What the Subject of Security Really Means:
A LOOK INTO THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF THE 2011-2016 NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase *

This article looks into the content and context of the National Security Policy (NSP) 2011-2016, with the end view of defining what the subject of security really means in Philippine administration. The first part of the study discusses the principles and promises of the NSP, as well as the arguments behind its intents and ideological pronouncements. The second part examines the security problems in the Philippines, and how these are perceived and addressed by government in presidential statements and policy enactments. The third part unravels the meaning of security as a concept debated in the academe, and as a course of action administered in the country. Significantly, the study offers a critical framework of analyzing the dynamics as well as problematique of what was hailed as a landmark policy on national security in the Philippines.

Introduction

The "subject of security"[1] is substantial, but nevertheless subtle for its complex and contextual nature. Security is thought about as the condition of being free from fear and sure of the future, a subject that is of much concern in scholarly discourses not only in International Relations but also in Public Administration. But the concept of security, both as a theme and a discipline, is subject to perceptions, deliberations, and even tensions in the academe and the political realm. What security really means to individuals, institutions, and nations is determined by different interpretations and situations which bespeak of security administration as

---

* The author is the Course Director for Policy Studies, and the Chief of the Research and Special Studies Division in the National Defense College of the Philippines. As fellow in the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) in Hawaii, USA, she wrote in June 2012 an essay with the same title of "What the Subject of Security Actually Means." This was in response to the academic inquiry posed by the APCSS on the essence of the thought that "the subject of security is the subject of security." Her original paper provided for the conceptual foundation of this revised and expanded journal article that she wrote in April 2013.

[1] Contemporary security studies, particularly in the APCSS, have adopted the provocative phrase, "the subject of security," in setting the agenda for discourse on emerging security dynamics brought about by globalization and democratization in the Asia Pacific.

essentially political and culture-bound.[2] In international efforts towards security sector development,[3] discussions on its principles and priorities in different political and cultural settings make the subject of security naturally contestable.[4]

That security is a highly "contested concept"[5] was put forth by scholars who gathered multiple perspectives and policy imperatives on how security is to be seen, satisfied, and strengthened. The controversy stems from different worldviews in the academe on the focus and scope of security. Two definitions of security arise from its multidisciplinary study. One sets a realist standpoint of defending the state and its institutional apparatuses. The other proposes a broadened vista of protecting and enhancing human lives in all dimensions.[6] Owing to its popular appeal, the latter perspective is adopted by idealists as a policy principle for democratic governance and peaceful global order.

The widening and deepening of the concept of security[7] came about as nations—denouncing the horrors of war and totalitarianism—pledged to build

---

[2] Ruiz wrote that a fundamental rethinking of security as well as a reconstitution of its practices necessarily include the political dimension at the center. By 'political', he meant understanding the dynamics of three elements: culture, democracy, and governance. [See Lester Edwin J Ruiz, "The Subject of Security is the Subject of Security: APEC and the Globalization of Capital," Pacifica Review 9, no. 2 (1997), 3-17.]

[3] Security sector development, otherwise known as security sector reform, is defined by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as transformation of the roles, relations, and administration of security actors and institutions in a manner that adheres to principles of democratic governance. The security sector is comprised of the military, police, coast guard, customs authorities, paramilitary forces as core security actors; and, the executive, legislature, and civil society as security management and oversight bodies. [See Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict (Paris, France: OECD, 2001), 38.]

[4] Heiner Hanggi, "Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Contexts," Transformation: A Security Sector Reform Reader (Pasig City, Philippines: INCITEGov, 2012), 12.

[5] Steve Smith, "The Contested Concept of Security," The Concept of Security Before and After September 11 (Singapore: Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, 2002), 1.
See also discussions on the "contested nature" in the studies of International Relations in Burchill et al, Theories of International Relations Third Edition (New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 5.

[6] See discussions on the "problematic concept of security" in Rommel C Banlaoi, Philippine Security in the Age of Terror: National, Regional, and Global Challenges in the Post 9/11 World (Florida, USA: Taylor and Francis Group, LLC, 2010), 4.

[7] The notion that there has been a widening and deepening of the concept of security was discussed in Rouben Azizian and Justin Nankivell, "Security Sector Development" (Course Overview, Advanced Security Cooperation Course 2012-1, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2012).

a just, peaceful, and progressive world through diplomatic and cooperative endeavors. The Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994 redefined "security" as a condition and as a guiding policy with a human face. Specifically, the HDR identified threats to human security under seven categories, which include: (1) economic security; (2) food security; (3) health security; (4) environmental security; (5) personal security; (6) community security; and, (7) political security.[8]

In theory, the non-traditional approach of human security calls for a "win-win solution" of promoting the well-being of society with no cost to human lives. This is contrary to a realist game of war that aims for victory by inflicting great loss on the part of the enemy. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan in 1999 viewed "security" as a condition that can be understood meaningfully in non-military terms and democratic peace. According to him, security "must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."[9]

Despite the reinvention of the concept of security in the approach of the 21st century, critical thinkers warn against its obscure meanings and leanings if this is to be translated in actual policy, especially by a conservative state.[10] Understanding the subject of security is crucial in defining a security problem and devising appropriate policy to address it. Ideally, the desired definition must be one which points to people as the fundamental focus of security in the new century, instead of the state as the traditional locus of defense in the bygone era of real and imagined war.[11] But whether this holds true for all democratic nations today is a rhetorical question that, nonetheless, calls for serious attention by security thinkers and policy administrators.

