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General Douglas MacArthur and The American Military Impact in the Philippines

RONALD K. EDGERTON

In 1945, as American troops advanced through the Philippines toward Japan, they became significant participants in the history of villages and towns which they liberated. Again and again they moved into a vacuum created by the retreat of Japanese forces and dissolution of the wartime Laurel Republic. Through them, their commander, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, exercised virtually unlimited power over local civil affairs regardless of carefully outlined plans prepared in Washington. Predicting that "an elaborate *a priori* plan and organization would melt in the fierce heat of battle," he determined to make policy himself and to carry it out as he saw fit.¹ He realized that nowhere in Asia would the American soldier exercise greater influence than in the Philippines where he would return as liberator and operate as power-broker in an environment already accustomed to American rule.

How would MacArthur and the forces under his command exercise the power within their grasp to influence Philippine history? In a society as fluid as the Philippines in early 1945 the impact of American troops was certain to be both wide-ranging and unpredictable. Their potential for influence was greatest in Central Luzon where the Hukbalahap Barrio United Defense Councils (BUDC) offered a possible alternative to continued rule by the prewar landed elite.² In other areas where such an organized alternative had not yet emerged, American forces could still decide whether new personalities or old would govern. With the rise to

1. Joseph Ralston Hayden's notes on his private conference with MacArthur, 4 August 1944 (The Michigan Historical Collections, Hayden MSS, Box 42, hereinafter referred to as MHC . . .).

2. The best analysis of change during this period in Central Luzon is the superb study by Benedict John Kerkvliet, "Peasant Rebellion in the Philippines: The Origins and Growth of the HMB" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972). A revised version of this has been published, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

prominence of guerrilla officers at a time when many prewar leaders were accused of collaboration, the opportunity for change in local leadership was great. It remained to be seen how MacArthur's command would alter the character of this leadership element.

MACARTHUR AND HIS COMPETITORS

Having lived in the archipelago for years before the war, General MacArthur was deeply interested in Philippine affairs and confident that none better than he could direct the reconstruction of that devastated country.³ He had been Field Marshal of the Philippine Army and Military Advisor to Commonwealth President Quezon from 1935 to 1941. According to Joseph Ralston Hayden, his advisor on Philippine civil affairs, he felt himself "more competent than any other American, or than any other Filipino either," to deal with the tasks of reconstruction.⁴ "You do not need to tell me a thing about the political situation," he advised Hayden, "because I am spending practically all my time upon those problems."⁵ He intended to retain "full authority and responsibility" over the Commonwealth Government during liberation. He, MacArthur, would be "in control."⁶

In 1945 MacArthur had two potential competitors for control of the Philippine situation: the Commonwealth Government, and the

3. Even Pres. Manuel Quezon, in MacArthur's opinion, could not have directed the reconstruction effort as well. He told Professor Hayden on 4 August 1944, shortly after Quezon's death, that Quezon was "right in the big things - but would have given a lot of trouble in ordinary matters." He, MacArthur, "could control him in major policy - He would have followed me there" (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

4. Hayden, a professor of political science at the University of Michigan, was appointed "Civil Advisor and Consultant on Philippine Affairs," and was attached to General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area. Before the war he had been vice-governor of the Philippines under Gov.-Gen. Frank Murphy. He was acting governor-general at the time of the Sakdalista uprising in 1935. A dedicated student of Philippine history and government, he published in 1942 what is still regarded as the basic work on Philippine political development, entitled *The Philippines, A Study in National Development* (New York: Macmillan, 1942). In February 1943, he visited MacArthur in Australia as one stop on a trip through the Pacific theater as a member of the Board of Analysts of the Office for the Coordination of Information (later to become the OSS) under William Donovan. After reporting to Donovan, he was assigned to the Allied Intelligence Bureau in Australia where he worked with Courtney Whitney's Philippine Regional Section. From 1944 until his death in May 1945, he was the principal civil affairs advisor in MacArthur's headquarters.

5. Quoted in Dale Pontius, "MacArthur and the Filipinos, Part 2" *Asia and the Americas* 46 (1946): 511.

6. Professor Hayden's notes on his private conference with MacArthur, 4 August 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

American bureaucracy in Washington. Of the two he clearly feared the latter most. Throughout the war he opposed efforts by the OSS (Office for Strategic Services) to gather intelligence in his theater, preferring to confine all such activities to his G-2 staff. And when his own men began formulating plans for reoccupation, he rejected all suggestions that American civilians other than Professor Hayden be included in the operations. "Civil affairs and civil government will be in the hands of the Filipinos. If we send a big staff of outsiders in there to tell those people how to run their affairs, there'll be another '1898.' The guerrillas will go to war with them."⁷

MacArthur's antipathy toward civilian interference dated back to the beginning of the century when as a young man he had watched another "gang" of American officials replace his father's military administration with a civil government. His father had been getting "on smoothly with the Filipinos, when that selfish man Taft came in." Together with Dean Worcester and others, Taft had "made enemies of the Filipinos who were being converted into friends by his father." Now in 1944-45, history was repeating itself with new actors playing the old roles. But this time Douglas MacArthur was not going to let Taft's bureaucratic descendants steal the show again.⁸

The position which General MacArthur forged for himself — as supreme commander over Philippine affairs during liberation — did not go unchallenged in Washington. There in February 1944, at the initiative of the Secretary of War, an ad hoc committee was created to coordinate the plans of numerous civil agencies and those of the War Department for administering civil affairs in the Philippines. It was also empowered to define the powers and

7. Ibid. MacArthur's comments about "a big staff of outsiders" referred to a proposal by Courtney Whitney dated 10 August 1943, recommending the acquisition of four "old Philippine hands" to plan for "Philippine nonmilitary activity." The four were to have been Dwight Davis, Weldon Jones, George Malcolm, and Evett Hester. Charles A. Willoughby, head of G-2, took exception to Whitney's proposal, calling the Whitney committee "so obviously an 'All-American' Committee that it is not likely to 'inspire the confidence of the Filipinos,' but rather suggests a pointed racial discrimination [sic]." He eliminated Davis, Malcolm, and Hester (MacArthur was known to dislike Hester in particular), substituting Gen. Basilio Valdes, Dr. Hayden, Weldon Jones, Andres Soriano, and Carlos Romulo. This exchange between Whitney and Willoughby was part of an on-going and very bitter feud between the two men. Both the Willoughby proposal of 15 August 1943 and Whitney's of 10 August were rejected by MacArthur (National Archives and Records Service, Federal Records Center, Record Group No. 338, 11104/72, herein-after referred to as NARS/FRC/RG . . .).

