

PHILIPPINE COUNTRY REPORT
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Prepared by the Philippine Working Group (PWG)*

This paper is a compilation of work and documents provided by members of the Philippine Working Group, and edited by Aida F. Santos, Country Coordinator for the International Meeting. Specific contributions came from Amnesty International-Pilipinas, BUKLOD, KAISA Ka, and WEDPRO. A shorter version is prepared for the Country Paper presentation for the open meeting on 26 November 2004.

Department of Agriculture FY 2003
P2,059,886
Department of Health
Department of Defense
PNP

Introduction

This meeting comes at a time when the Filipino people is commemorating historical events that had been imprinted in the present day struggles of many sectors of Philippine society, and especially within the ranks of women and human rights advocates. This November, we remember the entry of the Japanese occupying forces to a village in Mapanique, Pampanga where hundreds of women, men and children suffered the brunt of the occupation, and left hundreds of what has been popularly known as “comfort women” as victim-survivors forcibly held and violated in sexual slavery facilities. We also remember the departure of the US military forces from the 21 US military facilities in the country in 1991. November is also the month where a global campaign to address violence against women, called 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence is being held in many parts of the world.

This meeting is being held amidst a time of global unrest, at the heel of the occupation of the US forces of Iraq, and amidst unrelenting armed conflicts and civil unrests in many parts of the world that continue to harm, maim, kill civilians, especially the most vulnerable populations-women, children and the elderly. Human security is endangered, and development is a dark alley that millions navigate in search of peace and social justice.

The present paper is divided into three sections, following the thematic concerns of the International Meeting.

The first part will deal with the issue of militarism and its environmental impact on communities. Specifically it will focus on the environmental concerns related to the presence of toxic materials left by the US military forces during the presence of the same up to the early 1990s, and include the actions taken by groups addressing this concern.

The second part will discuss the issue of human security in relation to violence against women, in particular on the issues of prostitution and sexual exploitation, and the reproductive rights issues compromised by militaristic cultures.

The third part will discuss the issue of human rights and its implications to human security.

Part 1 - Militarism and its Environmental Impact on Communities

Brief History of US Bases in the Philippines

Since the late 1800s, the Philippines was colonized by the United States, after 300 years of Spanish colonial rule. In 1946, independence was granted the Philippines. To date, the US remains a key player in the economic, political, social and cultural life of Filipinos. In 1947 up to 1991, the Philippines hosted the US military facilities in the country¹

In 1992, the governments of the Philippines and the United States agreed to become partners in holding of joint military exercises between the Philippines, US and at times Singapore. Two years after, in 1994, the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was proposed. In 1997, the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). In 1999 the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was signed. The agreement features the following elements:

- Visits of aircrafts, ships and vessels
- Access to 22 ports
- Geographic reach expanded to include Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao
- US personnel exempted and with extended privileges
- US have total jurisdiction over crimes committed by US personnel
- Philippines waives the right to exercise jurisdiction (over all offenses committed by US troops), and its claims on damages to the environment and destructions caused by the activities of the VFA

The Mutual Logistics and Support Agreement (MLSA) is regarded by many as a “Trojan horse”, with empty promises of military aid that has been shroud in secrecy as no draft agreement is presented/released to date. The MLSA has various implications to the Philippines and the Filipino people: it grants permanent basing services and setting up of infrastructure to the U.S.; offers not just 22 ports but the entire country as facility for land, sea and air spaces, and expands the application of the MDT. (“The Philippine SOFA and

the State of the Philippine-US security relations”, a powerpoint presentation, prepared by the NFPC, Gathering for Peace Secretariat, no date)

Impacts and Implications of US military bases and presence

- On local communities - toxic contamination, noise pollution, damage to property - TOXIC LEGACY IN THE FORMER US BASE
- On the economy – highly dependent on the economy servicing US military presence: entertainment, service providers on and off base
- Women, children, Amerasians: prostitution, rape, sexual abuse, unrecognized & neglected children out of casual sex, injustice
- Indigenous Peoples – ancestral lands expropriated unjustly
- Foreign policy, sovereignty – subservience to US interest
- Human rights, Crimes of servicemen – Not a single US soldier was tried in Phil. Court under Phil. laws
- On people’s security – source of people’s insecurity
- On the environment – the Toxic Legacy of US presence in the Phils (“The Philippine Country Report, “ prepared by Cora Fabros for the Philippine Reader on US Bases, October 2004?)

