

# U.S. Utopians Move In On the Philippines

by Michael Billington

Philippines Defense Secretary Gen. Angelo Reyes was welcomed into the parlors of the utopian war faction at the U.S. Defense Department, and the closely allied think-tank, the Heritage Foundation, on Aug. 12-13. The purpose of the visit was spelled out in unambiguous terms by both the U.S. Defense Department and General Reyes: to create a *civilian-to-civilian* line of command between the United States and the Philippines, to override the existing military-to-military institutions which have guided policy thus far.

Under normal circumstances, it may appear that the idea of “civilian control over the military” would be the appropriate policy objective. But these are not normal times, because the war-mongering civilian leadership of the U.S. Defense Department, centered around Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his assistant, Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, are attempting to initiate global religious warfare under the guise of the “war on terrorism.” The uniformed military, including some members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are in open revolt against the insanity of these “Clash of Civilization” ideologues. Placing U.S. military policy in the hands of the civilian fanatics is a sure bet to unleash the dogs of war in the Philippines, while also serving the broader objective of the utopians: a clash with China.

## The New ‘Defense Policy Board’

After a meeting with Rumsfeld at the Pentagon on Aug. 12, General Reyes told the press that a new forum had been established, to be called the Defense Policy Board, between the civilian side of the military establishments of the two nations. The Pentagon’s spokesman, Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis, said that for years there had been several dialogue venues “for uniformed military officers, but no forum for defense officials who are civilians.” The details and the composition of the board will be determined at a later time.

The very name of the board is ominous. The world’s press is currently full of reports on the infamous presentation on July 10 by a RAND Corp. analyst, calling for the United States to invade Saudi Arabia and seize the Saudi oil fields. This lunatic proposal was presented to a forum, also called the Defense Policy Board, which is also a civilian board, formed to advise the Defense Department, and headed by Richard

Perle, the foremost war-monger among the “Wolfowitz cabal,” and the head of the Defense Policy Board who has been long suspected of being an Israeli spy. The choice of the same name for the United States-Philippines Defense Policy Board is a bit of intrigue which will not be missed by governments around the world. It is not yet known whether General Reyes spent time in the web of Perle’s Defense Policy Board during his visit to Washington.

The timing of the Reyes trip is crucial. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who is the most outspoken opponent of the war policy within the Bush Administration, and who is looked to for leadership by many of the uniformed military officers who oppose the Wolfowitz cabal at the Defense Department, has just completed a tour of Southeast Asia (see “Powell Points Different U.S. Policy for SE Asia,” *EIR*, Aug. 16, 2002). Across the region, Powell represented a different direction for U.S. policy from the confrontational approach of the war faction, assuring the leaders in the region that there was a voice of sanity within the Bush Administration, which could hopefully counter the influence of the new warrior caste. In the Philippines, Powell assured the nation that the United States would not establish bases, would not be involved in any combat, and would not demand agreements that were counter to Philippine law or Philippine wishes. Powell was basing his policies on the existing chain of command, which ran from the foreign policy establishment which he directs as Secretary of State, through the military establishments of the two sovereign nations.

The new civilian-to-civilian structure is intended to shift policymaking to the war faction at the Defense Department.

Powell announced a new measure upon his return to the United States, which he may eventually regret, if it ends up providing cover for the war faction. Powell placed the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and its military wing, the New People’s Army (NPA), on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. His motivation in this act is not completely clear—the NPA has committed terrorist acts in its 33-year history, but it is purely a domestic organization rather than an international terrorist operation (although it receives foreign financial support). It has also been engaged in various peace negotiations with the Philippines government for many years. Sources in the United States indicate that Powell took the step in response to evidence of drug trafficking and money laundering by the NPA. Placement on the terrorist list may also dry up the public and private foreign funding for the NPA insurgency.

The danger lies in the fact that among the policy options put forth by the war party in the United States, is the notion that any organization on the U.S. terrorist list is fair game for unilateral U.S. commando operations, with or without the approval of the host nation. Secretary of State Powell’s assurance that such measures will not be taken in the Philippines

will mean little if the war faction attains control over U.S. policy.

## Confrontation at the Heritage Foundation

On Aug. 13, General Reyes appeared at an open forum at the Heritage Foundation, one of the leading institutes promoting free-trade fundamentalism and U.S. military unilateralism throughout the world. Introducing General Reyes was Larry M. Wortzel, the foundation’s Director of Asian Studies, and one of the most rabid advocates of U.S. unilateral confrontation, not only against Iraq and Muslim nations, but most emphatically against China, the Philippines’ neighbor.

*EIR* asked General Reyes whether the open differences between the civilian and military leadership in the U.S. defense establishment did not lead him to worry that the new civilian-to-civilian Defense Policy Board would place his nation under the gun of those promoting a Clash of Civilizations. While acknowledging the existence of the factional division within the United States, General Reyes dodged the issue by reporting that no such division exists within the Philippines.

That assertion could be challenged, based on the January 2001 decision by General Reyes, then Chief of Staff, to desert the civilian Commander-in-Chief, President Joseph Estrada, who was thereupon overthrown in a bloodless coup. However, even if the assertion were true, General Reyes was missing the point, that the *U.S.-based civilian war party* could attempt to assert U.S. power over the Philippines through the civilian line of control set up under the new Defense Policy Board, regardless of the intentions of the Philippine leadership.

To his credit, when *EIR* also asked General Reyes if he were not concerned, given the Philippines’ proximity to China, that his sponsor at the event, the Heritage Foundation’s Wortzel, had been a leading participant on the U.S.-China Security Review Commission—whose report to the U.S. Congress in July was a raving diatribe against China, calling it a terrorist-supporting nation, and calling for sanctions and confrontation—he responded at length that the Philippines values its economic and cultural relations with China, and stands by the “One China” policy. General Reyes praised China for adopting diplomatic means to settle the territorial disputes in the region over several islands in the South China Sea. Wortzel, visibly uncomfortable throughout Reyes’ comments, later told this reporter that he had tried to convince the Security Review Commission to call for even tougher language, declaring China to be a threat to the security of the United States.

Again, however, General Reyes either denied, or chose to diplomatically ignore, the danger that if the war faction consolidates its power in the United States, the U.S. military’s assistance and training exercises in the Philippines could drag the Philippines, against its will, into a broader U.S. confrontation with China.