8. Hayden notes on his conversation with MacArthur, 4 August 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42). It is clear from these notes that MacArthur regarded Harold Ickes as well as Evett Hester with great suspicion and distrust. It should be mentioned that Ickes was equally distrustful of MacArthur.

Philippines. It was also empowered to define the powers and responsibilities of the Area Commander over civil affairs in the islands. Called the Philippine Ad Hoc Committee, it included John J. McCloy, assistant secretary of war; Abe Fortas, under-secretary of the Interior; and Major General J. H. Hildring, Director of the Civil Affairs Division, War Department Special Staff.⁹

Members of the committee were determined to have a hand in policy-making for the Philippines. General MacArthur was just as determined to prevent any such "meddling" by Washington officials. At the crux of the issue was the Interior Department's plan to send a representative (possibly a High Commissioner) and some civilian experts to join the liberation forces. MacArthur served notice that if a High Commissioner did come out, "he would fix it so that he couldn't do a thing. He would be a prisoner of the Army." Nor would he welcome any civilian experts. He predicted that "if a cloud of carpetbaggers were sent [to the Philippines] . . . there would be another insurrection. Life would be cheap and some of them would be killed."¹⁰ Furthermore, such officials would interfere in his relations as military commander with the Philippine Government and Filipino people. "They would cause trouble — people would go to them against him." He alone would advise the Commonwealth Government for as long as he remained in the archipelago. "If the High Commissioner or his representative . . . tries to do anything of that sort, I'll put him on a boat and send him home and send a message to the President telling him why."¹¹

Through the summer of 1944 the Ad Hoc Committee continued its efforts to circumscribe MacArthur's autonomy. It sent a draft directive in August defining his powers and responsibilities over civil affairs. MacArthur objected to the draft and completely rewrote it, thereby raising a small tempest in the Departments of

9. McCloy was designated committee chairman. Other members were James C. Dunn, director, Office of European Affairs, State Department; Dr. Lauchlin Currie, Foreign Economic Administration; and Captain L. S. Sabin, officer-in-charge, Military Government Section, Central Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operation (NARS, Modern Military Records Office, Combined Chiefs of Staff Decimal File RG 218, Box 707, hereinafter referred to as NARS/MMRO/CCSDF . . .).

10. Hayden conversation with MacArthur, 8 May 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

11. Hayden conversation with MacArthur, 4 August 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42). It is worth noting that Commonwealth President Sergio Osmeña, who succeeded to the presidency on the death of Manuel Quezon in August 1944, asked Hayden to become his personal adviser. MacArthur objected vigorously when Hayden mentioned this offer in November 1944. Then, in March 1945, MacArthur gave his approval. Hayden had decided to accept but suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died on 19 May 1945.

State, Interior, and Treasury. The differences between the committee draft and MacArthur's reply were enumerated by Abe Fortas in a memo:

1. The Command eliminated the provision that the statutory relationship between the Commonwealth Government and the High Commissioner should be resumed when and where civil functions might pass from military to Commonwealth authority, consistently with military necessity.

2. The provision 'You will not deal with those who have collaborated with the enemy except for the purpose of removing them from political and economic influence over the people' was eliminated.

3. The draft sent to the Command assumed that a returned Commonwealth President and cabinet would exercise the civil authority conferred by law over such areas as might be freed from combat conditions. The returned draft, however, provides that the *theater commander* will exercise supreme authority, civil as well as military, and may within his discretion 'delegate' civil functions to the Commonwealth Government.

4. The draft sent to the Command assumes that governmental powers will be relinquished, when appropriate, to the United States High Commissioner as well as to the Commonwealth Government, as provided by law. The Command's revision eliminates the High Commissioner.

Having listed these differences, Fortas concluded that the changes made by MacArthur would "have the effect of setting up a full-fledged military government and governorship in the Philippines of indefinite duration."¹²

Despite Fortas' fears and objections, the Ad Hoc Committee's final directive (dated 9 November 1944) accepted virtually all MacArthur's demands. On the question of collaboration the committee no longer prohibited him from dealing with collaborators beyond removing them "from political and economic influence." Although it asked him to remember that the ultimate disposition of all civil authorities, it now agreed that "their immediate disposition is a matter for your determination." On the question of MacArthur's powers vis-à-vis Sergio Osmeña, the new Commonwealth President, they insisted that he pass on to civil authorities the "responsibility and authority for civil administration." But they vitiated any meaning this provision might have had by agreeing that he should do this only when he saw fit! Finally, on the question of sending a High Commissioner, the committee bowed to the wishes not only of MacArthur but of President Roosevelt. In early October 1944,

12. This memo is enclosed in a letter from Col. David Marcus to General McFarland, 23 October 1944 (NARS/MMRO/CCSDF/RG 218, Box 707).

the President sustained MacArthur over Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior. A High Commissioner, therefore, was not sent to the Philippines until Paul McNutt visited in July 1945, and arrived to stay in September, just after General MacArthur had left for Japan.¹³

Having beaten back efforts from Washington to impinge on his authority, MacArthur left his other potential competitor, the Commonwealth Government, little recourse other than to comply with his wishes. But it must be said that the Philippine Government-in-exile had done little to strengthen its position. President Quezon had been planning to send only a half dozen men, hardly an adequate number to coordinate civil affairs during liberation.¹⁴ And President Osmeña, in the opinion of one American intelligence officer, was coming back "hat in hand" with "no idea of what has been done, what was planned, or what should be done."¹⁵ As it turned out, Osmeña was cooped up in Tacloban, Leyte, and later in Manila, with little representation at the grass roots level. And when he did get an opportunity to travel somewhere he depended on American Army transport vehicles to get him there.

