

Another Vietnam Shaping Up in the Philippines?

By HANS BINNENDIJK
News Correspondent

MANILA — A civil war is currently being waged in the Philippines and it somewhat resembles the early stages of the Vietnam war. The action centers in Central Luzon and Bataan, both north of the Filipino capital of Manila.

Traditionally, Americans feel a close tie with the people of the Philippines, so it is important that the current movement is understood.

Perhaps the Vietnam mistake can be avoided in this island nation.

Within the last few days, another guerrilla leader has been killed. At least six have been slain in the last six weeks.

The movement has roots which dig deeply into Filipino society, and new leaders will take their place.

Modern Robin Hoods?

The guerrilla fighters, called the Huks, retaliate for these raids by stepping up ambushes on government officials. As in Vietnam, the people are caught in the middle.

Different views are taken of the Huks. Some say they are simply gangsters using ideology to cover up their operations.

In some urban areas, this seems to be true. However, most rural Filipinos see the Huks as a group of modern Robin Hoods. They often serve as an effective police force in the northern rural areas.

The Huks deal with cattle rustlers, robbers and greedy landowners without the delay of the bureaucracy.

Like Wild West of U.S.

In either case, the Huks want to overthrow the government of President Ferdinand Marcos.

The Philippines today is similar to the American wild west, except the Colt .45 has been replaced by the Thompson submachine gun. Most rich landowners have private armies for protection.

The police carry loaded Thompsons on many of their beats, and the people feel compelled to maintain a parity. Automatic weapons purchased in Vietnam sell for five and ten times their original cost in Philippines. Local gunsmiths run a lucrative business.

It is not at all uncommon to find people walking through the city street of Manila with a .38 stuck in their belts. Top government officials travel in armored cars.

Tension is high and unrest is widespread. The students are becoming more violent, and some are taking to the hills, but they are not the movement's leaders.

Behind the Unrest . . .

The revolt's history is long and the reasons for unrest are convincing. Above all, it is a domestic movement, guided only incidentally by the thoughts of Chairman Mao.

The primary reason for the unrest is poverty combined with a total lack of land reform, and the obdurate government of President Marcos. The country's rich do little to help the poor. Fifty families control more than 90 per cent of the wealth.

Unemployment is rampant in urban areas. Every street corner offers more men hustling tourists in order to stay alive. Rural areas are covered with poor squatter settlements that can breed rebellion.

Although his popularity was declining rapidly, President Marcos was re-elected by a large margin last November. However, to win, it was necessary for him to spend more campaign money than Nixon did in 1968.

To make victory certain, Marcos decided to stuff the ballot boxes. A Newsweek correspondent witnessed Marcos' men tampering with the election returns, but little could be done.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Corruption is rampant in every sector of the government. The web of bribery reaches into all government offices. U. S. embassy personnel joke that all the bribes cancel each other out.

How Much Justice?

The devaluation of the peso this February, caused by increased government campaign spending has resulted in more hungry stomachs. Food prices are soaring and imports are more expensive.

Filipino justice is asymmetrical. While the rich can buy their way out of jail, the poor suffer under Marcos' "law and order."

For these reasons, wide popular support is growing for the Huk movement, which has a long history.

Like the Vietminh, they aided the Allied Forces

in World War II. After the war they turned against their own government.

The Communist party was outlawed.

In 1950, the Huks misread public feeling and attempted a premature revolution which failed. The leaders were captured and the movement was forced underground.

On Dec. 25, 1968, a group of Huk leaders split from the main body and formed the Maoist-oriented New Peoples Army (NPA), with Commander Dante as their leader. An older group under Commander Sumulong still works with the NPA but the Huks are quite fractionalized.

Huks' Mysterious Leader

The new vanguard is a group of between 300 and 500 armed men under Commander Dante. Dante, whose real name is Bernabe Buscayno, is the 29 year-old son of a poor squatter. He has become something of a legend among the people of central Luzon.

Few people know what Dante looks like, and 5-

foot-2, he has been able to evade the police with great success. Stories of his escapes can be heard everywhere.

Dante's men, armed with M-16s and Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR's), follow the ideological and strategic teachings of mentors Chairman Mao and Regis Debray.

The Huks pay for all that they take, and must not molest the local people. They rely on these people for support, and support cannot be gained by force.

The Huks plan to control the countryside and hence isolate the cities. Complete obedience to his superior is required on the part of each Huk fighter.