In a modest attempt to contribute to the security debate, this concept paper looks into the contents of a national security policy in a developing country that is faced with complex internal and external threats. Specifically, the paper discusses the principles, promises, as well as politics of the 2011-2016 National

---

[8]   Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, 1994 Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 24-25.

[9]   Hanggi, "Security Sector Reform," 13.

[10] Ibid., 15.

[11] Richard Jolly and Deepayan Basu Ray, "The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports: A Review of Experiences and Current Debates" (occasional paper, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA, April 2006), 3.

Security Policy (NSP) in the Philippines.These are analyzed in the context of the socio-economic and political conditions within which the administration envisions the NSP to work.The analysis uncovers some predicaments and impediments which underlie the complex environment of the NSP.

Lastly, this study reflects on the meaning of security as a concept discussed and debated in the scholarly community, and as a course of action promoted and administered in the country. On the whole, the review of the components and complexity of the NSP offers a critical framework of understanding its dynamics and problematique, which could help in a comprehensive policy analysis by law-makers, public administrators, and academics.

The 2011-2016 National Security Policy: Unraveling the Arguments Behind its Contents and Intents

The Contents of the NSP

The National Security Policy or NSP in the Philippines was crafted in 2011 as a political statement that binds the year-old presidential administration to fulfill its "Social Contract" with the people until the end of its term in 2016. Promulgated through Memorandum Order No. 6 by President Benigno S Aquino III, the NSP was said to be a reaffirmation of his campaign promise to promote the people's welfare through democratic governance. The NSP, with the title of "Securing the Gains of Democracy," presents four focal areas of concern by the current administration, which are as follows: (1) good governance; (2) delivery of basic services; (3) economic reconstruction; and, (4) security sector reforms.

Taking the NSP as his personal legacy, President Aquino promised to bring forth the "ways of democracy" by laying down a "people centered document" that shall provide a conducive environment for peace and security in the country.[12] He emphasized in the NSP that the Filipino people deserve the best from government as they are the "greatest resource for a progressive and prosperous Philippines."[13] To note, this appears to be in line with the principle reinforced in the 2010 United Nations Human Development Report (UNHDR) with the theme "The Real Wealth of the Nations: Pathways to Human Development."[14]

---

[12]   See President, Policy Statement, "National Security Policy, 2011-2016: Securing the Gains of Democracy," (7 July 2011), i-ii.

[13]   Ibid.

[14]   Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2010 20th Anniversary Edition (New York, USA: UNDP, 2010), 1.

The focus on the people as the center of national security is substantiated by the enshrinement in the NSP of the President's "Social Contract with the People." Presented under the topic of "Foundations of National Security" in the NSP, the Social Contract outlines a plethora of objectives, which include the following: (1) transformational leadership; (2) job generation; (3) education; (4) reproductive health care; (5) impartial justice system; (6) execution of the rule of law; (7) food security; (8) capacity-building for the poor; (9) economic competition; (10) protection for overseas Filipino Workers; (11) merit and fitness in government service; (12) professional bureaucracy; (13) gender equality; (14) peace and development in Mindanao; (15) urban development and welfare development; and, (16) sustainable use of resources.[15]

The NSP states that the aforementioned objectives of the Social Contract are attuned to the seven elements of national security. The elements include: (1) socio-political stability; (2) territorial integrity; (3) economic solidarity; (4) ecological balance; (5) cultural-cohesiveness; (6) moral-spiritual consensus; and, (7) peace and harmony. Military defense, which is a core component of national security, is conspicuously written off as one of the elements in the NSP.

Following the presentation of the ideological foundations of national security in the first part of the NSP is an overview of the security landscape in the region and of the external and internal threats to the Philippines. Among others, the NSP identifies tensions with China in the West Philippine Sea[16], transnational crimes, terrorism, and arms build-up in Asia as external threats to the country.[17] Its internal security environment, on the other hand, is described as being confronted by a host of complex threats against the government and the people. Foremost among these are the protracted armed conflicts with the communist insurgents and Muslim separatists. Other internal threats to Philippine security include terrorism, criminality, graft and corruption, political violence, natural disasters, pandemics, and poverty.[18] To address all of these, the NSP outlines general courses of action to strengthen public institutions, protect the environment, combat terrorism, engage in regional cooperation, and modernize the armed forces.[19]

---

[15] Ibid., 5-6.

[16] President Aquino, through Administrative Order Number 29 dated 5 September 2012, renamed the South China Sea as the "West Philippine Sea." The said Order came following a stand-off with China on the contested sea.

[17] National Security Policy, 2011-2016, p. 13.

[18] Ibid., 15-23.

[19] Ibid., 24-30.

The Arguments on the NSP

The NSP purports to uphold a re-founding of the concept of national security, and the use of non-traditional approach for human security. It must be taken into account that the latter calls for a reorientation of traditional military policies that proved to be unworkable in neutralizing complex threats to human development. At the outset, the apparent shift in security thought in the NSP can be construed in the conspicuous omission of the military dimension in the enumerated elements of national security. The absence of this core element, however, appears to be interesting or rather intriguing as military defense is essentially and explicitly included in contemporary praxis of national security administration. As such, the non-military characteristics of national security in the NSP can be taken either as a novelty in reframing security thought, or as a controversy in renaming traditional practice of national security in the Philippines.