MACARTHUR'S POLICY

American policy during Philippine liberation, therefore, was MacArthur's policy. He was indeed "in control." In exercising the power which he had consolidated, he accepted the same dictum that his father, Arthur MacArthur, had postulated at the turn of the century: that intervention in Philippine civil affairs is hazardous and oftentimes counterproductive. Thus he constantly sought to place limits on military interference in nonmilitary affairs. For example, many persons were said to have urged him to impose

13. For the committee's directive of 9 November 1944 see NARS/MMRO/CCSDF/RG 218, Box 707. MacArthur's Command recognized that it had won a victory. In a memo dated 16 November 1944, in which he discussed whether Command policies would have to be changed in view of the directive (which was made officially by the Joint Chiefs of Staff), Brig. Gen. Bonner Fellers concluded that "no amendments . . . are required." This memo is appendix 12, volume 2, of the "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," prepared by the Civil Affairs Section of AFPAC, and dated 25 August 1945 (a copy of which is in NARS/FRC/RG 338, 11082/29).

14. Memo from Hayden and J. L. Rauh to General Fellers concerning civil administration and relief in the Philippines, 22 July 1944. "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 2, appendix 1 (NARS/FRC/RG 338, 11082/29).

15. S. M. M. to Charles Willoughby, 25 September 1944 (NARS/FRC/RG 338, 11104/74, folder 119).

military rule for the duration of the American occupation. This advice was rejected, according to the "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," because MacArthur believed military rule would "weaken the cause of democracy in the East and undermine the great strides made by the Filipino people, under American guidance, in . . . building . . . constitutional government."¹⁶ MacArthur himself declared that "an imperialistic attitude will not be introduced into the situation under the guise of military necessity."¹⁷ From his point of view American "carpetbaggers" were a manifestation of such an imperialistic attitude. They should be kept out of the Philippines not (as we have said) in order to enhance his own power but to avoid insurrection and a return to 1898. Internal disorder was an ever-present concern of his. Determined to avoid another Philippine insurrection, he pledged himself to restore to Filipinos "the sacred right of government by constitutional process . . . as rapidly as . . . the military situation will . . . permit."¹⁸

This predisposition to limit American interference must be kept in mind in analyzing MacArthur's civil affairs policies. But in point of fact MacArthur *did* exercise a profound influence over Philippine affairs. Given the hopelessly dependent position of the Commonwealth Government in 1944-45 keeping American "carpetbaggers" out meant, in effect, solidifying his own position. The more he delegated authority to Filipinos, the more he heightened his own stature. As his power to influence affairs mounted, he exercised it selectively. In particular he sought to leave his stamp on the emerging Philippine leadership. While he hoped to breathe new life into the leadership group, he feared that a general purge of old leaders whom he held in contempt would precipitate unrest. And while he sought to tap the guerrilla movement for dynamic new leaders, he shunned those resistance groups which threatened to delay a rapid return to peace and order. Let us look more closely at this very selective approach to intervention by analyzing his appointments policy.

In considering how appointments of new officials were made, it must first be made clear that MacArthur envisioned two broad

16. "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," prepared by the Civil Affairs Section, AFPAC, 25 August 1945, vol. 1, p. 14 (NARS/FRC/RG 338, 11082/29).

17. Standing Operating Procedure No. 26 (SOP #26), 9 October 1944, "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 2, appendix 8.

18. *Ibid.* The quotes are taken from proclamations made by MacArthur and included in this SOP #26.

phases of civil administration during liberation. In the first or combat phase, while military operations were still going on in the area, "the senior tactical commander . . . [would] be responsible for such civil administration and relief as circumstances permit." In the second, after hostilities had ceased in an area, the Commander-in-Chief would "delegate, as promptly as possible," the administration of civil affairs to the Commonwealth Government.¹⁹

During the first phase, therefore, MacArthur (through his Army commanders) enjoyed more control over appointments than later. This was especially so because as American troops advanced through the islands, all elective offices in areas which they liberated became vacant. Filipinos who had served in the Laurel Republic were relieved of their positions and many jailed as collaborators. As for those last elected before the war, they could no longer claim their elective positions in 1945 even when they had not collaborated. Local elections had last been held in December 1940, and the incumbents' terms had expired on 30 December 1943.²⁰ Who would be appointed to fill these vacancies?²¹ Who would be chosen in towns and provinces throughout the country to lead in constructing a new Philippines from the ruins of war?

Army and area commanders were instructed to appoint "temporary officials" who would serve until President Osmeña chose to replace them.²² In making their choices, they were to consult with "the highest representative of the Commonwealth available or the most reliable and loyal local citizens." New appointees were to be "controlled rigorously" at first, and then given "more responsibility as they demonstrated their ability and fitness to govern." So that supervision would be as rigorous as possible in the early months of liberation, commanders were urged to set up their

19. SOP #26, 9 October 1944, "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs." These orders were not changed by the Ad Hoc Committee's directive in November 1944. See SOP #27, 15 November 1944, "Report on Civil Affairs," vol. 2, appendix 11.

20. Those elected in December 1940 were the last to have only a three-year term. Had there been a local election in 1941 it would have been for four years, as was the case after the war. Elective offices in 1940 included those of governor and two additional provincial board members in regularly constituted provinces, and mayor, vice-mayor and councilmen in regularly constituted municipalities.