Human Cost of Environmental Damage Caused by U.S. Bases

The People’s Task Force for Bases Clean Up – Philippines report states:

Soon after the withdrawal of the US Air Force and Navy in November 1991 and 1992, respectively, the nightmare of toxic contamination began to surface. In June 1991, roughly 20,000 poor families were relocated by Philippine government inside Clark Air Base in a place called CABCOM, or Clark Air Base Command. These 20,000 poor families were temporarily placed there because they were displaced by strong volcanic eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

While in Cabcom, these families were given by Philippine government more than 100 pump wells to be installed on the Cabcom grounds where they would draw their daily water needs for drinking, cooking, milk of their children, bathing, laundry, and other daily water requirements. A few months later, many of these poor families began complaining of stomach problems, skin disorders, and vomiting. Soon pregnant women began to experience spontaneous abortions, still births, birth defects and deformities. Many young children and old persons have died of various ailments including leukemia, cancer, heart ailments, lung problems, kidney problems, among others.

By September 2000, the People’s Task Force For Bases Clean-Up has documented more than 100 deceased victims and more 300 living victims suffering from neurological disorders, heart ailments, leukemia, and kidney problems, among many others. In 2000 the People’s Task Force on Bases Clean Up filed a toxic suit that were classified into three categories, namely: (1) the human victims who suffered deaths and serious ailments due to toxic chemical

contamination; (2) the Philippine environment; and (3) the Filipino people, both the present and future generations, being the beneficiaries of the Philippine environment.

To date, the US government and the Philippine government denied any responsibility or liability for this human tragedy. The efforts to get justice for the communities and victims of the toxic waste and environmental poisons caused by the military presence continue with high spirits and with vigorous dynamism from various groups including the victims themselves and their advocates. We can all expect that there will be children who will be born 10 years, or maybe even 20 years from now, suffering from deformities or defects caused by toxic chemicals dumped irresponsibly by US Navy in Subic and US Air Force in Clark.

Part II - Violence Against Women and Human Rights

Women's organizations in the Philippines have been involved in VAW work since the 1980s, implementing programs and services that include consciousness-raising, organizing, education and training, research, advocacy and campaigns. Women's groups have been successful in pushing for the passage of two landmark legislation: the Anti-rape Law of 1997 (RA No. 8353) and The Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998 (RA No. 8505).

Despite these landmark accomplishments, however, the incidence of violence against women appears to be deteriorating in terms of frequency, intensity and severity. This gender-based violence takes various forms such as physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or psychological and economic abuse. Government statistics and data from NGO and academic researches suggest that violence against women in the family and AWIR can be considered as the most prevalent type of VAW in the Philippines.

Available local literature on VAW suggest that majority of women-survivors endure long-term, repeated and escalating violence from their husbands or intimate partners. The conservative values and strict standards of morality engendered by a predominantly Catholic society, and the patriarchal institutions and its attendant values are pinpointed as the root causes of VAW. Another factor that hinders efforts to adequately address the problem of VAW is the misconception that VAW is a "private matter," thus for a long time, neighbors, local community, and law enforcement agents have been reluctant to intervene. While some sectors of Philippine society insist on clinging to the idea that VAW is a private matter between the concerned parties, i.e., wife and husband or intimate partner, Amnesty International-Pilipinas asserts that VAW is a human rights violation.

