. 80 on February 28, 1987 granting amnesty to rebels who would lay down their arms and surrender. This event marked the return to the search and destroy approach to COIN.

Furthermore the administration also issued Executive Order No. 30 'Defining the systematic Approach and the Administrative Framework for the governments peace efforts.' The executive order also establish the Office of the Peace Commissioner as a presidential staff to assist in the effort of the peace process. The last two years of the Aquino administration saw the resumption of counterinsurgency (COIN). There were attempts at back channelling to facilitate the resumptions of talks and that period also saw the internationalization of the issues raised by the NDFP. The NDFP raised the issue of coming up with a written agreement on the International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and insisted on belligerency. The continuing mistrust and lack of confidence building measures did not bring any substantive accomplishment on the peace process with the NDFP. The resumption of COIN took a heavy toll among the ranks of the CPP/NPA/NDFP. "According to military statistics, the peak rebel strength of 25,800 in 1988 had been reduced to 11,900 by 1992, while the peak firearms strength of 15,500 in 1987 was brought down to 8,700 by 1992." (The Media and Peace Reporting, 2000).

**Fidel V. Ramos Administration (1992-98).** In a similar fashion as with the previous administration, Fidel V. Ramos embarked on a government that gave priority to civil order, social justice and a lasting solution to the armed conflict. One of his first moves was to enact proclamation 10 and 10-A which provided amnesty programs to rebels. Moreover one of his legislative agenda was the repealing of the anti-subversion law which paved the way for the decriminalization of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Ramos desire to provide clearer direction for the peace process, led him to form the National Unification Commission (NUC) though Executive Order 19. Public consultations were held and the administration of Ramos heeded the suggestions of the peace constituencies to broaden the amnesty program to be more comprehensive and inclusive. On July 1, 1993 the NUC submitted the final report and recommendation to the president which subsequently paved the way for the issuance of Executive Order No. 125, "Defining the approach and administrative structure for the government's comprehensive peace efforts."

The three core principles developed by the NUC are the following:

1. A peace process must be community based, reflecting the sentiments, values and principles important to all Filipinos.....defined not by government alone , but by the different contending armed groups only, but by all Filipinos as one community.
2. A peace process seeks to forged a new social compact for just equitable, humane, pluralistic society...where all individuals and groups are free to engaged in peaceful competition for predominance of their political programs without fear, thorough the exercise of rights, where they may compete for political power though the electoral system that is free, fair and honest.
3. A peace process seeks principled and peaceful resolution of the armed conflict, with neither blame nor surrender, but with dignity for all concerned. (The Media and Peace Reporting, 2000, pp. 23-24).

Moreover, the Executive Order 125 also developed six components which served as basis for government actions, projects and programs leading to peace. These are (The Media and Peace Reporting, 2000, p.24):

1. Pursuit of social, economic and political reforms to address the root causes of the armed conflicts and social unrest;
2. Consensus building and empowerment for peace;
3. Pursuit of peaceful, negotiated settlement with the rebel groups;
4. Implementation of programs for reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration into mainstream society of ex-combatants and civilian victims of the armed conflict;
5. Addressing concerns relative to the continuing conflict;
6. Building a positive climate for peace.

Upon his assumption into office Ramos embarked on exploratory talks with the NDFP. The Hague Joint Declaration on 2 September 1992 provided the framework for the negotiations. Several joint declarations were made. The succeeding negotiations moved slowly due to problematic situations and marked incompatibilities. Some of the major obstacles to the negotiations were issues revolving around sovereignty of the Philippines, the demand for a status of belligerency by the NDFP and other issues like the indemnification of human rights victims during the Marcos regime. One substantive agreement accomplished by the Ramos Administration was the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law which was signed on 16 March 1998 in the Hague. (The Media and Peace Reporting, 2000).

**Joseph E. Estrada (1998-2001).** Joseph E. Estrada was a popular president elected in 1998 to succeed Fidel V. Ramos. For many years he served as municipal mayor of San Juan, a municipality within the National Capital Region (NCR) and later served as Senator of the Philippines. Estrada was later forced to resign and the first president to stand trial in impeachment proceedings, accused of corruption and for receiving kickbacks. After resigning from office Estrada was indicted and subsequently convicted of plunder and after serving some jail time was pardoned by President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo.