21. Under normal conditions President Osmeña would have filled vacancies by appointment in accordance with Commonwealth Act No. 357, except for mayoral vacancies, which were to be filled automatically by vice-mayors.

22. SOP #27, 15 November 1944, made it clear that Osmeña might remove these temporary officials and appoint his own even during the combat phase. "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 2, appendix 11.

headquarters in the same building in which governors or mayors had their office.²³

MacArthur's orders on temporary appointments stipulated that "provincial and municipal officers last serving under . . . *recognized* guerrilla leaders or in *recognized* free governments will occupy positions of equal or better rank as temporary officials."²⁴ Thus he gave preference to individuals who had opposed the Japanese so long as they were approved or "recognized" by him. Because many of these resistance officers had not held such high office before the war, this approach enhanced the possibilities for change in local and national leadership. But in implementing the orders, it became necessary to decide which individuals would be absolutely prohibited from appointment on grounds of collaboration and which would be bypassed because their guerrilla unit or "free government" had not been recognized. MacArthur's decisions on both of these issues (collaboration and guerrilla recognition) insured that those appointed by the Army would not differ radically from office-holders before the war.

Concerning collaborators, MacArthur did not propose simply to reinstate the old elite in power, but neither did he propose to purge *en masse* all those who had cooperated. Collaboration, he told Professor Hayden, was "not a legal question."²⁵ To treat it as such would be to lump the good men with the bad, to throw out the grain with the chaff. One had to make distinctions.

In prohibiting men from appointment on grounds of collaboration, MacArthur's criteria for judgment were highly subjective. He distinguished, for example, between the Executive Commission (formed in January 1942, and headed by Jorge Vargas) and the Republic (inaugurated on 14 October 1943, with Jose P. Laurel, Sr. as President). He bore no grudge against "people who held office at the time of the Executive Commission." After all, "the Japs had the right to demand that," and anyway "Vargas had received instructions [from Quezon]." Laurel, on the other hand, "didn't have to set up his 'republic,' and the others didn't have to join

23. SOP #26, 9 October 1944. SOP #27, 15 November 1944, omitted this provision. According to the authors of the "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," this change indicated "a desire to avoid all appearance of infringing on the independence of Commonwealth officials even though they be temporary appointees." (vol. 1, p. 12).

24. SOP #26, 9 October 1944. *Italics added.*

25. Taken from Professor Hayden's notes on his private conference with MacArthur, 24 November 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

him.”²⁶ Even among those who joined the Laurel Republic he made distinctions. On one occasion he vowed that if he could “lay his hands on a few particular men” he would have them tried by general court martial.²⁷ And later, not long after his dramatic return to the islands, he promised, “I’m not going after the little fellows — but the crowd in Manila, and fellows like Torres [Bernardo Torres, occupation governor of Leyte] are different.”²⁸

MacArthur issued a proclamation on the collaboration issue 29 December 1944. Even this did not clarify his position on the appointment of collaborators because he failed to define the term “collaborator.” He intended to remove persons who had given “aid, comfort and sustenance to the enemy” from “any position of political and economic influence.” But the fact that a person had served in the Laurel government did not necessarily mean that he had given “aid, comfort and sustenance to the enemy.”²⁹

Take the oft-mentioned case of Manuel Roxas. In 1944 he had served as chairman of Laurel’s Economic Planning Board and as supervisor of BIBA, the rice procurement agency. Yet in April 1945, MacArthur exonerated him completely.³⁰ Instead of being detained as a collaborator he was assigned to General Willoughby’s intelligence section.³¹ Instead of being retained on active duty as an officer in the USAFFE and thereby prevented from reentering politics until the war’s end, he was permitted in May to return to civilian life.³² Thereafter he had the best of both worlds — the

26. *Ibid.*

27. He had in mind particularly “officers in our Army” who had collaborated with the Japanese, “As for the rest,” he said, “let the Filipinos handle them.” (Hayden conversation with MacArthur, 8 May 1944, MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

28. Hayden conversation with MacArthur, 24 November 1944 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

29. For his proclamation of 29 December 1944, see the Commonwealth of the Philippines, *Official Gazette* 12 (May 1945): 148–49. For more on the collaboration issue, see David Joel Steinberg’s *Philippine Collaboration in World War II* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967). Steinberg suggests that MacArthur “tended to confuse America with himself,” and to regard “disloyalty to the United States as a personal breach, a type of *walang hiya*, of the oligarchy to him.” (*Philippine Collaboration*, pp. 109–10).

30. On 18 April 1945, the *Philippine Liberty News* quoted a communique released by MacArthur’s headquarters to the effect that Roxas had been “among those freed” from Japanese hands.

31. Consul-General Paul Steintorf, dispatch dated 2 May 1945 (NARS, State Department Decimal Series, No. 811b.00/5–245, hereinafter referred to as NARS/SDDS . . .).

32. Consul-General Steintorf, Cable No. 63, 23 May 1945 (NARS/SDDS/ No. 811b.00/5–2345). In this cable Steintorf noted that “the American Army controls the situation.

military, whose uniform he continued to wear, and the civilian, which welcomed his return to the political arena.

In fairness to Roxas, he participated in the Laurel Government under duress and only after the guerrilla intelligence group of which he was a member had been broken.³³ But MacArthur chose to treat him as a special case ultimately because he had known and liked him before the war and during the battle of Bataan, and because Roxas offered the type of leadership he deemed necessary for the postwar Philippines. Compared with Osmeña, he promised a younger, more dynamic, more "American" or technocratic approach to government. And more important still, he provided a link both to the guerrilla resistance (and particularly to the USAFFE guerrilla units) and to the collaborationist elements within the Philippine elite. With Roxas in power, a strongly pro-American government filled with USAFFE guerrilla leaders would also be a stable government with close ties to the colonial past.³⁴

Just as he refused to condemn elitist collaborators *en bloc*, so General MacArthur refused to support all resistance leaders who had helped prepare the way for American reoccupation. The case of the Hukbalahap provides one example of his selective use of "recognition." Formed on 29 March 1942, the Huks were by the

If it did not wish Roxas to reenter politics it could refuse to release him from active duty."