VAW, Women's Human Rights and Due Diligence

Two principles underpin the anti-VAW campaign in the Philippines—**VAW as a women's human rights violation** and the concept of **due diligence**. Elimination of VAW is an intrinsic part of human rights work and AI can contribute in the area of raising VAW as a human rights issue as well as raise the issue of due diligence by the State, in relation to VAW by both State and non-State actors. Due diligence by the State was hitherto hardly brought up in the discourse of DV/AWIR in the Philippines.

The concept of **due diligence** of the State provides that individual governments can be held accountable in national and international arenas for its failure to exercise due diligence to prevent VAW, protect women from VAW, investigate and punish perpetrators. The concept of due diligence of the State provides that the State can be held accountable even if the State itself has not committed the human rights violations.

Economic Woes and Cutbacks on Social Services

Globalization, structural adjustment programs, the debt trap, and the chronic fiscal deficit of the government, all contribute to worsening poverty and cutbacks on spending on social services such as public education and health, including VAW-related programs.

The proposed national government budget for 2004 is PhP864.8 billion. This does not include the off budget item for payments of amortization of the principal of foreign and domestic debt which is approximately PhP270.66 billion. Based on the recomputed national budget of PhP1.16 trillion, debt servicing accounts for 46.7 percent while only 21.4 percent is devoted to social services. The targeted national government deficit for 2004 is PhP198.7 billion.

Given the chronic deficit, a debt servicing policy that eats up almost half of the national budget while the provision of social services is not a priority, it is likely that VAW related services and projects would again not be allocated funds. For example, RA 8505 or the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection law of 1998, calls for the establishment of rape crisis centers (RCCs) in every province and municipality. The law also provides that an initial budget of PhP120 million be allocated for the first year of implementation. To date, no funds have been allocated or released for its implementation, three years after the law has been passed.

The World Bank's 1993 World Development Report estimated that five (5) percent of the healthy years of lives of women aged fifteen (15) to forty-four (44) are lost due to experiences of violence. In the Philippines, the computations made by the National Commission on the Role of the Filipino Woman (NCRFW), based on the 1991 cases of reported battered and raped women who sought help, peg income loss of these women at around PhP19 million.

Based on the 1996 statistic on the incidence of VAW, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) estimated that services to the 7,975 reported cases of rape and battered women would have cost the government some PhP48.5 million per month. Based on the formula used, assuming that half of the estimated 3.6 million women victims/survivors sought medical assistance, the projected costs of services limited to medical, psychological and crisis intervention would have run to a PhP109.5 million per month or a staggering PhP1.314 billion for one year (Yap, E., NCRFW and UNFPA: 1998).

These estimates are incomplete given that the computations were based only on the reported cases that sought assistance from various government and non-governmental institutions. Moreover, the literature on VAW warn us that we cannot begin to understand the 'intangible' costs of VAW, which include the physical, emotional and psychological impacts.

With regard to the poverty situation, studies suggest that worsening poverty may be a mitigating factor to VAW—unemployment and economic difficulties have been observed to aggravate the incidence of violence in the family or in intimate relationships. Women are the targets of violence of frustrated husbands/partners who could not find work but now has a lot of time on their hands and could even afford to get drunk with the other unemployed men in the community.

VAW experiences of Filipina migrant workers

Another form of VAW identified to be of key importance, which is unique to the Philippine experience, is violence against women migrant workers. Aside from the VAW they experience in the workplace, usually at the hands of their recruiters and employers in the country of deployment, there are also reports that tend to establish the complicity of government officials (e.g. case against labor attaché and Philippine consulate/embassy personnel). Case in point are the experiences of at least eight (8) women migrant workers in Lebanon and the case filed against the Labor Attaché to Lebanon accused of negligence of duty and grave misconduct. The Labor Attaché has also been accused of allegedly conspiring with Lebanese recruitment agencies and employers, and abandoning the victims when they sought repatriation. There is a need to further validate these reports and gather documentation of similar cases.