With the resurgence of the CPP/NPA/NDFP the government reverted back to the same strategy as the *Oplan Lambat Bitag*, i.e., the clear-hold-develop strategy. Then there was also the implementation

of the counterinsurgency programs, *Oplan Makabayan*<sup>26</sup> and *Oplan Balanggai*<sup>27</sup> (Village). The counterinsurgency approach of the Estrada administration was militaristic in character. Though he won election on a pro-poor platform yet there was no concrete nor sustainable program on how to address the root cause of insurgency. The communist insurgency problem was looked upon as a law enforcement problem and that the only way to start negotiating with the rebel is through a show of force. As Estrada would insist that the government should negotiate with state enemies from the point of strength. After Estrada left office, the communist insurgency remained a security threat though no longer considered a threat to the existence of the state.

**Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010).** The administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo saw the ascendancy of the program *Oplan Bantay Laya*.<sup>28</sup> This program is based on the National Internal Security Plan (NISP) of the Department of National Defense. The *Oplan Bantay Laya* is a five year program that aims to put an end to the communist insurgency. The Arroyo administration employed the “victory” and institutional paradigm in its COIN. Later on in the process the administration of Arroyo observed the incoherence of the institutional approach which led her to embarked on a convergence program. The objective of the program was to effectively coordinate the military and the non-military approach to counterinsurgency. Previously the non-traditional military COIN approach was undertaken by the military. Policy analysts saw this as ineffective because the military were not trained to do community development work. However, as the administration sought to involve other agencies, the COIN approach the program suffered from incoherence. Some agencies of the government were indifferent and found no point of convergence. Hence, after ten years of Arroyo’s administration no significant accomplishment were reach, no negotiated settlement. The fractious nature of command of the CPP/NPA/NDFP made it difficult for the government to identify who to negotiate with. This led to the breakdown of negotiation between the CPP/NPA/NDFP and the GPH.

**Benigno Aquino III (2010-present).** The administration of President Benigno Aquino III expanded the counterinsurgency approach of the Arroyo Administration. Aquino was elected into office because of his anti-corruption platform and he made it clear at the start of his term that arriving at a negotiated settlement with the Muslim cessationist movement in Mindanao was a priority of his administration. He expanded and built on COIN of the Arroyo Administration through the *Oplan Bayanihan*.<sup>29</sup> The government also began to seriously consider the issues that gave rise to the insurgency problem. The Aquino administration continued the poverty alleviation program started by Arroyo known as the *Programang Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino (4Ps)*, conditional cash transfer program for the poor.<sup>30</sup> The government also launched the PAMANA projects in areas where the

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<sup>26</sup> *Oplan Makabayan* tagalog term for Oplan National Development was a COIN program of the Estrada Administration more or less similar to the search, clear, hold and develop strategy.

<sup>27</sup> *Oplan Balanggai* tagalog term for Oplan Village is another COIN strategy used by the administration of Estrada which advocated a village to village operation.

<sup>28</sup> Meaning in Tagalog - Guardian of Freedom.

<sup>29</sup> *Bayanihan* is the Tagalog word for solidarity. In villages and countryside it is customary for neighbors to help someone in the community when say building a house or transferring a house. The neighbors voluntarily help and expect no payment. The word was used to symbolize the government’s new approach to counterinsurgency. The government realized that the insurgency problem in the Philippines is multi-faceted and it cannot be solved just by the army but it can be solved through the total-government approach that would also include the communities and civil society.

<sup>30</sup> The objective of this is to encourage poor families to avail of the maternal and health services provided for by the department of health and to encourage poor families to send their children to school. These were the conditions tied to the conditional cash transfer. There are however, several critiques of the program who believed that these can result to politicians using the scheme

influence of the CPP/NPA/NDFP were strong. Although these anti-poverty programs were not officially identified as part of the *Oplan Bayanihan* there were perceptions that these were non-military support to the *Oplan Bayanihan*. For this reason time and again the CPP/NPA/NDFP made as pre-conditions the suspensions of the programs for the resumption of peace talks.

The shaping of the *Oplan Bayanihan* was also influenced by the changing nature of human security from a state-centred/military centred to human security centered. The changing discourse in human security as shaped by the current development trend has had its impact on the way the government developed its COIN approach. Increasingly the Aquino Administration realized the need for convergence between the military and non-military approach to the COIN.