33. The extent of Roxas' participation in the resistance is still something of a mystery. MacArthur, however, was convinced of his loyalty. When Roxas asked to be evacuated because of increasing Japanese pressure on him to join the Laurel regime, MacArthur authorized the move and cabled Roxas: "You have been splendid in every way and I pray that God may preserve you for the future." The escape effort failed in February 1944. See General R. K. Sutherland to Allied Intelligence Bureau, 8 September 1943, transmitting message to Roxas from MacArthur, (MacArthur Memorial Archives, RG 16, Box 122, hereinafter referred to as MMA/RG . . .).

34. Two other aspects of MacArthur's collaboration policy deserve passing mention. *First*, men who had served in the Laurel government but who were not jailed by the Army could be appointed to civilian offices. Yet few of these men actually were appointed. This author has found only three governors appointed under American Army auspices who were wartime officials. It is not clear if any such officials were appointed to municipal positions. See the author's "The Politics of Reconstruction in the Philippines, 1945-1948" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1975), p. 87. *Second*, MacArthur declared that those men who were detained were to be held only "for the duration of the war," whereupon they would be released not to American civil authorities but "to the Philippine government for its judgment upon their respective cases." This part of his proclamation marked a significant departure from President Roosevelt's policy as defined on 29 June 1944, in which he did not set a time limit on American intervention in the collaboration issue. Clearly, the intent of MacArthur's proclamation was to confine American involvement in the question to the period when MacArthur himself exercised complete authority over Philippine affairs, to the exclusion of American officials in Washington.

Army's own estimate "one of the largest and most powerful guerrilla organizations in central Luzon."³⁵ They differed, however, from other guerrillas. Whereas officers in the prewar Philippine Army had become the nucleus of most resistance groups, peasant activists and their unions formed the Hukbalahap core. Willoughby's intelligence section or G-2 viewed the Huks with suspicion even before the landing on Leyte in October. It described them as a "semi-political, semi-bandit organization centered in Bulacan and Pampanga." Reports also indicated to G-2 that their policy was "definitely communistic," that their plans included "the establishment of a communistic government in the Philippines after the war, on the early Russian model," and that they very probably had "connections with communistic elements in China."³⁶

Because of its suspected intentions and rumored connections, the Hukbalahap was not expected to be a strong ally but rather "a difficult problem during reoccupation and possibly afterwards."³⁷ This attitude — that they were at the very least a problem and possibly a threat — pervaded the command's attitude toward the Huks. General MacArthur withheld his stamp of approval, preferring to recognize and appoint members of guerrilla organizations which did not challenge the traditional socioeconomic order in Central Luzon. With the exception of a few selected units, the Huks never won formal recognition, or received veterans benefits, or were appointed to public office by the United States Army.³⁸

We can see, therefore, that Filipinos appointed to office during liberation had to meet certain criteria. On the one hand, those who

35. Hukbalahap is short for *Hukbo ng Bayan laban sa Hapon*, or People's Anti-Japanese Army. This estimate is in "Report on the Hukbalahap," October 1944, in *The Guerrilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines*, vol. 1 of *The Intelligence Series*, G-2, USAFFE, SWPA, AFPAC, FEC, SCAP, comp. by Gen. Charles A. Willoughby (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1 March 1948), p. 12. (Hereinafter this volume will be referred to as *Guerrilla Resistance Movement*).

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.* In November 1944, MacArthur, at the urging of Courtney Whitney, sent a message to the Huks admonishing them not to interfere any more with the USAFFE guerrilla units in Central Luzon. The message said in part: "When our military operations have reached the island of Luzon it shall be my firm purpose to run down and bring to justice every Filipino who has so debased the cause of his own people as to molest or otherwise impede the service of any USAFFE officer or man in resisting the enemy." (24 November 1944, MMA/RG 16, Box 110).

38. The case of Maj. Jose Taguam and his battalion of 300 Huks in Nueva Ecija is the apparent exception. Luis Taruc says that this battalion, "with the aid of Governor Chiocho, was able to gain attachment . . . to the 32nd Division of the American army." This was known as the Dimasalang Force. See Luis Taruc's *Born of the People* (New York: International Publishers, 1953), p. 200.

had occupied positions under the Laurel Republic were rarely appointed. On the other, officials who had served under "recognized" free governments were given preference, while the Huks were shoved aside. These criteria did permit recognized guerrillas, many of whom had not been prominent before the war, to step into civil government positions during the early months of liberation. But MacArthur's principal concern was to put the lid on what he perceived to be a political tinderbox, and to do this as quickly as possible. Given this approach to the problems of Philippine rehabilitation, his policy did not leave much room for Filipinos who wanted to begin rebuilding their wartorn nation with a reallocation of power at the expense of prewar landed families. This will become even more evident as we look at *how* individuals were chosen for local offices.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: THE AGENCIES

Among the agencies which transmitted MacArthur's influence over civil affairs the following merit special attention: the Philippine Civil Affairs Section, the Philippine Civil Affairs Units (PCAU), and the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC).