Notably, the promotion of human security has not been without misgivings in the face of internal insecurities that result from poor governance in weak states. Owing to the all-inclusive panorama of human security, a dilemma may arise in pushing for conventional military strategy to justify the goals of human development. It must be noted that "human security" takes on a different meaning in the 2007 Philippine Human Security Law or Republic Act 9372, which provides the legal framework for counter-terrorism by the forces of government. Human security, in this case, pertains to securitizing the state and the people from threats and acts of terror. But the all-out campaign to preempt and prosecute suspected terrorists is criticized for its tendencies to transgress human rights for the price of security.[20]

Nonetheless, the state has to exercise its basic function to provide security as well as its inherent authority to criminalize terroristic activities. In order for an anti-terrorism strategy to be effective in guarding "human security," the former must be built on public trust, rule of law, judicious oversight, and democratic processes. These are the important foundations which legitimize the use of military force as well as intrusive intelligence by the state in a move to protect its people against terrorism. But in countries where governance is perceived to be weak, the employment of state violence loses legitimacy and ascendancy to protect the people from harm. It is in this context that the idealists promote the human security approach as safeguard against a dysfunctional or "failing state" that is seen as the

---

[20]   Chester B Cabalza, "Deconstructing Human Security in the Philippines" (Paper presented at the 20th General Assembly of the International Federation of Social Sciences Organizations, Batangas City, 18 November 2011.)

source of insecurity of vulnerable groups.[21]

The adoption of the human security framework, as a fad in democratic public administration, calls for good governance in order for the NSP to fulfill the Social Contract of the President with the people. With this, there is a need for concrete and coherent policy actions that will reconstruct a problematic status quo and put the welfare of the people at the center of the security agenda for real. Human security in a democracy must be pursued in the NSP not only as a popular ideology but as a strategic plan of action with budgetary priorities as well as accountabilities. The NSP, to be more than a political banner of the President, must be able to build a solid foundation for a sustainable policy environment for human development beyond his term.

No doubt, the general principles of democracy and human security, which the NSP upholds for the Filipino people, are undisputable. But the reality and complexity of how government will go about taking courses of action, allocating resources, and administering programs to achieve human security are controvertible. An understanding of idiosyncratic issues and problems in the enduring state of affairs in the country is thus needed in order for a comprehensive policy on national security to be well-grounded, credible, and convincing. The analysis of the NSP document unravels inherent arguments in its intents of promoting human development in the Philippines.

The Policy Environment of Philippine Security: Understanding the Context and Complexity of the NSP

The Security Context

The security environment in the country was described by the Philippine Human Development Report (PHDR) in 2005 as being confronted by two of the world's longest running armed conflicts—the Moro secessionist movement in Mindanao in the southern part of the country, and the communist insurgency in several provinces. The PHDR noted that the military solution by government fell short of addressing complex causes of armed conflicts. The reasons underlying insurgency were explained to be rooted on social injustice, political marginalization, lack of education, want of livelihood opportunities, as well as non-implementation of land reform. The PHDR also reported that the protracted insurgency in the country had affected 91% of its provinces from 1986 to 2004, resulting in mortalities, social

---

[21]   Hanggi, "Security Sector Reform," 14.

disruption, economic degeneration, and chronic poverty.[22]

In a period when a powerful nation like the United States (US) campaigns against transnational terrorists to guard peace and progress, the Philippines continues to battle local insurgents in poverty-stricken provinces to make way for development. The reality of armed insurgency as major threat to national security in the country was reinforced in 2010 by Banlaoi in "Philippine Security in the Age of Terror: National, Regional, and Global Challenges in the Post-9/11 World." From a critical perspective of national security, Banlaoi saw the long-drawn insurgency as a complicated symptom of a political malady that was ingrained in Philippine society. His study pointed to social exclusion and economic marginalization as root causes of armed uprisings in the country,[23] a view that had also been expressed in the PHDR in 2005.

The persistence of internal armed conflicts in the Philippines was also accentuated in 2012 by Cruz, former defense undersecretary for legal and priority concerns, in "Security Sector Reform: Philippine Perspectives on Defense Transformation." Cruz discussed the causes and effects of armed insurgency that characterized most prominently the security problem in the country. Conflict zones in Muslim provinces in Mindanao were taken as quintessential settings of security crisis. High poverty incidence and other dismal economic indicators in insurgency-affected areas showed that these variables bred more conflict, a condition illustrated by Cruz as a vicious cycle of continual degeneration.[24] To note, poverty incidence in the Philippines remained 27.9% in the first quarter of 2012, suggesting that the "jobless economic growth" in the country did not trickle down to the poor. Provinces affected by armed conflicts scored the highest incidences of extreme poverty with 41.5-68.9 % in the same year.[25]

---

[22]   Human Development Network, 2005 Philippine Human Development Report: Peace, Human Security, and Human Development in the Philippines 2nd Edition (_____: HDN, United Nations Development Programme, & New Zealand Agency for International Development, 2005), viii.