It is estimated that 57 percent (784,970) of migrant workers¹ are women who contribute a sizable percentage to the approximately US\$ 6 to 7 billion OFW remittances annually (Alcid, 1999:86). These women could be extremely vulnerable to accepting SALEP jobs—“shunned by all nationals except the very poorest,” or 3D jobs (dirty, demeaning and dangerous).² These women are extremely vulnerable to VAW. In view of these, it might be advisable to evaluate how violence against migrant women workers figure in the anti-VAW campaign.

What are very evident in the reports are the violations of the basic civil and political rights as well as the fundamental economic social and cultural rights of many people in the said situations. Amnesty International is witness to the use of small arms to commit gross abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law—whether in war, armed conflict, crime, law enforcement, state repression, or violence in the home.

¹ 1993 to 1998 figures on new hires for land-based overseas employment

² Mary Lou Alcid (1999) “The Impact of the Asian Financial Crisis on International Labor Migration of Filipino Women.” *Carrying the Burden of the World: Women Reflecting on the Effects of the Crisis on Women and Children*. UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo and Jeanne Frances Illo, eds.

And the three most important issue surrounding violence against women in the conflict are 1) lack of women's security in situations where the rule of law has collapsed; 2) abuse of women by armed groups; 3) abuse of women by security or state personnel.

Civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugee, internally displaced persons and increasingly targeted by combatants and armed elements

Women as caregivers, combined with higher levels of poverty, mean that the impact of war's destruction weighs heavily on them. At the same time, women are the backbone of the community, their ideas, energy and involvement is essential to rebuilding society in the aftermath of any conflict or war. These include rebuilding their confidence and capacity to ensure their security as human beings towards sustainable development.

Our common framework is establishing and highlighting the commonalities of the violence that affects women regardless of the country they are in, while at the same time stressing the **CONTINUUM of the violence against women**, whether full scale armed conflict, a post conflict or where there is an arbitrary military presence. Draft version, "Work on Own Country (WOOC) Project on Due Diligence for the Anti-Violence Against Women (VAW) Campaign," Amnesty International-Pilipinas, 7 October 2003)

WHAT IS MILITARIZATION and SMALL ARMS?

Militarization is the process where a society becomes increasingly dominated by military values, institutions and patterns of behavior dominating influence on the political, social, economic and external affairs of a society

Militarization often begins long before the outbreak of fighting and its legacy remains long after the main hostilities have ended. It is a growing reality in societies all over the globe seen in the dramatic rise in global military expenditure and the subordination of human concerns to the "security" agenda of the states. It is reflected in the use of force to resolve international and internal disputes, foreign occupation, internal conflicts and the proliferation of arms.

The uncontrolled global arms trade is both a manifestation of this trend and a contributory factor to increased conflict and aggression. Most of the armed violence that affects women, both in and out of conflict, is committed with small arms: guns or weapons that can be carried and used by one person.

There are approximately 639 million small arms in the world today- once for every 10 people in the world -, produced by morethan1135 companies in at

least 98 countries. Eight million weapons are produced every year. Nearly 60 percent of small arms are in civilian hands. At least 16 billion units of military ammunition were produced in 2001 alone – more than two military bullets for every man, woman and child on the planet³

The arms trade has rapidly expanded over the past few decades. Global military expenditures in the early 1990 were more than 60 percent higher in real terms in the 1970s and twice as high as in the 1960s⁴

The easy accessibility of small arms tends to increase the incidence of armed violence, prolong wars once they break out and enable grave and widespread abuses of human rights. In some situations the escalating supply of arms, whether through legal or illegal means acts as trigger for conflict and further fuel to sustain a long-term conflict

Arms shipments in Rwanda, principally from China, France, South Africa and Egypt in the tense months preceding the civil war in 1994, are widely considered to have encouraged and facilitated the eventual genocide, even though most atrocities were committed by people wielding agricultural tools.⁵