No agency was specifically entrusted with responsibility for planning and coordinating civil administration until 30 August 1944 when the Civil Affairs Section under the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, was so assigned.³⁹ The section never amounted to much. It was used for research more than anything else, despite Professor Hayden's plea for a strong section. He warned in July 1944, that "inefficient administration of civil affairs . . . would present grave difficulties to military operations, to the Commander-in-Chief, and to [the] Philippine economy, . . . would endanger United States prestige in the Orient, . . . [and] would severely strain Philippine-American relations." Hayden also reminded MacArthur that "agencies in the U.S. anxious to play a part in the Philippines might exploit weaknesses in civil administration and relief."⁴⁰ This was an inter-

39. Staff Memorandum No. 35, 30 August 1944, Appendix 2 of "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 2 (NARS/FRC/RG 338, 111082/29). The Civil Affairs Section was actually created as a special USAFFE staff section by General Order no. 127, 27 November 1944. But the section then created was merely a continuation in both personnel and function of the G-5 Civil Affairs Section which had taken over from G-1 on 28 September 1944. Such was the bureaucratic journey taken by this agency.

40. Memorandum concerning Civil Administration and Relief in the Philippines, by Hayden and J. L. Rauh, 22 July 1944, Appendix 1 of "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs."

esting attempt to play on MacArthur's known antipathy for "meddling" by bureaucrats in Washington, but it did not work. Hayden's request for a strong central planning and coordinating office with a qualified executive and "a nucleus staff of senior officers" to head five functional divisions was rejected by MacArthur who assigned instead 'a limited number of civil affairs officers" to the staff of each Army or Area Commander.⁴¹

It fell to the 30 Philippine Civil Affairs Units (PCAU) to administer directives at the operational level. Normally comprised of 10 officers and 39 enlisted men (of whom many were Filipinos), the PCAUs were attached to the Sixth and Eighth Armies. The Army or Area Commander and Corps headquarters each had its own civil affairs section to coordinate the activities of the PCAUs under its jurisdiction. Under the orders of Army commanders, the PCAUs moved into recently-liberated communities on the heels of the infantry. Among their many tasks, they would provide food and clothing relief, repair public utilities, license and open stores, establish local police forces, furnish hospital and dispensary facilities for civilians, hire labor for combat units, and assist in reestablishing public schools.⁴² And that was not all. PCAUs were also responsible for appointing temporary public officials where the Commonwealth Government, lacking adequate means of transportation or communication, was unable to do this. So PCAUs appointed and paid these officials until the Commonwealth was ready, the officials appointed were ratified, or new officials were named.⁴³

Still another task of the PCAUs was to assist the Counter Intelligence Corps. These CIC units were responsible for examining the merits of potential appointees. The 459th Area CIC Detachment, for example, reported that it was checking "all potential insular appointees" in its area prior to their appointment. Since those whom they investigated included all constabulary personnel

41. Ibid. The five divisions proposed by Hayden were: Relief and Supply, General Administration and Utilities, Health and Sanitation, Finance and Economics, and Communications and Transportation. MacArthur's decision can be found in SOP #26.

42. This description of PCAU activities is taken from the "History of Philippine Civil Affairs Unit No. 20," 17 November 1944 - 3 June 1945 (NARS/FRC/RG 94, WWII Operations Reports, 1940-1948, "Philippine Civil Affairs Units.") Also useful was the "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 1, pp. 31-32. See SOP #26 for Standing Operating Procedure for PCAU.

43. This is a paraphrase of an enclosure entitled "Civil Affairs in the Philippines," in the report: "Philippine Civil Affairs: Policy and Organization," prepared by the Philippine Research and Information Section, USAFFE, 16 April 1945 (MHC, Hayden MSS, Box 42).

and all municipal officials, they had, by their own admission, "a firm and reliable control over appointments."⁴⁴ They usually entered liberated towns even before the PCAU arrived, and in such cases it was their task to establish provisional civil governments. "The first step . . . was to determine the loyalty of the incumbent mayor, whether a puppet appointee or not. Otherwise, the prewar mayor, if available, was reinstated."⁴⁵ Wherever possible, CIC units maintained close liaison with PCAUs in the clearance of public officials.⁴⁶ Between them they left little to chance. In fact, until March 1945, virtually all appointments were made by these units.⁴⁷ By comparison, Osmeña did very little. Complained one PCAU report, "the lack of action by the Commonwealth Government is probably the greatest stumbling block in the way of the early turn-over of civil government to local officials."⁴⁸

The CIC and PCAU selected individuals for appointment by asking for recommendations from prominent prewar leaders who had not collaborated. Thus Civil Affairs Unit Seventeen, operating in the provinces of Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon, received orders to postpone making appointments until the arrival of Maj. Ramon O. Nolasco, the prewar fiscal of Misamis Occidental who had become Judge Advocate General of the Tenth Military District under Col. Wendell Fertig before being picked as Civil Affairs Officer of the same district. With his assistance they ultimately located qualified people for appointment to insular, provincial, and municipal positions.⁴⁹ The names were submitted to CIC for

44. 459th CIC Area Detachment Report of Operations, in the 441st CIC Detachment Report (20 October 1944 - 1 January 1945), Documentary Appendix to vol. 8, *The Intelligence Series*. It should be noted that CIC officers were also responsible for investigating cases of treason, espionage and sabotage, arresting and interrogating known enemy agents and collaborationists, and supervising censorship of newspapers and periodicals. They were not, that is to say, purely concerned with appointments.

45. 306th CIC Detachment, Sixth Army, "CIC in the Luzon Operation: A Brief History of the Counter Intelligence Corps in the Luzon Campaign, 9 January 1945 - 30 June 1945," Documentary Appendix to vol. 8, *Intelligence Series*.

46. See the 441st CIC Detachment Situation Report, SWPA, November 1944 (NARS/FRC/RG 407, 18339, folder marked "Monthly Reports of Activities, SWPA - 441st CIC Detachment"). The 210th CIC Detachment, under the 441st, reported here that "a blacklist file has been created by the Detachment, made up of persons suspected of being collaborationists or espionage agents by guerrilla organizations. Names are being investigated."