[23]   Banlaoi, Philippine Security in the Age of Terror, p. 17.

[24]   Rodel A Cruz, "Security Sector Reform: Philippine Perspectives on Defense Transformation," Transformation: A Security Sector Reform Reader (Pasig City, Philippines: INCITEGov, 2012), 50, 54-55.

[25]   Despite economic growth rates impressed over the past six years, the Philippines has not improved its poverty rate. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Philippine economy has only managed to produce a "jobless growth" fueled mainly by consumption, remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and business processing outsourcing industry. Among the regions, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) had the highest poverty rate of 46.9 in 2012. [Riza T Olchondra, "PH poverty unchanged," Inquirer (Manila) 24April 2013, p. A1.]

Notably, the PHDR in 2009 had underscored that the quality of politics and public institutions determines the fate of human security, a perspective informed by the principles of Public Administration.[26] Given the state of governance in the country, it can be seen that the means of getting to the ends of internal security is already complex, even before government can address a host of external threats, such as dealing with territorial disputes with China and other countries in the West Philippine Sea.

On the whole, the NSP indubitably emanates from a dilemma where dysfunctions in the administration of public institutions persist, as threats arising from poverty, armed conflicts, violence, and territorial issues exist. Whether these confounded problems will ease in the remaining term of the President who condemned most of these as remnants of the past political regime, is the question behind the celebrated promulgation of the NSP. A critical look into the complex socio-economic and political milieu in the Philippines helps in comprehending the security threats that thwart human development goals in the country. From this perspective, the purported logic behind the political rhetoric of the NSP stands under scrutiny.

The Presidential Addresses on Security

As the most influential policy leader and agenda setter, the President assumes the principal role of defining the security issues of the day, initiating crucial policies to Congress, and administering mechanisms by which perceived problems must be addressed. To accomplish this role of a policy manager, the President delivers messages to Congress and the nation for crucial funding and political backing.[27]

President Aquino, in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) in July 2010, expressed hope that peace and progress will be realized in insurgency-affected provinces through good governance. The newly elected President was confident to give the Filipino people renewed faith in democratic processes that will promote

---

[26]   See Philippine Human Development Network and others, <u>Philippine Human Development Report 2008/2009: Institution, Politics, and Human Development in the Philippines</u> (_____: Human Development Network, United Nations Development Programme, & New Zealand Agency for International Development, 2009).

[27]   The role of the President as chief legislator and policy leader was discussed in the pioneer study of the evolution of administrative thought in presidential rhetoric in the Philippines from the 1935 Commonwealth establishment to contemporary government. [See Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase, "Saga of Administrative Thought: An Analysis of the State of the Nation Addresses and Speeches of Philippine Presidents, 1935-2006" (Dissertation, National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, 2007), 24.]

transparency, public accountability, and equitable development. His firm resolve to shun the crooked road impressed a transformational leadership that guards against corruption and places the people at the center of his administration. At an opportune time for political rehabilitation, the President expressed his commitment to engage in political negotiations or "honest dialogue" with rebel groups in a bid for peace.

President Aquino's peaceful approach to end the armed rebellion became his rallying principle to ensure growth and development in affected provinces. The primacy of a political resolution over military action was a clear policy statement of the President in his first SONA in 2010. As he stated:

> We face two obstacles on our road to peace: the situation in Mindanao and the continued revolt of the CPP-NPA-NDF. Our view has not changed when it comes to the situation in Mindanao. We will only achieve lasting peace if all stakeholders engage in an honest dialogue: may they be Moro, Lumad, or Christian. . . .
>
> . . .It is difficult to begin discussions in earnest if the smell of gun powder still hangs in the air. I call on everyone concerned not to waste a good opportunity to rally behind our common aspiration for peace. Our foundation for growth is peace. We will continue to be shackled by poverty if the crossfire persists. [28]   (Underline provided.)

The realization of the policy statement made by the President depended on crucial legislations that were explicitly pronounced in the SONA during the opening of Congress. In order to meet current security demands and challenges, President Aquino urged legislators to amend the National Defense Act of 1935. The reference to national security in his SONA was capped by his express desire to develop and relocate military headquarters by partnering with local and foreign investors. Other priority bills sought by the President pertained to greater accountability in the public bureaucracy, as well as to ensuring the safety of witnesses and whistleblowers.[29]

Notwithstanding the promulgation of the NSP on 7 July 2011, the President in his SONA on 25 July 2011 neither mentioned the NSP as his overarching

---

[28]   See English version of the State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City, 26 July 2010.

[29]   Aside from the National Defense Act, the President also called on Congress to enact the Fiscal Responsibility Bill, Procurement Law, Anti-Trust Law, Whistleblower's Bill, and Witness Protection Program.

framework for national development, nor the term "human security" as a populist principle in security discourse. Instead, he articulated his staunch position to defend and protect the national territory as his only reference to the topic of "security." President Aquino articulated the following in his address to Congress in July 2011:

> Speaking of security, does enhanced security not also enhance our national pride? There was a time when we couldn't appropriately respond to threats in our own backyard. Now, our message to the world is clear: What is ours is ours; setting foot on Recto Bank is no different from setting foot on Recto Avenue.
>
> At times I wonder if the stories about some of our past stand-offs are true—that when cannons were aimed at our marines, they could only reciprocate by cutting down a coconut tree, painting it black, and aiming it back. True or not, that time is over. Soon, we will be seeing capability upgrades and the modernization of the equipment of our armed forces…We do not wish to increase tensions with anyone, but we must let the world know that we are ready to protect what is ours.[30] (Underline provided.)