The importance of arms is greatest as fuel to sustain long-term conflict, responsible not so much for the initiation of wars, but for their continuation. Armed conflict cannot be sustained without the supply of arms or, where they are already abundant, without ammunition.⁶

In the Beijing Platform for Action, states committed themselves to reduce excessive military expenditure and control the availability of armaments, to permit the possible allocation of additional funds for social and economic development, in particular for the advancement of women.⁷

There are over 40 countries in varying conflict situations involving armed violence of varying intensity in the world. In virtually all of these conflicts, the forces involved – be they state forces or armed groups –are responsible for abusing international human rights and humanitarian laws.

THE COST AND EFFECT OF VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AND BEYOND

Violence in “peace time”

While there are debates over the best way of ameliorating the culture of violence, that is often prevalent in societies that are crime-ridden, this basic

³ Small Arms Survey 2002, op, cit., p 14

⁴ Ruth Leger Sivard, World Military and Social Expenditures 1991. World Priorities Inc, USA

⁵ Rwanda: Arming the Perpetrators of the Genocide (AI Index AFR 02/014/1995)

⁶ Ed Cairns, Internal document on conflict resolution.

⁷ Beijing Platform of Action, Strategic Objective E2 para. 143b.

concern cannot be ignored. Studies from developed countries consistently show a clear correlation between household gun ownership and death rates. The link is most clearly seen in the case of suicides and accidental deaths, especially among young people⁸. Sometimes it is police and other law-enforcement officials who commit armed crime and violate human rights. For example, In Brazil, police in many areas have been linked to “death squads” responsible for hundreds of killings, of children, which have long gone unpunished.

Furthermore, in many societies, children have become targets in drug wars, in political and gang related killing and as victims of police brutality. In Honduras, at least 1817 street children have been killed over the last five years.

Again, in many societies, the death and injury of large numbers of people, many were young, have profound consequences for development. It reduces the number of people entering the work force, diverting family and social resources into care of those disabled by gun violence and forcing governments to redirect funding from social services to public security. If at all the social services are well placed and delivered to the people.

In non-conflict situations, a number of studies have suggested that the risk of being murdered by an intimate partner increase with the availability of firearms.⁹ When they are readily available, firearms are the weapons of choice when men kill their partners. In the USA, 51 percent of female murder victims are shot , according to the Violence Policy Center in 1999., Consistent with other international studies, research by Gun Control Alliance in South Africa in 1999 suggests that more women are shot at home in acts of domestic violence than are shot by strangers on the streets or by intruders.

Threatening behaviors are astonishingly similar across cultures; they include shooting the family dog as a warning, or getting out a gun and cleaning it during argument. A 10-month study in Northern Ireland showed that the increased availability of guns meant that more dangerous forms of violence were used against women in the home.

In the Philippines.....

Violence in conflict or war situation

Following the logic of the previous paragraph, women living through conflict not only have to endure assaults or the threat of assaults by the other side, but they also faces increased levels of violence from within their families, at the

⁸ Peter Cummings, Thomas D. Koepsell, Does owning a firearm increase or decrease the risk of death? Controversies, 5 AGUST 1989.

⁹ Gender and Small Arms, Wendy Cuckier, Small Arms Firearms Education and Research Network (SAFER-Net)

same time as they are depended upon to rebuild their communities from the devastation of constant attacks during the conflict.

Since the *intifada*, Palestinian women, have been exposed to increased levels of violence-not only through the destruction of their homes and communities by Israeli forces, but also through increased domestic violence.

A poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion in 2002 showed that “86 percent, which is up by 22 percent in the previous year, of respondents said violence against women had significantly or somewhat increased as a result of changing political, economic and social conditions of Palestinian women”.¹⁰

The examples above are a manifestation that instability and armed conflict lead to increase in all forms of violence including genocide, rape and sexual violence.

