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## Address of Col. Ismael Z. Villareal

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# Hunger as a tool of destabilization

*On Dec. 4, 1988, Col. Ismael Z. Villareal of the Army of the Philippines presented a speech to the Schiller Institute's Food for Peace conference in Nauheim, West Germany. In vivid detail, Colonel Villareal described how the Communist insurgent New People's Army has used food—or the lack thereof—as a weapon to expand its subversion and insurgency. Colonel Villareal is currently the Philippines military attaché in Bonn, West Germany. Below are excerpts from his speech.*

It is a distinct privilege to speak before this body on an issue which is of deep importance to the current stability of my country, the Philippines. I am referring to nationwide hunger which the Communist Party of the Philippines today is attempting to develop in order to cause a national crisis in preparation for the overthrow of the existing government.

What does nationwide hunger mean? Simply, it means the desire or craving for a better quality of life. By creating an apparent or perceived scarcity in food, personal security, education, health services, and livelihood means, the Communist Party of the Philippines is gradually promoting this growing desire or craving for a better quality of life which, when not fulfilled by the current government, will lead to mass frustration and hence a national crisis conducive to a revolution. . . .

Despite its abundance in natural and human resources, the Philippines has remained a poor country since its independence in 1946. Its per capita Gross National Product averages \$600, far below its neighbors like Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan. An agricultural worker receives an average daily minimum wage of \$2.50. His white-collar counterpart, particularly in the urban areas, earns roughly \$3.00. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate is still high at 20%, while underemployment remains at 25%.

The poor economic conditions of the country and its attendant socio-political problems since its independence from colonial rule in 1946 have been one of the major causes of the growth of Communist insurgency.

The current insurgency situation in the country is a continuation of the so-called "People's Democratic Revolution" which our local Communist Party launched openly in 1946. Through the years, the party managed to sustain its struggle by political and military action, mostly in the countryside. By the sixties, however, young party members broke away from the party and established a new party in 1968 under the

supreme guidance of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought. Its armed component, the New People's Army, was organized the following year.

The Communist Party and the New People's Army have grown from only 245 regulars in 1970 to around 25,000 as of mid-1988. The party's firearms have also increased and improved from a few World War II vintage firearms in 1969 to 12,000 small arms and high-powered firearms as of mid-1988. As a result of political and violent activities, the party has increased its influence to 7,631 villages out of the 41,630 villages nationwide. In the urban sectors, it has also infiltrated the labor, student, and professional organizations in its political efforts.

### The Communist strategy

In its effort to advance the revolutionary struggle, the CPP utilizes three complementing strategies, namely: party building, army building, and united-front building.

Party building aims at the expansion of the party network to all areas of the country to lead the "People's Democratic Revolution." Army building aims at improving the New People's Army in order to launch the armed struggle which the party considers as the primary form of struggle in the furtherance of its objectives to seize political power. Finally, united front building aims to expand the mass base of the insurgency and to convince the greater mass of the people to unite in and/or support the "People's Democratic Revolution."

The strategies of party building, army building, and united front activities cannot take place without the support of the people. It is therefore important that the people are motivated so that they can be mobilized to participate in party building, army building, and united front activities. How does the Communist Party motivate people?

The methodology resorted to by the party in motivating the people is basically the manipulation of tangible issues affecting the people in their daily lives. In going about this task, the party keeps in mind the primary aim of developing unrest in the country as the preparatory stage for the "People's Democratic Revolution."

Manipulative or exploitative efforts are centered on issues concerning the economic situation of the country. As mentioned earlier, these efforts are geared to the promotion of nationwide hunger through frustration and starvation. The expected effect, of course, will be nationwide strife and unrest. Apparently, the party believes in the adage that goes, "When a man is hungry, he is angry." The "angry" people will then look for a rallying point, and find the party as the answer to their plight.

In order to cause the development of nationwide hunger and eventually a national crisis, there must be control over the flow of the economy. The party, hence, has outlined a simple strategy to control the flow of economic activities from the villages to the processing or marketing points in the

urban centers. First, the party has created guerrilla units as control units adoptable to specific geographical requirements. The local militia and guerrilla units, for instance, would control the lowlands; the regular units in the highlands; and provincial/regional party committee and armed city partisans in the urban areas. Second, it has opened itself to two forms of control, namely: coercion and persuasion.

The control measures—coercion and persuasion—adopted by the party aim to directly starve and pressure the people who in turn put pressure on the government to undertake reforms or hasten development. If the government fails, the pressured or hungry people would become angry and seek and push for an alternative that would be spearheaded by the people themselves under the guidance of the party. The alternative solution can be the overthrow of the existing government by the people through an armed struggle to be led by the party.

How successful has the party been in its efforts to control the flow of economic activities in order to develop nationwide

hunger and hence an angry population?

As I have explained earlier, the party today has succeeded in establishing its influence in 7,631 villages or at least 19% of the country's total number of villages. It has succeeded in threatening with expansion another 19% of villages in areas adjacent to the influenced villages.