It can be seen from the preceding statements that the emphasis on military modernization departed from the more comprehensive theme of human security in the NSP. In this SONA, the President's penchant for power politics, military capabilities, and relative advantage resembled a realist perception of external threats. That a sovereign state "act(s) out of pride and the feeling of being put down," as International Relations scholar Donnelly put it,[31] was in fact the articulated rationale of the President for the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for national security.

In his talk about security, President Aquino reported in his 2011 SONA that the acquisition of state-of-the-art vessels, aircrafts, and weapons for the military, police, and other uniformed personnel were underway. Along this line, he was proud to note that the enhanced capacity of law enforcement agencies had resulted in increased efficiency and effectiveness of arrests, convictions, and prevention of crimes in the previous year. He also reported improvements in the morale and welfare of soldiers and policemen due to programs implemented by government to cater to their particular needs, such as housing facilities.

---

[30] See English translation of the State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City, 25 July 2011.

[31]   Jack Donnelly, "Realism" in Burchill et al., Theories of International Relations, p. 42.

In the same address, the President attributed the foregoing reforms in the security sector to effective administration. It must be recalled that security sector reform is one of the four key elements of the NSP. The prominence given by the President to forging that key in the SONA thus alluded to the primary agenda behind the NSP. From the perspective of government that administers policies, institution-building and modernization are the most urgent and practical concerns in national security.

The principal agenda of developing the Philippine military was sustained by President Aquino in his third SONA in July 2012. Focused on defense, the President did not speak on a fundamental rethinking of "national security" even as a political rhetoric. The non-use of the term "human security," as the very principle espoused in his NSP, was compensated, nonetheless, by his pronouncements on education, health, job generation, and overall welfare of the people in other items of the SONA.

Despite the comprehensive scope of security as critical thinkers reconstruct it, the subject of security remains a matter of national defense in a country poised to protect itself from internal and external threats. This was evident not only in the topic of security in the SONA, but also in the reported proportion of the expenditure requirements for social services to the budgetary cost for military modernization. In describing at the outset the state of the nation in 2012, the President presented the following fiscal dilemma to Congress:

> We were left with little fiscal space even as debts had bunched up and were maturing. We were also left a long list of obligations to fulfill: A backlog of 66,800 classrooms, which would cost us about 53.44 billion pesos; a backlog of 2,573,212 classroom chairs, amounting to 2.31 billion pesos. In 2010, an estimated 36 million Filipinos were still not members of PhilHealth. Forty-two billion pesos was needed to enroll them. Add to all this the <u>103 billion pesos needed for the modernization of our Armed Forces</u>."[32] (Underline provided.)

In accord with the above-cited priority list in the first part of his SONA, President Aquino reported that his administration had already allocated 28 billion pesos for the AFP Modernization Program only in his one year and seven months in office. Taking pride in this accomplishment, the President said the allocations can

---

[32]   See English translation of the State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City, 23 July 2012.

outmatch the 33-billion-peso budget for military modernization in the last fifteen years. According to him, if Congress were to pass the new AFP modernization bill, which sought to extend the defunct military modernization law of 1995, government would be able to allocate 75 billion pesos more for defense within the next five years.[33]

The President tried not to overdraw emphasis on military aggrandizement by rationalizing this course of action as an assurance of peace and protection for the country. As he stated in his SONA in July 2012:

> We are not doing this because we want to be an aggressor, we are not doing this because we want escalation. This is about keeping peace. This is about protecting ourselves—something that we have long thought to be impossible.[34] (Underline provided.)

President Aquino's report and rhetoric in his SONA in 2012 underscored the crucial role of a capable military force in securing the nation in an environment where threats are real. It must be recalled that in his first SONA in July 2010, the President's notion of peace had been related mainly to political and developmental means of resolving internal armed conflict, especially in Muslim Mindanao. The seeming shift in thinking to military security in his succeeding SONAs in 2011 and 2012 revealed a more realistic position that political influence has more power when backed up by a capable military, especially in international relations. On the whole, the President impressed a state of the nation whose source of security lies in building up the armed forces to defend the state, defeat the enemy, or deter aggression by militant groups, whichever course of action is appropriate. To note, the Philippine military by law remains as the lead actor in counter-insurgency operations with the national police only playing a support role.[35]

In accord with the priority agenda of the President, Congress in December 2012 passed Republic Act (RA) 10349 allowing the AFP to continue upgrading its assets and capabilities until 2027 or in another fifteen years. President Aquino, in his address during the 77th founding anniversary of the AFP on 21 December 2012, expressed pride and confidence that the newly amended AFP Modernization Act will ensure the development of a stronger military. With this, he assured the AFP

---

[33]   Ibid.

[34]   Ibid.