During conflicts, violence against women is often used as a weapon of war, in order to dehumanize the women themselves, or to persecute the community to which they belong. Women are likely to form the greatest proportion of the adult civilian population killed in war and targeted for abuse.

Refugees and internally displaced people

Women and children are estimated to make up 80 percent of the refugees and internally displaced people forced to flee their homes for protection in other countries during armed conflict. They are fleeing violence only to end up finding more violence.

This is the major reason why today, 40 million people worldwide are refugees or internally displaced within their own countries. At the end of 2002, around 22 million people cross the world were internally displaced. About 13 million were refugees and asylum seekers¹¹. Estimates show that 4.3 million people were newly uprooted in 2002, the majority in Africa. In Sudan alone, more than four million people are displaced, 85 percent of the inhabitants of southern Sudan are thought to have been displaced at least once in the last 15 years.

In Colombia, more than 250,000 people have been displaced each year for the last five years. It reaches an estimated 350,000 in 2003.

The government of Colombia in 2003 reported that 36 percent of displaced women in the country have been forced to have sexual relations with men.

¹⁰ Domestic Violence against Palestinian Women rises, Middle East Times, 20 September 2002, based on reporting from Agence France-Presse.

¹¹ World Refugee Survey 2003, US Committee for Refugees, May 2003.

However, sometimes people are forced to flee as an intentional strategy of war. This was the case for example, during the conflicts in Central America in the late 1970s and early 1980s; in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; in East Timor (now Timor Leste) in 1999, during the recent conflicts in Burundi and Angola; and in Western Sudan this year (2004).

As they traveled, they faced military or civilian checkpoints and roadblocks, where they were humiliated, threatened, and forced to pay bribes or hand over food and other possessions. In other places, armed groups and governments put limits on people's movement. Checkpoints prevent free passage, borders are closed, passes are required, civilians are "advised" when to travel.

This restrictions bar access to food, work, basic commerce, education and medical attention. The right to move freely is particularly critical for pregnant women, and sick and injured people.

Even refugees fleeing on foot from one camp to another had to pass so many checkpoints that they literally had no money or possessions left. In at least one incident, helicopter gunship flew low over a refugee camp and launched artillery close to the camp in Sierra Leone, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries, in attacks, which appeared to be an attempt to frighten the refugees into leaving¹².

Abduction and Hostage-taking

Men women and children are abducted at gunpoint and forced to fight or work for their abductors. In Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army has abducted more than 20,000 children since 1986; children make up a very high proportion of LRA soldiers. Those caught trying to escape are summarily executed as a warning to others.

China Keitetsi, a former **girl child soldier** wrote a book about her experiences as a child soldier in Uganda under the National Resistance Army (NRA). In one of her stories she has this to share;

"We were bodyguards to our bosses, we cooked, and we looked after them, instead of them looking after us. We collected firewood, we carried weapons and for girls it was worse because... we were girlfriends to many different officers. Today, I can't think how many officers slept with me, and at the end it became like I don't own my body, its their body. It was so hard to stay the 24 hours a day thinking which officer am I going to sleep with today"

Women Combatant
Armed opposition groups

¹² Guinea and Sierra Leone: No Place of Refuge, ?Amnesty International, October 2001, AI Index: AFR05/06/2001

Aid, etc development

The direct effect is so huge to comprehend at times and the indirect effects are often overlooked that actually lead to increase poverty and derailment of development

Post conflict

Violence increases in areas that are highly militarized, in areas where conflict is endemic and intergenerational in war and even beyond conflict situation

Annex?

PAULINE JELINEK, Associated Press Writer Tuesday, September 21, 2004
<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/news/archive/2004/09/21/national1749EDT0721.DTL>

U.S. troops stationed overseas could face a court martial for patronizing prostitutes under a new regulation drafted by the Pentagon.

The move is part of a Defense Department effort to lessen the possibility that troops will contribute to human trafficking in areas near their overseas bases by seeking the services of women forced into prostitution.