Furthermore the external security challenges in the territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea have made the resolution of the internal conflict more imperative. This to give the military the chance to modernize and to become a credible army capable of defending the territorial interests of the Philippines.<sup>31</sup>

**Table 2 Counterinsurgency Approaches of the Government of the Philippines against the Communist Insurgency**

Governments	COIN Approach	Description
Pre-Marcos Era (Magsaysay Administration)	<p>"mailed-fist" approach. (Dolorfino, 1997)</p> <p>Total Government COIN approach under Magsaysay.<sup>32</sup></p> <p>Ramon Magsaysay is the only President ever elected that came from the masses. His popular government and the progressive COIN operation brought an end to the armed rebellion and the mainstreaming of the communist party. However this was short lived as succeeding administration did not intend to pursue the gains of previous COIN strategies.</p>	<p>Prior to 1950s the communist rebellion were carried out by the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, the Leninist (Russian inspired) Communist Party, through its armed wing the HUKBALAHAP. The problems and difficulties brought about by WWII and the lack of trust with the government, coupled with corruption and the indifferent attitude of the government to the plight of the peasants contributed to the armed rebellion.</p>
The Martial Law Period Ferdinand E. Marcos (1972-1986)	<p>Right Hand and Left hand Approach</p> <p><i>Oplan Katatagan</i>. (Steadfastness) in 1982</p> <p>"Search-Destroy-Rebuild and Consolidate"</p>	<p>The Marcos Regime at the initial stage employed the military approach akin to the strategy of search and destroyed used by the Americans in Vietnam.</p> <p>In 1982 onwards the Marcos regime embarked on a more comprehensive counterinsurgency</p>

to perpetuate patronage politics and promote the dole out mentality among the poor. However, there are also those who believe that this anti-poverty scheme can promote human development because health and education are considered vital to robust human resources.

<sup>31</sup> The Armed Forces of the Philippines has embarked on a long term development plan for the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. This program is called the Army transformation Program (ATR). It is expected that by 2028, the Armed Forces of the Philippines would have come to be a world class army capable of defending the territory and interests of the Philippines.

<sup>32</sup> "A Total COIN effort was fully implemented when the Popular Magsaysay was elected president in 1954. Government programs including agricultural technical assistance, credit institutions for peasants, rural health facilities, agrarian courts to settle land lord-tenant disputes, and infrastructure projects were poured into HUK infested areas." (Dolorfino, 1997, pp. 14-15.)

		<p>program. But unfortunately these were timeworse in terms of human rights violations. Statistics show that 120,000 individuals were arrested and detained, 769 disappeared, and 1,500 victims of extrajudicial executions. (Torres, 2011, p.11)</p> <p>Established the CHDF</p>
Corazon C. Aquino (1986-1992)	<p>The COIN strategy – Clear-Hold-consolidate-develop approach.</p> <p>National Reconciliation and Development Program</p> <p>Government-Military-People</p> <p><i>Oplan Mamamayan</i> - This is the program that promotes Reconciliation with Justice. From the state-centric approach to security the government begins to veer towards satisfying the needs of the people.</p> <p>In 1988 the Military introduced the Oplan Lambat Bitag (Torres )<sup>33</sup></p>	<p>The administration after the failed peace talk embarked on a COIN strategy similar to that of Marcos however, it was coupled with an amnesty program to help rebel returnees reintegrate with society.</p> <p>The period also saw the establishment of Peace and Order Councils in all levels of government. These councils serves as coordinating bodies to consolidate the efforts of the government to unite its effort to address the communist insurgency.</p> <p>The Oplan Lambat Bitag assumes a quick victory. To avoid over stretching its resources, the military prioritized certain areas inorder to flush out the rebels and defeat the enemy. The key to success of this Oplan Lambat Bitag is the consolidation of the the three approaches: (1) Mobile Combat operations, (2) Intelligence and (3) Civil Military Operations.</p> <p>“The plan was more successful than <i>mamamayan</i> as it managed to diminish the communist strength from 25,000 in 1987 to 14,800 in 1991. Rebel firearms were likewise cut from 12,060 in 1989 to 10,510 in 1991. Several reductions were also noted in infiltrated barangays and guerrilla fronts.” (Hernandez , 2006, p. 5).</p>
Fidel V. Ramos (1992- 98)	<p><i>Operation Lambat Bitag</i> continued</p> <p>Balik-Baril Program</p> <p>National Program for Unification and Development (1994)</p>	<p>The government continued with the Oplan Lambat Bitag and aimed at consolidating victory against the armed groups. The government introduced programs such as the surrender of firearms in exchange for a seed money to start a new. Programs and projects of similar nature greatly reduced the influence of the local communist insurgency. The number of villages under the influenced of the local communist guerrillas dropped from 8,496 in 1988 to 984 by</p>

<sup>33</sup> “General Fidel V. Ramos, who served as Armed Forces of the Philippines’ chief of staff and defense secretary during the Aquino Administration, made further adjustments to Lambat Bitag. He presided over the design and implementation of OPLAN Lambat Bitag I, II, III, IV up to the time he was president from 1992 to 1998. Particular to these programs was the – total approach to counterinsurgency. With the total approach, emphasis was given to psychological warfare and intelligence operations to identify target areas and individuals, massive military operations. This approach is a combination of intelligence operations to identify targets and individuals, massive military operations; and offers of amnesty and capitulation. Under the Ramos Administration, the Armed Forces of the Philippines formed special operations teams for psychological warfare and intelligence operations.” (Torres, 2011, p.12).