[35]   See Section 3 of Republic Act 8551, otherwise known as the Philippine National Police Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998, which provides that the police shall only play a support role of information gathering in counter-insurgency functions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) "except in cases where the President shall call on the PNP to support the AFP in combat operations".

of an initial budget of P75 billion in the first five years of the implementation of RA 10349. The President also announced the acquisitions of modern sea vessels, sophisticated fighter jets, and state-of-the-art weapons system for the major services of the armed forces.

The Executive Agenda on Security

Despite the promotion of the human security principle in the NSP, Philippine security translates to development of national defense, particularly of the armed forces. The Department of National Defense (DND) released in July 2012 a white paper on "Transforming the Department of National Defense to Effectively Meet the Defense and Security Challenges of the 21st Century."[36] The defense white paper presents two major thrusts for DND, which are *defense mission* and *defense transformation*. The first pertains to the fulfillment of the DND mandate to guard the country against internal and external threats, while the other pushes for the development of military defense.

In the pursuit of national security, the DND administers the Philippine Defense Reform Program (PDR) that is geared towards improving materiel, technological, and professional capabilities of military personnel. Corollary to the PDR is the Philippine Defense Transformation (PDT) that is also focused on developing the organizational capabilities of DND in order to be "fully mission capable" by 2028. Through the lens of the DND, security challenges now and in the future are seen as continuing traditional threats which require efficient and responsive armed forces.

The organizational interests of DND form primarily the national agenda for peace and security. The Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016, which lays down the priority agenda of the current administration, defines and confines security concerns in the domain of the military along with the police. This can be seen from the five legislative priorities of the Executive to attain the "peace and security" component of Philippine development. Topping the priority list was the bill which sought to extend the AFP Modernization Act that had self-terminated in 2011 after its 15-year implementation program. Other proposed measures for peace and security in the PDP are the enactments of the National Defense and Security Act, the Philippine Maritime Zones Law, the Philippine National Police

---

[36]   See Department of National Defense, <u>Transforming the Department of National Defense to Effectively Meet the Defense and Security Challenges of the 21st Century</u> (Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City: Office for Defense Reform, DND, 2012).

Reorganization Act, and the Firearms, Weapons, and Ammunition Law.[37]

The legislation in 2012 of the extended AFP Modernization Program or Republic Act 10349 assures the military of special budgetary allocations apart from the annual appropriations to DND that gets the third largest chunk of the national budget. With this, the AFP Modernization Act may be construed as a clear and real policy priority in attaining national security in the Philippines.

What Security Really Means in the Philippines

The National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) defines "national security" as having six dimensions: (1) political; (2) economic; (3) socio-cultural; (4) science and technology; (5) environment; and, (6) military. These key dimensions make up the curriculum or more specifically, the titles of the subjects in the Master in National Security Administration (MNSA) Course of NDCP. In line with this multidimensional perspective is the National Security Council's (NSC) promotion of national security as a general state or condition wherein the people's well-being, their cherished way of life, democratic institutions, territorial integrity, and national sovereignty are protected and enhanced. This comprehensive definition of national security is adopted in the NSP and made as the ideational foundation for the promotion of human security in the said policy document.

What national security really means in the Philippines is elusive in its attempt to be comprehensive. The catch-all definition of the NDCP and NSC, for whatever principle and purpose this may serve, evades capture as a subject of analysis in the praxis of security administration. But the fact that security is referred to as "national security" by the executive already sets out the real meaning and leaning of the term in policy formulation and implementation.

From a Public Administration perspective, "national security" is qualified as a public good whose enjoyment by individuals in a sovereign nation does not deprive fellow citizens from equally benefitting. It must be taken into account that the "publicness" of national security stands not for the exclusive benefit of individuals or particular groups, but for the general well-being of a people as a nation. This means that while the welfare of the people is integral to national security, the latter is more concerned with the state of the nation as an aggregate whole. The primary interest on the security and survival of the state is demonstrated by the fact that individual liberties and sectoral concerns can sometimes be sacrificed,

---

[37]   NEDA, Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016, p. 301.

when necessary, for the greater good.[38] Critical thinkers in the post modern genre of security thought would label this conservative view as unpopular, but national security proponents today will rationalize it as still primordial.

Security, from a national perspective, is geared towards protecting and enhancing the welfare of a nation state, the latter of which comprises the essential elements of governmental entity, territorial integrity, and citizenry. This view of national security, one that is confined to a sovereign country, is fundamental for traditional leaders at the helm of nation-building. This is especially warranted in a country whose insecurities stem primarily from protracted insurgency, political rifts, and brewing tensions with neighboring countries on territorial claims in the West Philippine Sea.

But for countries that take pride in truly enjoying the gains of democratic peace, the focus of security is turned towards enhancing individual rights and sustaining human development in all its dimensions. The human security principle entails giving greater value to social welfare through increased expenditures on education, health, and economic opportunities; rather than to military modernization through arms build-up.[39] These are the concerns of human security as the priority in democratic nations that are secure of their economic conditions, political institutions, national unity, and territorial integrity.

In the Philippines, the NSP theme of "securing the gains of democracy" actually means securitizing human development through security sector reform or SSR, particularly military modernization. Apparently, the professed reorientation of

---

[38]   In her analysis of presidential addresses in the Philippines, Almase described the first period of administration from 1935 to 1944 as having the dominant theme of "Call for Self-Sacrificing Citizens in the Service and Defense of the State." This emerged from the speeches of President Manuel L Quezon during the Commonwealth government, and President Jose P Laurel during the Japanese occupation. During this period of authoritarian administration of the two Presidents, the principal concern for the security and survival of the state required the inculcation of patriotic principles that demanded for the service and sacrifice of citizens.