From Che Guevara's ideology, Regis Debray, they have taken the idea of the "focos," a small guerrilla band which is highly mobile. There are few base camps and the bands never stay in one place for long.

The Monkees & the Beatles

The Huks see themselves preparing the country for the revolution.

Total success depends upon the people of the Philippines. Geographic conditions are not favorable, since there are more than 7,000 islands in the nation, which shares no common borderline with a sympathetic neighbor.

The government has taken several lines of action to stop the movement, but non include reform. Terror is its basic tool.

Although the government police, called the Philippine constabulary, have been charged with the duty of eliminating the Huks, a group of government assassins called the Monkees terrorize Huk supporters.

Named for the rock group, "the Monkees" were organized to counter a similar Huk group called "the Beatles."

Death threats are sent with a "black spot," similar to that received by Long John Silver in "Treasure Island." More than 350 people were assassinated last year.

Predictions of a revolution vary widely. A Rand study done two years ago concluded that all was well. U.S. Embassy officials also tend to lean in the optimistic direction.

However, the old adage says that when you want to know the truth, ask a taxicab driver. A quick survey of cab drivers here shows tremendous dissent and a large potential for future unrest.

Only Against External Foes

The U.S. is heavily committed to the Philippines, not only through SEATO and a Mutual Defense Treaty, but through historical ties.

The U.S. has had an interest in the islands since the Spanish American War. Thousands of Americans died defending Bataan and Corregidor in World War II.

Thousands of U.S. troops are still stationed here, but to date they have involved themselves only tangentially in the internal affairs of the Philippines. Constant friction, however, exists between the GIs and the Filipinos.

The Huk movement must be recognized for what it is, a domestic problem. If dissent grows, the U.S. should remain totally neutral and thus able to deal with both sides.

The Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 refers only to a "common determination to defend themselves (U.S. and the Philippines) against external armed attack" and an external attack clearly does not exist in this case.

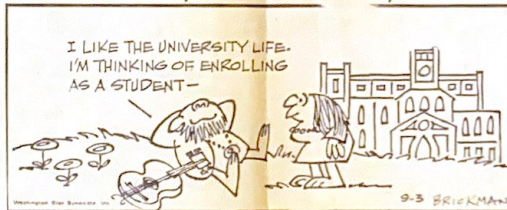
The U.S. has no binding obligations to fight the Huks.

Further American intervention will only exacerbate an already dangerous situation.

Because of the constant conflict over our bases in the Philippines, even an insignificant action on our part could provide the spark to light this powder keg.

the small society

by Brickman



Cost of Living At White House

By JANE DENISON

WASHINGTON (UPI)—How much does it cost to keep house at the White House?

If what Congress has approved is signed into law by the man who lives there, there will be nearly \$31 million in the White House kitty to spend by next June 30.

That's not counting the budget of close to \$45 million for the fellows who look after the people who live there—the Secret Service.

The Secret Service, of course, belongs to the Treasury Department and has many more duties than just watching over the president and his family. Just this year, its ranks were swelled by a new executive protective service that will also keep an eye on diplomatic missions in Washington.

So if the White House doesn't pay for its own protection, where will \$30.7 million go? First off, according to official budget figures, there is the President's \$200,000 salary and his \$50,000 expense account.

Next comes \$1.1 million just to run the White House—for such things as light bulbs, salaries for 75 full-time employees, pruning shears for the rose garden, and fancy food and drink for "official entertaining."

Then there is \$8.55 million to pay 548 staff members for all the letters they type, speeches they write and advice they give.

There will also be \$700,000 in salaries for 39 of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's assorted staff members; \$500,000 to help 30 employees to run the President's Advisory Council on Executive Reorganization (the group that studies how to eliminate government waste); and \$180,000 for the nine-worker office of intergovernmental relations.

Also earmarked is \$1.5 million for "special projects," \$350,000 for "expenses of management improvements," \$1 million for the President's Emergency Fund for use in "situations affecting the national interests, security or defense, which may arise at home or abroad during the year," and \$13.1 million to run the 585 employe office of management and budget.

To wrap things up, the White House also plans to spend \$1.2 million on the Council of Economic Advisors (57 employees) and \$2.18 million on the National Security Council (75 workers).

The housekeeping provisions were part of an \$11.1 billion appropriations bill passed 68 to 0 by the Senate Tuesday. The bill will go to a conference committee to resolve some differences with a House-passed version, but the White House figures are the same in both bills.