	<p>The AFP considered the CPP/NPA/NDFP strategically defeated and introduced the program UNLAD BAYAN (National Development). (Dolorfino, 1997).</p>	<p>1993. (Hernandez, 2006).</p> <p>The government also endeavoured to create the economic, social and political climate that would promote reconciliation and mainstreaming of all armed groups. One concrete example is the repeal of Republic Act 1700 or anti-suversion law thereby enabling the communist party and other rebel groups to return to parliamentary struggle rather than armed struggle.</p> <p>The improved situation prompted the government to turn over the insurgency problem to the police. This move was a tactical error on the part of the government as shown by later developments.</p>
Joseph E. Estrada (1998-2001)	<p>With the resurgence of membership in the CPP/NPA/NDFP the government resorted to the same strategy as the Lambat Bitag. (Devesa,2005,p.37).</p> <p>OPLAN Makabayan (Nationalistic) in 1998 OPLAN Balangai (Villages) 2000</p>	<p>Both of these strategies or approach were militaristic. Villages identified as strongholds of the insurgent were targeted for operations.</p> <p>Estrada employed a localized approach to the insurgency problem. The Visiting Forces Agreement was the primary stumbling block at arriving at a negotiated solution with the CPP/NPA/NDFP. The localized approach to the negotiation arose from the administrations awareness of divisions among the CPP/NPA/NDFP. Instead of weakening the local communist insurgency, the end of Estrada's term saw the resurgence of the CPP/NPA/NDFP.</p>
Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo	<p>In 2001 though the National Internal Security Plan the government began to employ the Strategy of Holistic Approach (SHA) This was based on Executive Order No. 21 s-2001. (Devesa , 2005, pp. 37-38).</p> <p>The Armed Forces of the Philippines formulated the Internal Security Plan called Oplan <i>Bantay Laya</i> 2002-2010 (<i>Guarding Freedom</i>).<sup>34</sup> (Devesa, 2005, p.42). They follow the three stage process of clear, consolidate and develop stage.</p>	<p>-This approach includes the Political, legal and diplomatic approach; Psycho-social ; Peace and Order; and information.</p> <p>The process involves three stages, the clear, consolidate and develop stage. The first consists of driving or clearing the area of the influences of the CPP/NPA/NDFP, after the clearing stage, the military establishes an outpost or a camp manned by civilian volunteers, establishes intelligence and information mechanisms, and when everything is well established the Army engages in non-traditional roles in cooperation</p>

<sup>34</sup> The main objective is to decisively defeat the communist insurgents.

		<p>with other agencies to promote the development of the local community once under the influence of the communists.</p> <p>Bantay Laya is a five year program aimed at eliminating the insurgency. It follows the victory and institutional approach.</p> <p>Based on the National Internal Security Plan of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.</p> <p><i>"Bantay Laya's operational principle consists of clear, hold and support methodology. The clear phase involves the conduct of combat, intelligence, and psychological (the so called triad concept) operations to military defeat the insurgents. Hold phase entails limiting the movement, resources and mass base support of the insurgents and preventing their incursions in the barangays to protect the people, defend communities, and secure vital installations...With Bantay Laya modified methodology the AFP's role is to strengthen government control over contested Barangays, help develop LGUs capability during consolidation, and play a support role to civilian agencies during the development sub-phases."</i> (Hernandez, 2006, p.6).</p>
Benigno Aquino Jr.	OPLAN Bayanihan	This counterinsurgency approach is a marked improvement of past counterinsurgency approaches.

### **The Evolving Counterinsurgency (COIN) Approach of the GPH and Human Security**

The aim of a good counterinsurgency program is to prevent violence and arrived at a negotiated settlement. The best way to end an armed struggle is to find the solution to the problem that gave rise to an armed rebellion. Sometimes, the process of arriving at a practical solution is fraught with difficulties because of simultaneous situation of finding solution and the fast changing situation. Thus arriving at a truce becomes the initial preoccupation which may complicate the process of arriving at a practical solution to immediate problem. This is reason why a negotiated settlement seems to be elusive. The demands of the CPP/NPA/NDF are along socio-political reforms which are not different from what the government of the Philippines wants to accomplish. But demands for belligerency on the side of the CPP/NPA/NDFP, and sensitivity about sovereignty issues on the part of the GPH hampered the realization of a negotiated settlement.