   In the era of war, the emphasis on the good of the state and not of the individuals became the fundamental principle espoused by Quezon and Laurel. While the basic principle of promoting the public welfare was also propounded during their presidencies, the primary objective of building a strong State and ensuring its existence in the face of internal and external threats preceded everything else, even individual good and liberties. Almase argued in her dissertation that this principle of protecting the state was the indigenous Filipino administrative thought that was unexplored and understudied in the Westernized literature of Philippine Public Administration. [Almase, "Saga of Administrative Thought," 88-91.]

[39] Jolly and Ray, "The Human Security Framework," 8, 9, 12.

national security in the NSP is a false impression in a country whose army continues to fight chronic insurgency in the midst of poverty and corruption.

Cruz, in writing on the Philippine perspective on SSR in 2012, presented a causal loop modeling to explain the causes of underdevelopment in the Philippines and the courses of action that are needed to address the problem. In his framework of analysis, he explained that government can be effective in administering the rule of law, delivering basic services, and ensuring human security, if peace and stability are attained. The precondition for peace and security was regarded to be dependent on the neutralization of armed conflicts by the security forces of the state.[40] Following the logic of this argument, the recurring theme of "state-building" was taken as the primary interest of government before it can proceed to its task of social, political, and economic development. As Cruz wrote:

> When a substantial level of stability is achieved, there is a chance for state-building to be given due attention once again. State-building entails strengthening institutions, enhancing democratic processes, working towards sustainable socio-economic and cultural development, and ensuring that security institutions make citizens feel safe and secure. As the negative cycle is arrested and a positive cycle is begun, the interrelated elements of State-building are addressed.[41] (Underline provided.)

The foregoing viewpoint alludes to a traditional security thought in a country that strives to build institutions and defenses to quell threats to national security. To combat the illegal use of force by insurgents, the employment of state violence was deemed as only necessary.[42] National security was argued to be under jeopardy if the defense department is unable to beef up its security apparatus to be "fully mission capable." Cruz's conceptual model suggested that the inability to fulfill this mandate would embolden insurgency, leading to greater incidence of violent conflicts. Thus, to end the negative cycle, the need to reform and strengthen the security sector was put forward by government as a priority agenda for national development.

Given the enveloping security scenario, the propaganda of human security in the NSP seems to be anchored on building up the institutional mechanism that will deliver development outcomes. In this case, capacity building and modernization of government bureaucracy, particularly of the military, are earnestly sought. The latter

---

[40] Cruz, "Security Sector Reform," 56.

[41] Ibid., 57.

[42] Ibid., 51.

is even more wanting as the administration strives to gear towards external defense in a region where military build-up determines a precarious balance of power. The disposition of the Philippine government as a sovereign state to strengthen its national defense defines in policy the meaning of "national security" that is coated in the academic fad of human security in the NSP.

Conclusion

The challenge for the 2011-2016 National Security Policy or NSP is how to actualize in the present state of affairs its professed principles of human security, and how to sustain these beyond the President's term should they work out today. Continuing with the status quo may appear to be convenient for an administrative leadership with limited time, as revolutionizing systemic practices engenders high political risk. One reason why a government may not take the risk for policy reconstruction could be the stark reality of scarce resources. This is especially true when allocations of limited national budget already incite high political tension and corruption; and when massive debt servicing, which is tucked in the black box of legislation, eats up the largest chunk of public revenues every fiscal year.

Albeit competing budgetary demands for human security needs, President Aquino—as the chief agenda setter, was able to muster congressional support for the new Armed Forces of the Philippines or AFP Modernization Act of 2012. Aside from addressing threats to the country, the extended modernization of the armed forces was said to respond to the demand for security sector reform or SSR in democratic governments in Asia. It must be taken into account, however, that contemporary literature on SSR posits that the effectiveness of the security sector is not defined by arms capability, but by the quality, transparency, and accountability of political institutions and democratic mechanisms under which a capable military operates.[43]

Moreover, to ensure that human development is realized, idealist proponents of SSR advocate for a realignment of expenditures from military hardware to social and economic services. This guards against excessive military expenditures

---

[43] Mark Sedra, <u>The Future of Security Sector Reform</u> (Ontario, Canada: The Center for International Governance in Innovation, 2010), 16.

that reduce resources for development needs,[44] an advocacy that jibes well with the policy principle of "social bias" in Public Administration. Social bias, which is synonymous to "social justice," pertains to budgetary allocations that favor agricultural development, safeguards for the environment, and safety-nets for the poor. But while the bias for social welfare is demanded as a policy priority in democratic governance, the inclination for military upgrade, on the other hand, is taken as a fundamental necessity in national security administration.

Invoking national security to build up the military was what Buzan, a British Emeritus Professor of International Relations, described in 1991 "as a political tool of immense convenience" for policy leaders. According to him, the use of national security rhetoric is a power-maximizing strategy of political and military elites who want to gain control over resource allocations and domestic policies.[45] This perception could perhaps explain how the politically powerful construct of "national security" was able to bolster the immediate enactment of the extended military modernization law in the Philippines.