47. The monthly "Consolidated Reports of the Eighth Army PCAUs" stated in February 1945 that "during the period no permanent officials were appointed by the Commonwealth Government." ("Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 1, p. 39).

48. *Ibid.*, p. 40. The Commonwealth got busy appointing people in March.

49. Nolasco also was married into a family (Chavez) which was closely related to

clearance, which, according to a CIC report, was "normally accomplished through the informant panel." Selected by the local CIC units, informant panels consisted of "six civilians of unquestioned loyalty and integrity who had a broad knowledge of the activities of the civilian populace during the occupation." They were consulted by CIC agents as they made their investigations. In Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon, appointment orders were finally issued in June 1945.⁵⁰

Use of men (like Nolasco) who had close connections both with prewar oligarchy and the wartime resistance, and of the informant panels as well, insured a high degree of continuity in local authority. According to CIC directives, when incumbent free-government officials were not available, or when they were not recommended by selected informants, then prewar officials who had not collaborated were sought out and reinstated.⁵¹ This reflected the preeminent concern in General MacArthur's headquarters for maintaining political stability in the Philippines.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: THE CENTRAL LUZON CASE

MacArthur's civil affairs policy of limited but selective interference for the purpose of minimizing public disorder is best seen in analyzing how this policy was implemented in Central Luzon. First we will look at how he limited military interference there, and then at how he used his authority within these limitations to the detriment of Hukbalahap guerrillas and the advantage of their enemies.

In January and February 1945, MacArthur received two memos recommending that he order the disarming of Huk units. The first, from his G-3, admitted that Huks posed no threat whatsoever to

other wealthy families which had literally controlled politics in Misamis Oriental since the nineteenth century. See the "Unit History, Philippine Civil Affairs Unit No. 17," May-June 1945 (NARS/FRC/RG 407, Box 22418).

50. Ibid. These informant panels were not used everywhere. In Bukidnon, for example, investigators relied largely on just one man - Dr. Carlos Fortich, son of Manuel Fortich, who had dominated the province politically for 30 years. The "Operations Report, Mindanao Campaign, 31st Infantry Division," 22 April - 30 June 1945, states that "when the division headquarters arrived . . . Dr. Carlos H. Fortich . . . immediately returned and began laying groundwork for the resumption of provincial and municipal functions" (NARS/FRC/RG 407, Box 8958, 31st Infantry Division [331.0-331.0.3]). Mrs. Carlos Fortich has told the author that American officers occupying the province dined with the Fortich family frequently and that her husband met with the commanding officer at least twice a week for consultations.

51. "Report on Philippine Civil Affairs," vol. 1, p. 12.

American forces, but charged that they were a potential threat to the Commonwealth Government. For this reason it urged him to "take the wind out of the sails of this organization" by directing the Commanding General of the Sixth Army to have Hukbalahap elements "disarmed immediately" as soon as contact was made with them.⁵² In another anti-Huk memo on 20 February 1945, Courtney Whitney advised MacArthur to proclaim Central Luzon liberated and hence no longer in need of armed resistance by people not employed in the Philippine Army, the Constabulary, or duly constituted local police forces. Such persons would be urged in the proclamation to "turn in their arms to the nearest United States military commander."⁵³

It is noteworthy that General MacArthur did not approve either the G-3 recommendation to have the Hukbalahap "disarmed immediately," or the Whitney suggestion that he "employ . . . [his] personal leadership" and call upon Huks to turn in their guns. Although he shared the suspicions of his staff concerning Huk ideological orientations, he took pains to avoid involving American troops in open conflict with them, fearing that this would spark widespread antagonism toward Americans throughout Central Luzon.

MacArthur thus directed that "no action" be taken on the G-3 memorandum. He stated that difficulties with the Huks would be treated as isolated cases and handled by local commanders. Furthermore he instructed these commanders to make use of local Huk units "when it is to our advantage to do so."⁵⁴ His response to Whitney, written in the margin of the 20 February memo, is even more to the point. He insisted that the problem of arms-bearing in Central Luzon was not an American problem but rather a matter for the Commonwealth Government. Let them enforce the law prohibiting possession of arms without a license. "I do not care to enforce it." To become involved in disarming Huks, he warned, would "precipitate most violent reactions." In a comment reminiscent of his statements to Professor Hayden earlier, he pre-

52. S. J. C. of G-3 to MacArthur, 30 January 1945 (MMA/RG 16, Box 122).

53. Courtney Whitney to MacArthur, 20 February 1945 (MMA/RG 16, Box 13, folder marked "Hukbalahaps").

54. See R. J. M. to G-3, 1 February 1945 (MMA/RG 16, Box 122, folder marked "January 1945").

dicted that "much more blood would be then shed than under any present guerrilla conditions — and if it becomes the white man against the Filipinos — we will have another insurrection with all Filipinos finally crystallizing against us." At bottom, he noted, "it is political — not merely a question of law and order — and as such should not be handled by the military." Anyway, he concluded, "these guerrillas are absolutely no menace to our armed forces."⁵⁵

Yet despite General MacArthur's unwillingness to engage American troops in the task of disarming Huks, his command did initiate policies against Huk interests in early 1945. When PCAUs entered liberated barrios in Central Luzon, they "removed the Hukbalahap officials, often replacing them with Filipinos from recognized USAFFE guerrilla units with which they were embattled."⁵⁶ Professor Kerkvliet comments that in Talavera, Nueva Ecija, "Hukbalahap supporters were disappointed to learn that no Hukbalahap leaders were included among the new officials" chosen by PCAU.⁵⁷ In most cases, Huk officials acquiesced and permitted PCAU and Commonwealth Government appointees to replace them. In the Huk core area of Pampanga, however, where Huk leaders could count on overwhelming popular support, they balked. In Candaba, for example, Osmeña appointees had to share offices with Huk officials who refused to leave.⁵⁸ Referring primarily to Huks, the 306th CIC detachment complained that "these outlaw bands have the backing of the majority in many cases CIC is unable to combat this situation."⁵⁹

The Counter Intelligence Corps did more than interfere in the selection of public officials in Central Luzon villages. The Huk leadership became the object of a CIC manhunt in February 1945. According to the 306th Detachment, it "became the responsibility of CIC to determine the identity of . . . individuals who were, 'for one reason or another, unsympathetic toward the United States,' to apprehend them, to investigate their activities, and, when justi-

55. See Courtney Whitney to MacArthur, 20 February 1945 (MMA/RG 16, Box 13, folder marked "Hukbalahaps"). The note quoted above is in MacArthur's handwriting.