The GPH in its effort to address the armed conflict has initiated various approaches. In a paper, Montessa (2009, p. 281) identified three major approaches:

- (1) "Military Victory" or crushing the armed groups in a decisive military manner;
- (2) "Pacification" or making sure that hostilities do not escalate but without seriously addressing the root causes of the problem; and
- (3) "Institutional change" or responding to the root causes of the conflict by seeking a transformation of Philippine society.

The question may at this point be asked, is there a consistent counterinsurgency paradigm in the Philippines. From the literature it would appear that each succeeding government has its own COIN program. The consistency and continuity of such could be one of the reasons why the solutions to the armed struggle appear to be elusive. Ferdinand E. Marcos declared martial law in 1972 purportedly to arrest the growth and subversion of the communists. In succeeding years the Marcos regime employed a purely military means to defeat the local communist insurgency. It was akin to the "search and destroy" strategy used by the Americans in Vietnam several years ago. But instead of ending the armed struggle, the CPP/NPA/NDFP experienced a phenomenal growth, in its peak the membership rose to almost 21,000. The human rights abuses and corruption arising from the martial law regime created a population base for the CPP/NPA/NDFP. The adeptness of the CPP/NPA/NDFP in community organizing provided the group with a mass base of support. The human rights abuses committed by the agents of the Marcos regime galvanized the mass base support for the CPP/NPA/NDFP generated from the countryside. Nationalism and anti-imperialism became contributing factor in the growth of the CPP/NPA/NDFP.

The People Power Revolution which overthrew the Marcos regime in 1986 prove to be a tactical defeat for the CPP/NPA/NDFP because of their failure to participate in the movement that overthrow the Marcos regime. This resulted in the marginalization of the CPP/NPA/NDFP. The people power revolution of 1986 was initiated by a faction of the military that rebelled against Marcos who chose to cooperate with the political opposition led by Corazon C. Aquino the widow of the slain Filipino leader, Benigno Aquino Sr. with the help of Jaime Cardinal Sin the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Manila. The revolutionary regime of Corazon C. Aquino which succeeded the Marcos Regime showed its desire to arrived at a negotiated settlement with the CPP/NPA/NDFP by signing a ceasefire agreement with the CPP/NPA/NDFP, by freeing political prisoners and initiated peace talks with the communists insurgents. But the process was short-lived. The lack of trust between the government and the CPP/NPA/NDFP persisted and no substantive agreement was arrived. The truce and the freeing of political prisoners provided the chance for the CPP/NPA/NDFP to regroup. The Aquino government was plagued by a series of coups staged by a fractious and politicized military, a legacy of the Martial Law regime.

The Aquino Administration though sincere in its desire to address the insurgency problem was basically a transition government plagued by coup attempts by rebellious military factions. Its main legacy however, was the restoration of democracy and the promulgation of the 1987 constitution that brought to the fore human rights and safeguards against totalitarianism. The Aquino administration also saw the termination of the US military bases in the Philippines which to some extent affected its COIN approach.

Fidel V. Ramos assumed the presidency after the term of Corazon C. Aquino. Ramos aimed to arrive at a comprehensive peace agreement with the various armed rebellion in the Philippines. In pursuit of this he commissioned a comprehensive study on the root cause of the insurgency problem and in support of this endeavour established the National Unification Commission (NUC). However, the peace process he initiated with the communist insurgents did not arrived at a substantive agreement except for the document: *Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law*. In this agreement where both parties agreed to observe the principles of IHL and Human Rights and implementing mechanisms were set in place. In some sense this agreement is a step forward for the quasi-belligerency status that the CPP/NPA/NDFP desire and also the internationalization of the issues. However, the *kampanyang ahos* and the internal divisions among the CPP/NPA/NDFP weekend the rebel movement. At the same time the changing geopolitical situations in the Southeast Asian Region and the emergence of a security flashpoint in the South China Sea gave the Armed Forces of the Philippines a new arena to focus on. The desire of the Armed Forces to refocus its attention to securing the territorial integrity of the state by passing on the



COIN task to the Philippine National Police (PNP) was a tactical blunder on the part of the government. The PNP as an organization was not prepared for COIN and it was saddled with anti-crime activities and this situation provided the local communist movement the opportunity to regroup. Subsequently the GPH reverted to its former strategy and returned the COIN to the AFP (Insternational Security Plan, Bayanihan, \_\_\_\_).<sup>35</sup>

The government of Joseph E. Estrada was short-lived but under his term the *Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law* was signed. The factionalism within the CPP/NPA/NDFP led the Estrada Administration to adapt a localized approach to the COIN.