In recent years, "women and girls are being forced into prostitution for a clientele consisting largely of military services members, government contractors and international peacekeepers" in places like South Korea and the Balkans, Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., said Tuesday at a Capitol Hill forum on Pentagon anti-trafficking efforts.

Defense officials have drafted an amendment to the manual on courts martial that would make it an offense for U.S. troops to use the services of prostitutes, said Charles Abell, a Pentagon undersecretary for personnel and readiness. If approved, that would make it a military offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice to have contact with a prostitute, Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, an Abell spokeswoman said later. The draft rule is open to 60 days public comment after being published in the Federal Register, she said. Officials also are developing a training program for troops and contractors, to be distributed in November. The program will explain trafficking, department policy on it and possible legal action against violators, Abell said in a written statement.

Additionally, the military is reviewing regulations and procedures for placing off-limits those businesses where such activities take place and working with Justice Department officials to tighten rules on contractor misconduct. Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, commander of the 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea, said another initiative started on the peninsula has been to "make on-base military life a more desirable experience, and attempt to diminish the seductive appeal of many of the less wholesome off-duty pursuits." That effort includes offering expanded evening and weekend education programs, band concerts, late-night sports leagues and expanded chaplains' activities.

All new arrivals to duty in Korea are given prostitution and human trafficking awareness and the military is working with Korean law enforcement agencies, he said.

"In spite of all these efforts, we know that there are still some U.S. service members, Department of Defense civilians and contractor personnel who may continue to contact prostitutes and, thereby, be construed as supporting human trafficking," LaPorte said.

NATO officials in July outlined new guidelines adopted to ensure alliance peacekeepers do not encourage sex trafficking gangs by seeking the services of women forced into prostitution.

The rules follows accusations from human rights groups that NATO peacekeepers and civilian staff working for international organizations had fueled the growth of sexual slavery in the Balkans.

Endnotes

¹ Important dates to remember:

- ✚ US colony; in 1946, after the Second World War, the US granted our “independence” but not after ensuring that it had established several colonizing mechanisms through agreements, treaties aimed at manipulating and controlling our political and economic lives.
- ✚ 1947 – Military Assistance Agreement, the bases agreement was terminated in 1991, while the assistance agreement was amended in 1953 and later known as the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement.
- ✚ 1951 – Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT); the MDT serves as the overarching framework and the “mother” treaty of the present day US and Philippine relations in line with “common security interests.” The MDT was the foundation for the Military Bases Agreement, which allowed the setting up of permanent structures in four (4) areas in the country. Two of the four structures were closed down in the 1970s. The former Naval Base at Subic in Zambales and the Air force Base in Clark, Pampanga have been converted into economic zones. These bases were closed on September 16, 1991, when the Philippine senate led by nationalist Senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto E. Tanada, now lead convenor of the Gathering for Peace, led 10 other Senators to reject the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Security between the Philippines and the US.

The Philippines was host to the US Air Force in Clark Air Base in the province of Pampanga in the Philippines and to the US Navy in Subic Naval Base in Olongapo, in the northern part of the Philippines. Clark Air Base occupied an area of 158,277 acres of land, about the size of the whole island of Singapore. Clark Air Base became the homebase of the US “Fighting” 13th Air Force. It became a training ground and refueling station for the US fleet used in the Korean war in the 1950s, the Vietnam war in the late 1960s, and in the Gulf war in 1990. Subic Naval Base was the largest naval supply depot of the US Naval force in the world. Like Clark Air Base, Subic was also used by the US during the Korean war in the 1950s, the Vietnam war in the late 1960s, and in the Gulf war in 1990. If they were not forced to leave the Philippines in 1991 Clark and Subic would have been used also in the Afghanistan war. (“The Philippine SOFA and the State of the Philippine-US security relations”).
Prepared by NFPC/Gathering for Peace Secretariat, Philippines)