56. Robert Ross Smith, "The Hukbalahap Insurgency: Economic, Political, and Military Factors" (Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1963), pp. 54–55.

57. Kerkvliet, "Peasant Rebellion" p. 366.

58. William Owens, "Will the Huks Revolt?" *Asia and the Americas* (February 1946): 56.

59. 306th CIC Detachment Report (June 1945), Documentary Appendix to vol. 3 of *The Intelligence Series*.

fied by evidence, to intern them pending action by the Philippine Commonwealth Government." Despite their "valuable service" during the war, the Huks had, by their "irresponsible and terroristic activities . . . fostered unrest and dissension among the people and seriously hampered the efforts of the U.S. Army to restore peace and order." Furthermore, they were "unquestionably communist-inspired."⁶⁰ So on 22 February, members of the General Headquarters of the Hukbalahap including Casto Alejandrino and Luis Taruc were arrested and detained by the CIC in San Fernando, Pampanga. They were freed three weeks later, but not before undergoing intense interrogation and not until after some 50,000 people converged on San Fernando to demand their release. Recalling the interrogation sessions, Taruc remarked that "they kept asking questions about how many Communists there were in the Huk, and who they were. It seemed as if they had forgotten the Japanese and considered the Communists their main enemy."⁶¹

The most explosive point at issue between the Hukbalahap and the Army, however, concerned Huk disarmament. Considering the evidence of MacArthur's opposition to direct American disarmament of the Huks, it would appear that American troops were never formally ordered to engage in this overtly anti-Huk activity. But American commanders permitted Filipino USAFFE units to do the work for them. There were also some instances where American troops did disarm a Huk unit, suggesting that such activities were condoned if not endorsed by MacArthur.⁶²

Instead of surrendering their weapons, the Huks offered to place their strength at the disposal of the United States Army. In effect, they asked to be recognized in the same manner as the USAFFE guerrilla units. In a few cases this was done. Huk squadrons in Laguna Province which had "especially good relations with the 11th Airborne Division," and which were estimated by American

60. *Ibid.*

61. Taruc, *Born of the People*, p. 197. Taruc and Alejandrino were arrested by the CIC again on 8 April and held without being charged until 25 and 30 September respectively, apparently because they refused to order Huk units to surrender their weapons.

62. An example of Americans permitting Filipinos to do the anti-Huk work for them occurred in Malolos, Bulacan, when the local USAFIP unit under Adonais Maclang arrested and disarmed Huk Squadron Seventy-seven. Maclang appears also to have murdered many of the members of the squadron. For evidence of American complicity in the cover-up of this crime, see the communique from Capt. J. O. Platt to Col. Thorpe, 12 March 1945 (MMA/RG 16, Box 122). For an example of American troops actually disarming a Huk unit themselves, see Kerkvliet's description of the Silvestre Liwanag incident, January 1945, in "Peasant Rebellion," p. 379.

intelligence to number "no more than 200 rifles," were attached to the American Army.⁶³ In Laguna, also in contrast to Central Luzon, the Huk provisional governor, Jesus Lava, was permitted to stay in power. But MacArthur never recognized the Hukbalahap in Central Luzon, a guerrilla force numbering 4,000 rifles and 500 machine guns (by American intelligence estimates).⁶⁴ This in itself was bad enough, for it meant that these guerrillas would not be eligible for veterans benefits after the war. But nonrecognition had a more immediate meaning: it led to the conclusion that Huks were merely civilians in arms and should, once the Japanese had been driven from Central Luzon, give up their weapons and go home. In the meantime, Huk enemies were recognized and allowed to keep their arms, which they quickly turned against the Hukbalahap. MacArthur's partiality toward the USAFFE guerrillas thus placed members of the Hukbalahap in a difficult position; they could lay down their arms and become easy prey for their enemies, or they could hold onto their arms and become the objects of deepening suspicion among Americans, including General MacArthur himself.

CONCLUSION

Because MacArthur had lived in Manila before the war and knew many Filipino leaders personally, he dealt with civil affairs in a personal way. Thus he opposed a blanket condemnation of collaborators, yet denounced individuals like Jose Laurel; he opposed direct use of American troops against the Huks, yet approved the arrest of selected Huk leaders like Luis Taruc.

But his impact on civil affairs was more than just personal. The circle of his personal acquaintances did not spread very far beyond Manila. Out in the provinces where civil affairs were the purview of the Philippine Civil Affairs Units and Counter Intelligence Corpsmen, it was not his personal preferences but his strategic priorities that mattered. As an American military commander planning the invasion of Japan in 1945, MacArthur accentuated

63. *Guerrilla Resistance Movement*, p. 15. For another case of American recognition of a Huk unit, see footnote 38. More typical of Huk-American cooperation was the case of Bernardo Pobleto (Commander Banal). Some of his units were recognized but only after they had broken with the Huk command.

64. *Ibid.*

stability, favored the appointment of pro-American guerrillas, and distrusted the agrarian radical movement in Central Luzon. Through the PCAUs and CICs, he saw to it that the emerging Philippine leadership would serve above all to effect a rapid return to peace and order. He channeled American influence against those seeking liberation not only from the Japanese but from the social and economic constraints of their colonial past.