The succeeding government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo saw the continuation of the COIN approach of the Estrada and the Ramos administration. The COIN policies of the Arroyo administration are aptly summarized in Chapter 14 of the Medium Term Development Plan of the Philippines, 2004-2010. The goals of the peace process under the Arroyo Administration were as follows:

- (1) The completion of the peace agreements with the rebel groups resulting in permanent cessation of armed hostilities by 2010;
- (2) Completion of implementation of final peace agreements signed since 1986;
- (3) Mainstreaming the rebel groups through an enhanced amnesty, reintegration, and reconciliation program;
- (4) Rehabilitation, development, and healing of conflict-affected areas; and
- (5) Strengthening the peace constituency and citizen's participation in the peace process on the ground.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's COIN employs the All-of-Government-Approach (AGH). Arroyo's COIN policies sought to obtain a total solution to the insurgency problem that has plague the nation for several decades. However, the implementation of these objectives in order to succeed needs a political solution and political will, as Millalos (2011) puts it:

...that the government recognizes these principles in implementing them has been problematic due to the broader context of the insurgency. The government's strategy may achieve limited objectives that predominantly military but policies that favour the poor and the marginalized have yet to be addressed. Massive poverty, poor governance, ineffective judicial system, and unequal access to electoral and political participation still persists and continue to fuel the armed struggle. Addressing the root causes of insurgency requires political solution and political will on the part of the government.

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<sup>35</sup> "The PNP was originally intended under Republic Act 6575 to wield the 'primary responsibility on matters affecting internal security, including the suppression of insurgency.' However, the challenged posed by internal security threats lead national authorities through Republic Act No. 8551 to revert to the DND and AFP the primary responsibility for internal security. In turn, the PNP was tasked 'through information gathering and performance of its ordinary police functions, to support the AFP on matters involving suppression of insurgency.'" (Oplan Bayanihan).

During Arroyo's term the peace talks with the CPP/NPS/NDF were factitious and piecemeal until it finally collapsed and the government has to resort to containment which resulted in the resumption of military offensives against the CPP/NPA/NDFP.

The *Oplan Bayanihan*, the current counterinsurgency program of the GPH is a synthesis of the long experience and the evolving paradigm of human security. Many of the suggestions given by policy analysts were incorporated in the *Oplan Bayanihan* as Amador III (2010) puts it:

Aquino identified four elements that must appear in the national security policy and strategy documents: governance, delivery of basic services, economic construction and sustainable development and security sector reform. He also ordered all government agencies concerned to refer to the said documents when they implement programs and projects with security dimensions. The president also asked all stakeholders to participate actively in the crafting and implementation of the national security policy and national security strategy. (pp. 6-7)

The *Oplan Bayanihan* has adapted the phrase "winning the peace" as its slogan. This slogan aptly summarized the philosophy and principles of the COIN approach of the Benigno Aquino III administration. The government has begun to espouse the whole of government approach. The GPH became more aware that the insurgency problem cannot be resolved by purely military means because the root causes of the insurgency are multi-faceted and mostly non-military in nature. Thus cooperation and coherent coordination among the stakeholders was needed for this COIN program to succeed. The AFP Internal Security Plan states thus:

The AFP shall be guided by two equally important *strategic imperatives*: Adherence to Human Rights/International Humanitarian Law and the Rule of Law and involvement of all stakeholders. These imperatives are critical in ensuring that the multi stakeholder approach and the paradigm shift to a people centered approach shall be fully integrated into AFP operations.

The cooperation among the values stakeholders that includes civil society groups, NGOs and the academe in crafting the *Oplan Bayanihan* expressed the human security component of the COIN and the redirection which the Aquino Administration wishes to see. Aside from these the Armed forces of the Philippines also embarked on an army transformation program to complete the security sector reform so desired by the Aquino administration. The significance of the *Oplan Bayanihan* rests on the fact that for first time the government articulated that the insurgency problem cannot be solved by military means but involved a greater scope beyond the AFP. From a state centred security and from a secretive counterinsurgency approach, the government has democratized and made transparent the crafting of a counterinsurgency plan. It has brought the military to refocus and redefine its role in national development and at the same time recognize that the COIN is not purely military but there are varied non-traditional security issues that has to be factored in the process.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The changing geopolitical situations have had its impact in the shaping of the COIN approach of the Philippine government. The security challenges facing the nation-state and the way human security is defined also were contributing factors in the shaping of such approach to how security was viewed and defined (Alkire, 2003; Gomez and Des Gasper, 2012). Human security has been intertwined with the concept of human development. The link between security and development brought about the clamour to arrive at a comprehensive definition of security. Geopolitical realities such as the end of

the cold war, transnational crime, climate change, financial volatility and other similar transnational problems called for an expanded definition of human security (Nasu, 2011, pp. 15-16). One of the notable changes in the conception of security was the focus on the reference of security. Whom are we protecting? A new definition of Human Security was introduced by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP) in 1994. The Human Development Report of 1994 defined human security as:

...an emerging paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities whose proponents challenged the traditional notion of national security by arguing that the proper referent for security should be the individual rather than the state. Human Security holds that a people centered, multi-disciplinary understanding of security involving a number of research fields, including development studies, international relations, strategic studies and human rights.

