

# REPORT on YOUR ARMED FORCES

By Major General CALIXTO DUQUE

**O**UR country today finds itself in an atmosphere of world instability and insecurity. Barely seven years after it was born from the ruins of a global war, sinister forces again threaten it both from within and from without. The uneasy shadow of the truce in Korea, the bristling bastion that is Formosa, the Red-inspired offensive in Indo-China, the threat to Thailand's borders, the upsurge of communist power in Indonesia... all these portentous rumblings are grim signs that this young nation is again hemmed around by the nakedness of a war of aggression.

With these circumstances, I feel it my duty to emphasize here that on the home front our people have marvelously withstood the threat from within. Your armed forces have routed the dissidents to allow the normal growth and development of our industrial as well as rural areas. From a dangerously precarious position in 1949, we have risen to a vantage position over the tools of rebellion and chaos. We have successfully fulfilled our commitments in Korea while in Luzon we have whittled down the Huks to a point where their only chance of survival is to move continually in small groups or face inevitable annihilation.

From a captured document by elements of "G" Company of the 8th BCT last May 5 somewhere in Quezon province, we have discovered that the Huks admit that their defeat at the hands of government troops has been due to "weak

intelligence, shortage of arms, manpower, funds, system of communication, and internal dissension among our own leaders." Calling attention to reverses suffered by them, the enemy circular cites the factors to which the losses can be attributed and describes the points that must be observed by every Huk in guerrilla warfare. The document calls for strict compliance with a harsh warning to all HMB members that "this circular must never fall into the hands of the enemy, for it will mean that we ourselves taught them how to defeat us".

If only for admitting the weaknesses of the Huk organization and the successes of the government forces, the captured document has great significance.

Let not this, however, lead you to a hasty conclusion that we may now relax our relentless campaigns against the enemy. It would be folly to slacken our vigilance and lose thereby through a false sense of security. The Huks may lie low for the present, but their vicious designs, their doctrines of force, violence, and revolution will continue in spurts and spasms in the approved manner of modern vandalism.

In reporting to you this modest degree of military success gained for the internal security of our country, I wish, you would consider the fact that the manpower involved has not been more than 54,000 officers and men including a yearly expeditionary force to Korea. Whatever stability we have gained and all the taxpayers' money that have been spent for national defense, I must say you owe to the muscle and sweat of the Filipino soldier, the loyal Filipino G.I. who is the noblest embodiment of the people's will to promote and defend the happiness and well-being of the country. Compare our strength with those of the countries in Asia today, in Europe, and elsewhere. Compare the degree of leadership, the stamina, the courage and gallantry that he has displayed. They bear the earmarks of the great fighters before them, men like you who stood the shock of steel and armor on Bataan in a death-grapple so unevenly matched. The soldierly virtues and success of our soldiers today stand as a tribute to the spirit and tradition of the veterans and defenders before them.

Recently, one foreign newspaper cast

Address delivered by General Duque before the Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor last 17 July 1953.

some insinuations and doubts purportedly indicating that rumblings from this part of the world might give rise to a military coup. This suspicion, my friends has been engendered by unkind critics who have not learned enough of the Filipino soldier to appreciate his native virtues. It is short-sighted and should not unduly disturb you. So long as there is enlightened leadership in your armed forces, so long as our own young men still believe in our democratic ways and institutions, and so long as we still enjoy the freedoms for which we fought and died... there is no cause for alarm. I must be emphatic when I tell you that your armed forces shall continue to preserve peace and order above anything else. No one is more determined than we are to keep your armed forces strictly above partisan politics. It is a most difficult and trying task, but we mean to enforce it lustily if only to preserve our democratic ideals.

The National Defense Act, Commonwealth Act No. 1, clearly establishes the legal basis for the organization of a national force to be composed of a regular complement and a trained reserve. Let me remind you that this Act contemplated the conscription of 20-year-olds at an average annual rate of 40,000.

The threat of internal aggression, however, offset the emphasis on training and building up of our reserves during the years immediately following the establishment of the Republic. Obviously, we could not have borne the task of a huge national defense outlay to include both operations against the Huks and the training of our 20-year-old reservists. But we have not entirely neglected that phase of our national defense efforts. The concept of building up a citizen army around a small core of professional soldiers is still intact and unchanged. When we fought the last war in the hills and hinterland, no one ever questioned whether a man was a regular or reserve or guerrilla or a mere volunteer... whether an officer came from ROTC or the PMA or just one of the many run-of-the-mill guerrilla units of 1945 vintage. All of them built up a magnificent unity... a unity to fight aggression to a point where years later, it seemed unbelievable for America to give credence to hundreds

of thousands of veterans who fought and suffered and died even without a paper of induction, a roster, a service record, or even a gun. That was the high-water mark of loyalty and patriotism.

I ask you now, gentlemen, to reconsider with me your role as reserve officers of this citizen army. I ask you now to reaffirm your solemn declaration to come to the aid of the state when and if that time should ever come. I urge you to re-examine your position and ask why it had not been possible to call more reservists to the colors. It would be within your prerogative as citizens to see the evils and short-comings of your military establishment so that your own law-makers might see where the weaker links are today. We now see the tendency to ignore the AFP's claim for a greater share of the budget so that preparedness might not just be a hollow promise and a sham.

Towards this problem of restoring the interest and welfare of reservists, the General Staff has evolved a plan creating a Reserve Bureau, a special staff section intended to supervise and coordinate the training of reserve officers and reservists all over the archipelago. With the Provincial Commander as the nucleus of a cadre of advisors, it is planned that reservists might be grouped conveniently to receive as much military information and training that all reservists should have from time to time.

I appeal strongly to you all for confidence and assurance on the integrity and noble intentions of your armed forces today. As long as it is within my humble power to maintain the good name of the organization, I shall not relent my appeal for public support. You and I have a sacred covenant to elevate the standard of officership and leadership of your citizen army.

In these days when passions run high and personal ambitions seem to cast a shadow upon the better things in life, I implore of you to use common sense and a more mature judgment. Bear in mind that Communism will come in when terror and violence seethes in our midst.

We cannot afford to lose the peace we enjoy today. The country needs the reassurance of its military leaders that liberty is far dearer to our generation than life itself ever was.