In both these influenced and threatened areas, the party has implemented by means of coercion and persuasion its so-called "progressive taxation program," targeting individual farmers, small businessmen, agro-industrial firms, commercial establishments, and rich persons. For instance, the party extracts per family in the rural areas either one to three pesos in cash or 4 kilos of rice per month. Farmers give at least 3% of the total produce and fishermen, coconut and vegetable planters pay from P30 to P500 per week. Big landowners are taxed annually at the rate of P1,000 per hectare of total landholdings. Big fish pond owners contribute from P15-20,000 per month, while rice mill operators are charged a monthly quota of P3-5,000. Big business firms contribute

## Where the NPA gets its money

On Dec. 22, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze made an official visit to Manila to meet with Philippine leaders, including President Corazon Aquino. As reported by Reuters, Shevardnadze "pledged the Soviet Union would not support Communist rebels in the Philippines." Shevardnadze did not add that thanks to the funding of the NPA by organizations from the West, it is not necessary for the NPA to seek direct support from Moscow. Based upon its own investigations and documents seized from the NPA in the Philippines by the armed forces, *EIR* has drawn up the following list of organizations in the United States and Canada responsible for funding or channeling funds to the NPA, through its various front organizations:

- National Council of Churches
- United Methodist Church
- The Maryknoll Order (Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America)
- United Church of Christ
- Church Coalition For Human Rights in the Philippines
- Union of Democratic Filipinos (Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino—KPD)
- People's Aid Project
- International Association of Patriotic Filipinos
- Alliance for Philippine Concerns

- Philippine Resource Center
- Philippine Workers Support Committee
- Philippine Support Committee
- Funding Exchange
- Vanguard Foundation
- Resist Foundation
- The Philadelphia Philippine Working Group
- Methodist Federation for Social Action in New York City
- Ohio Coalition for Philippine Concerns
- Church Committee for Philippine Concerns in Chicago
- The Minnesota Church People for Justice and Peace in the Philippines
- Southeast Asia Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
- Pacific Asian Center for Theology and Strategies in San Francisco
- Columban Fathers
- Clergy and Laity Concerned
- Pax Christi
- Mennonite Church
- Sisters of Mercy
- Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

The aid ranges, in form, from sponsoring tours in the United States and Canada for National Democratic Front leaders or leaders of NDF front groups and sponsoring conferences, to financing projects in the Philippines which are linked to NDF fronts or whose funds are finding their way to the NPA.

taxes ranging from P75,000 to as much as P1.2 million per year.

Confiscation of livestock, poultry, rice and corn, medicines, and other goods from the middle class and big farmers also adds considerably to the control of the economy. For instance, farmers who have five cows are left with two and those with three are left with one.

Transportation companies moving goods and services between the rural and the urban areas have not been spared by the local party. For instance, private bus operators contribute from P500,000 to P1.5 million yearly to be able to have their buses and trucks ply their assigned traffic routes.

Taxation and confiscation activities of the party executed by means of coercion and persuasion have provided the lifeblood for the growth of the insurgency in the Philippines. But more importantly, it has disrupted economic activities in almost all provinces in the country with the following consequences:

a) It has cowed the farmers and businessmen who would rather comply with the party's demands than lose their lives or property.

b) Several farmers and businessmen have already chosen to give up their businesses or farming, believing that the initial party demands would lead to bigger payments in the future.

c) Residents of certain areas have chosen to evacuate

rather than comply with the demands of progressive taxation.

d) There has been a slowdown in the production and delivery of goods and services in the countryside and in the urban areas.

e) The lack of food exists in certain rural areas as borne out by the fact that the people in these areas are able to eat only two meals a day.

f) The growing malnutrition of children in the rural areas. The indications of increasing frustration of a hungry population are highly visible in the Philippines today. Strikes in the factories are continuing. Recently, there was a massive transportation strike in the Philippines which paralyzed economic and social activities in major urban centers.

In the rural areas, there has been an increasing participation of the people in the armed struggle as evidenced by the appearance of larger and more numerous guerrilla units.

The Communist Party is still far from its goal of developing a national crisis. However, if the trend continues, and through the skillful use of nationwide hunger as a tool of destabilization, a crisis situation might exist at anytime in the 1990s. . . .

Let me end my presentation with the information that my government is of the belief that to neutralize the "People's Democratic Revolution," the best weapon is still an integrated program of social, political, and economic reforms for the betterment of the quality of life of the people.

## NPA fronts

### In Luzon:

Ilocos Northern Front  
Northwestern Front  
Southwestern Front  
Eastern Cagayan Front  
Western Front  
Eastern Front  
Benguet Front  
Dulnuan Front  
Dex Front  
Beltran Front  
Isidro Front  
Estrella Front  
Ilaban Front  
San Mariano Front  
Kimat Front  
DRT Front  
Front Off Shore  
GF2  
GF6  
KLA I  
KLA 2  
Kamagong Front

Romulo Jallores Front  
Camel Front

### In the Visayas (Antique, Iloilo, Negros, Samar, Leyte):

Northern Front  
Central Front  
Southern Front  
Eastern Front  
Northern Negros Front  
Central Negros Front  
South Western Negros Front  
South Eastern Negros Front  
First Fighting Front  
Second Fighting Front  
Third Fighting Front  
Northern Leyte Fighting Front  
Southern Leyte Fighting Front

### On Mindanao:

Front Jvisis (A1)  
Front Arma (A2)  
Front I (BBC)  
Front U (77)  
Front 6

Front 8  
Front 0  
Front 12  
Front 16  
Front 21  
Front 4-A  
Front 4-B  
Front 2  
Front 3  
Front 14  
Front 15  
Front 18  
Front 19  
Front 23  
Front 27  
Front 30  
Front 71  
Front 73  
Front 72  
Front 51  
Front 52  
Front 53  
Front A  
Front B  
Front C

# NPA fronts in the Philippines as of June 1988



NPA front covers the entire province 