This emerging concept emphasize that human security can be defined as “freedom from fear” and “Freedom from want”. The new security paradigm put more weight on meeting the needs of the people and communities. This new emerging paradigm consists of several security dimensions for individuals and for communities. These are: (1) Economic Security, (2) Food Security, (3) Health Security, (4) Environmental Security, (5) Personal Security, (6) community security, and (7) Political Security.

These new concepts in the changing paradigm of Human Security are not wanting in critics. Some academicians considered human security too broad and lacking in specifics that without this specificity anything can just be labelled as human security. On the other hand some critics would argue that the notion of a nation-state is not yet obsolete and despite of the transnational nature of emerging global problems, the nation-state remains an important player in international relations. Hence some scholars advanced the idea that since the nation state cannot be eliminated from the paradigm of security there has to be a way where a synthesis between state-centered security and human centered security can be arrived at. Thus the broadness of this topic has prompted scholars in the Philippines to make a study in order to come up with an index of human security for the Philippines (Atienza, \_\_\_\_).

Broadness and relevance were the main points in the criticisms levied on the Human Security Paradigm of the UNDP. Critics said that if the reference of human security is the individual person then the human rights instruments and human rights regimes has covered enough of the topic. And if collective rights are the focus then they will have to go back to the paradigm they wish to avoid, i.e., the state being the representation of commonality, as the reference for human security. Despite of the challenges to the role of nation-states, it still commands relevance in present day international relations. No matter how vague or broad the concept of human security it has to some extent influence policy-making.

By looking into the way the operational plans of the AFP evolved the author used the Human Security paradigm and the categorization of Oquist to analyze the changing nature of counterinsurgency in the Philippines and how it was influenced by the emerging definition of human security. The COIN approaches employed by the government of the Philippines have been shifting from the new and to the old methods again. Hernandez (2006) attributed the failure of most counterinsurgency approaches to achieve its goals due to shifting approaches from one approach to the other. Previous administration was not so keen on taking into consideration the human security side. The previous governments and the succeeding governments made attempt to employ the institutional approach by first taking the whole-of-government approach and later expanded this concept by calling the approach whole-of-nation approach. But time and again when peace talks or

negotiations fail there is a tendency to return to the search and destroy tactics. But recently when the talks with the CPP/NPA/NDFP were suspended the GPH stood by its commitment to pursue peace by declaring that the response of the government is to avoid armed clashes whenever possible and had that preferential approach to a negotiated peace. Unlike in the past where it took the government to easily declare an all-out war, but in the current administration the immediate reaction to the collapse of the negotiation was a desire to prevent violence.

A comprehensive and meaningful land reform and economic reform with a view of redistribution of wealth so as to create a bigger middle class will be the most plausible solution to end the armed conflict. Political will is needed and consistency to be able to deal with persisting and emerging problems.

While the *Oplan Bayanihan*<sup>36</sup> of the Aquino administration is a marked improvement in the counterinsurgency approach from a purely military approach, the government has evolved towards an acceptance of the whole of nation approach. And while there is a shift of weight from a state-centered security emphasis to a human security emphasis in the overall analysis the only way to end the communist insurgency is to address the structural problems of society which today remains embedded in society despite of the reforms and efforts at reforms. There are various issues that have to be addressed if ever to improve the counterinsurgency situation. These are identified in these summarized observations:

