

Shall We Reduce The Philippine Navy?

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THE ROLE OF A NAVY in the framework of our national defense is underscored by the numerous activities performed by our Philippine Navy. The Philippines is so located geographically that it would require a would-be invader to cross the seas before he can land his men, equipment and supplies here. This calls for an active patrol of our coastlines by PN watercraft over an area covering 14,700 miles about twice that of the United States, the country with the big-

gest and most powerful navy in the world.

Enough Craft Needed

From the standpoint of modern developments in warfare, all major powers invariably depend on their navies in transporting men, supplies and equipment because it has been proven to be most economical. While our defense structure does not envision the use of our armed forces as an offensive force, we should not lose sight of the fact that the Phil-

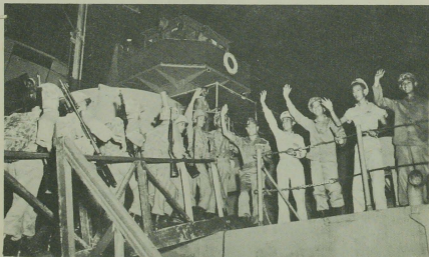
ippines is composed of more than 7,000 islands. To successfully defend these islands, we must have enough naval vessels to prevent enemy ships from approaching very close and to provide our forces transportation to insure mobility.

Militarily, the Philippine Navy's main mission is national defense. To accomplish this, naval planning and operations lean heavily on the successful prosecution of the peace and order campaign. This has called for naval blockade, fire support and amphibious action against dissidents in certain sections of the Philippines and outlaws in Sulu.

In conjunction with the overall

structure of national defense the Philippine Navy is continuously engaged in the active patrol of our sea lanes against any unlawful or aggressive infiltration. It has checked and rechecked reports on the presence of unidentified watercraft lurking in Philippine waters with effective results. In one year of operations the Philippine Navy has apprehended a total of 24 alien vessels trespassing across Philippine territorial waters. These have been dealt with and disposed of in accordance with our laws. While it is true that these foreign surface craft have not been linked with any sort of military aggression, the fact re-

Imminent danger of having an unprepared, under-strength and under-developed naval arm to cope with any eventuality must be forestalled and given serious thought by Congress



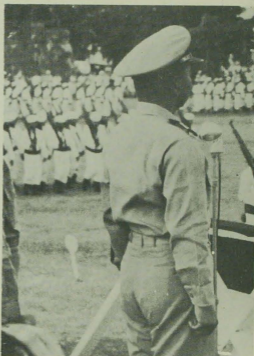
From the standpoint of modern warfare, all major powers depend on their navies in transporting men. Photo above shows a PN vessel transporting AFP troops.

mains that our country's waters, if not properly guarded by alert navy ships on a 24-hour basis, can be infiltrated any moment.

Navy Activities

Operating with a limited budget since previous years the Philippine Navy has performed various services indispensable to both national security and reconstruction. These services consist of the active patrol of our coastlines; enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to customs, immigration, fishery, and neutrality in the territorial and contiguous waters of the archipelago; support and assistance to the armed forces in the successful prosecution of the peace and order campaign; aid in the rehabilitation of national industries such as the animal industry, cement production industry, railroad transportation, maritime industry and manufacturing industry; distress and rescue missions; transportation of relief and welfare food supplies and commodities; ferrying of artesian wells and pre-fabricated school housing units to various places in the Philippines; and the resettlement of settlers on various points in the Philippines.

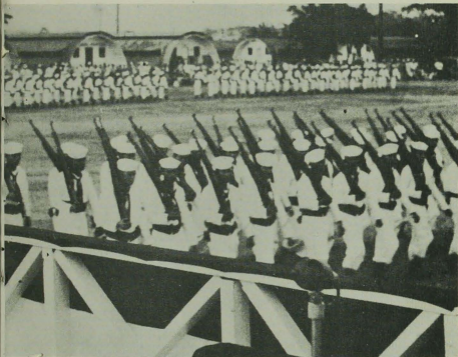
These sustained and vigorous efforts of the Philippine Navy in the furtherance of the national welfare and security have been made possible because the Navy has the present number of trained personnel, ships and equipment allowed by the budgetary outlay given by Congress as in previous years. While naval appropriations do not amply provide for any increase in strength or



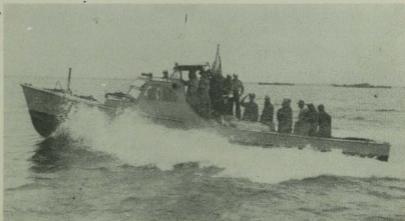
modernization of equipment the development of the Philippine Navy has been spurred by MDAP support and assistance.

Budget Slash Bad

Naval operations for the fiscal year 1956-1957 will be reduced by about 20% if the reduction in the Philippine Navy budget as embodied in the 1956-57 Appropriations Act is not restored. This would mean less patrol coverage in the enforcement of customs, fisheries, immigration and neutrality laws, limited naval reconnaissance missions, and less, if any, support and assistance to government social or welfare projects.



Commodore Jose V. Francisco in photo above reviews a battalion of PN sailors during the celebration of PN Day recently at the PN headquarters on Dewey Boulevard.



PN officers aboard a Navy vessel participate in exercises involving amphibious operations.

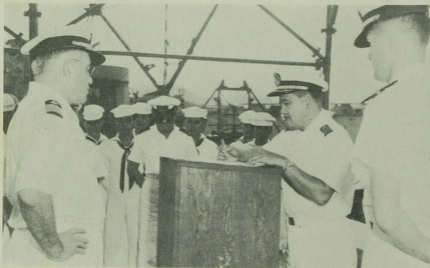


Photo above shows the turnover by the US government to the Republic of 4 vessels

The drastic reduction in the Philippine Navy budget will result in the immediate separation of approximately 800 officers and men. This will not only have an adverse effect on the morale of personnel, but also reduce further the compliment of naval vessels by from 75% to 60% of their normal table of organization requirements. In turn this will result in less maintenance and greater deterioration of equipment and eventually decreased combat efficiency.

At least four naval vessels will be decommissioned for lack of the necessary personnel if the drastic cut in the Navy budget goes through. Likewise the activation of some existing projects, including those in the Sulu Sea Frontier for the defense of the Philippines' backdoor, will be disrupted. Six naval ves-

sels consisting of two minesweepers two patrol gunboats, two coast-guard cutters, and a floating dry-dock which the United States has committed to deliver this fiscal year would have to be laid down in moth-balls until the budget is replenished. These naval vessels are new with modern equipment and are intended to augment our present naval defense and coastguard capabilities.

Big Question

Whether we will reduce the Philippine Navy or not is a big question which will categorically be decided by the amount of budgetary outlay Congress will authorize for the Navy this fiscal year.

Aware of the serious consequence of the reduction in the naval appropriations, Philippine Navy au-



thorities are seeking restoration of the reduced amount in the interest of national welfare and security. The imminent danger of having an unprepared, under-strength and under-developed naval arm to cope with any eventuality must be forestalled.

The sea around us seemingly pro-

vides a barrier against any aggression by an enemy that does not use ships. But all potential aggressors use ships today. The fortune of geography can be an effective deterrent to aggression only if we have the naval force to take advantage of it.