- (1) process of democratization. Democracy is not just the opportunity to cast votes but to have be able to be given a chance to participate in the decision-making process. Though enabling laws were passed to address the gaps and to mainstream the principles laid out in the 1987 constitution some issues remain to be addressed. For instance, the law created the party list system to enable the marginalized group to have representation in congress, but traditional politicians and other mainstream politicians have found ways to utilize these party list to serve their own objectives. Another example is that the law has prescribed limits on the terms of elected officials yet there is no law that would regulate the entry of relatives to succeed incumbent officials. This kind of situations have perpetuated political dynasties to dominate local politics thereby limiting the opportunities of citizens to run for office. Situations like leaves the electorate very little choices to choose whom they would wish to lead them.
- (2) Widespread poverty and inequality has been identified to be at the heart of the insurgency problem. To this effect the government has promoted the conditional cash transfer program known as *Pantawid Para sa Pamilyang Pilipino* (4Ps). The conditional cash transfer provides cash for poor families and this cash transfer serves as the incentive to obliged poor families to send their children to school and to regularly avail the health services offered by the government. The idea of this is to provide an opportunity for social mobility thereby helping bridged the gap between the rich and the poor. This do not contradict widespread beliefs among Filipinos and the values they have about education. Many Filipinos believe that education is a means to a better life. On the otherhand there is also a danger that this program can lead to a "dole-out" mentality among the poor. There is also some procedural questions in the administration of the program that could affect the outcome. Hence, the only for the country to develop is to create a middle class. This can only be done if the government could create a social and economic climate conducive to investment and for

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<sup>36</sup> Is the Armed Forces of the Philippines Newest Comprehensive Plan to address the insurgency. This plan was crafted in cooperation with civil society and other sectors of society. The plan incorporates many elements of the human centered security paradigm as enunciated by the United Nations Development Plan.

creations of jobs. Without a middle class the wealth of the country will be concentrated in the hands of the upper class and the very reason for the communist insurgency will remain.

Table 3 : Shifting approaches of the GPH in Counterinsurgency and Security Emphasis

Oplans of the AFP	Paradigm of Approach (Oquist,2002)	State-Centred Security vs. Human Centred Security
Early Years of Martial Law-Search and Destroy Approach	Victory	State Centered
<i>Lambat Bitag</i> (Fish net)	Victory and Institutional	State Centered and Human Centered but in the end it was more of a State Centered Approach
<i>Unlad Bayan</i> (National Development)	Victory, Pacification and Institutional	A combination of State-Centered and Human Centered Security
<i>Oplan Makabayan</i> (Patriotic)	Victory and Institutional	More of State Centered with a little of Human Centered
<i>Oplan Balanggai</i> (Villages)	Victory and Institutional	More of State Centered with a little of Human Centered
<i>Oplan Bantay Laya</i> (Guardian of Freedom)	Victory and Institutional	A combination of State-Centered and Human Centered Security but in the end weights heavily on the former.
<i>Oplan Bayanihan</i>	Victory, Institutional, Pacification	A combination of State-Centered and Human Centered Approach to Security with emphasis on the latter and with democratization as an important element.

(3) There is a need to broaden the political participation of the people along the

Hence the author is of the opinion that the only way to end the insurgency is to broaden the participation of the masses in the social and economic life of the country. The *Oplan Bayanihan* could be an opportunity to consolidate these efforts. It can be a point of convergence, and at the same time it can be a way to reform the Armed Forces of the Philippines so that as they redefine their roles along development they will be able to refocus the attention to address the security challenges of the Philippines and by putting the welfare of individuals, communities and nation at the centre of a security paradigm. Furthermore the *Oplan Bayanihan* could be a way to bridge the gap between a state-centred security paradigm and the human centered security paradigm.

### Conclusion

The administration from the 1950s up to the present has employed every means to address the communist insurgency. The earlier approach made use of the search and destroy technique which sought to defeat and bring to submission the armed rebellion. There were attempts in the succeeding administration to address the root causes of the communist insurgency going beyond pacification to finding institutional solution to the problems leading to the insurgency. But each time the program fail to achieve its objective there is a tendency to revert back to purely militarized solution to the problem. The current counterinsurgency program, *Oplan Bayanihan* provides a fresh hope that a holistic solution to the problem of insurgency could be found. Outstanding in this *Oplan Bayanihan* is the inclusion of elements of human security. For the first time the Armed Forces of the Philippines has engaged civil society in finding solutions to the problem. This was also the first time that the Armed Forces admitted that a military solution is not adequate. Hence the inclusion of non-traditional roles of the military was included in this new counterinsurgency approach. The evolution of meanings and paradigms in human security is imposing itself in the government's effort to implement the social sector and the security sector reform aimed at addressing the roots of this

problem. The lack of coherence in the administration could be an obstacle but not an impossible one to surmount. At the bottom of the discourse, the solution to the armed conflict and insurgency in the Philippines lies in the process of democratization, social reform and security sector reforms. Democratization involves levelling the playing field for every citizen in politics and economics and strengthening the moral fibre of the nation through the elimination of corruption and to ensure that every citizen is given the opportunity to achieve their full potentials as persons. Only a climate of inclusion, where human rights are respected and where citizens enjoy security will ensure genuine security and peace. These needs, aspirations and realities will continue bear upon and influence counterinsurgency policies that will take into consideration the welfare of citizens and the realizations of their dreams.

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