It is worthwhile to note that the prominence given to national security as a principle and to military build-up as a policy is out of use in addressing unconventional threats to human security. In the quest for an ideal world, "security" is re-founded by constructivists as no longer referring to the security of nation-states, but to the security of individuals whose nationalities are irrelevant in common and non-exclusive humanitarian concerns of the international community. Examples of these emerging security concerns are food scarcity, epidemic diseases, water security, natural disasters, climate change, as well as transnational crimes and terrorism—which make states cooperate and relax their exclusive national interests. In addressing threats that transcend national borders, "human security" and "comprehensive security" —instead of "national security"— have been adopted as the more appropriate policy themes in regional discourses.

The comprehensive approach to security becomes a matter of cooperative concern in a community of nations in the new century. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), in its blueprint on establishing the ASEAN

---

[44] Nicole Ball, "The Evolution of the Security Sector Reform Agenda," in Mark Sedra (ed)The Future of Security Sector Reform (Ontario, Canada: The Center for International Governance in Innovation, 2010), 30.
    See also Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, "Security Sector Governance and Reform" (backgrounder series, DCAF Research Division, Geneva, 2009), 11.

[45] For Wolfers, the use of the term national security by policy makers and military strategists is both attractive and deceptive. In practice, this connotes a struggle for power that is "dangerously self-fulfilling." [See Barry Buzan, People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War Era (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Publishers, 1991), 6,9,11.]

Political Security Community (APSC) for 2015, defines "comprehensive security" as having "the interwoven relationships of political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of development."[46] The comprehensive approach prefers peaceful settlements to resolve conflicts as it renounces aggression and armed offensives in the region. It must be noted that this broader perspective of security does not constitute the military dimension that is essentially a component of national security administration. From an international standpoint, "national security" is national security with explicit reference to protecting the exclusive interests of an egoist state, rather than to promoting the common interests of the regional community.

It must be taken into account that the current literature in Security Studies maintains the realist ontological view of "national security" as the use of military capabilities by a sovereign state to protect itself. Omand, British professor and author of "Securing the State: National Security in Contemporary Times," in 2012 defined national security as "an objective reality such as freedom from foreign intrusion."[47] In his book, he presented "a modern approach to security" that bears clearly a conventional military strategy that has endured in the post-modern security discourse. His strategic approach to promote "national security" has three primary components, which include: (1) mitigation of future circumstances; (2) management of risks; and, (3) employment of efficient and reliable intelligence.[48]

While the administration of national security focuses on the protection of the state by itself, the need for good governance was emphasized in the employment of military force. This very principle is important in national security administration as articulated succinctly in Omand's writings below:

> My argument, in a nutshell, is that good government will always take the task of 'securing the state' at the top of its priority. With security comes confidence, economic and social progress and investment in the future. But good government also recognizes, as the 14th century frescoes show, that security needs the active support of the public and thus the right relationship between justice, civic harmony, wise administration, fortitude, prudence and other virtues to which the wise ruler and government should aspire.[49] (Underline provided.)

---

[46] Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, 2009-2015 (Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Secretariat, 2009), 6.

[47] Sir David Omand GCB, "Securing the State: National Security in Contemporary Times," (working paper series, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 6 November 2012), 6.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 2-3.

The demands for legitimacy and public accountability accentuate the primary obligation of a good government to build up its military defense for national security. Good governance, therefore, is the great challenge to defense transformation in a country that is in need of military modernization to quell insurgency, but lacking of sufficient resources to provide human security. The problem of bad governance and corruption makes even more complex the dilemma of balancing competing demands for peace, security, and development.

What does the subject of "security" actually mean in the Philippines? It means obviously "national security" in real terms even if this is idealized in the NSP as a comprehensive human development framework for the country. What the prospects would be for the NSP are grounded on the present state of affairs, enduring social structures, traditional practices, and confounded security threats in the Philippines. One only needs to look into the complex socio-economic and political environment surrounding the NSP in order to understand the problematique of the publicized policy on national security with a Social Contract until 2016.

List of References

Almase, Ananda Devi Domingo. 2007. "Saga of Administrative Thought: An Analysis of the State of the Nation Addresses and Speeches of Philippine Presidents, 1935-2006." Dissertation, National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations. 2009. Roadmap for an ASEAN Community, 2009-2015. Jakarta, Indonesia: ASEAN Secretariat.

Azizian, Rouben and Justin Nankivell. 2012. 'Security Sector Development." Course overview, Advanced Security Cooperation Course 2012-1, Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA.

Ball, Nicole. 2010. "The Evolution of the Security Sector Reform Agenda." The Future of Security Sector Reform. Ontario, Canada: The Center for International Governance in Innovation.

Banlaoi, Rommel C. 2010. Philippine Security in the Age of Terror: National, Regional, and Global Challenges in the Post 9/11. World. Florida, USA: Taylor and Francis Group, LLC.

Burchill, Scott et al. 2005. Theories of International Relations Third Edition. New York,

USA: Palgrave Macmillan.

Buzan, Barry. 1991. People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War Era. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Publishers.

Cabalza, Chester B. 2011. "Deconstructing Human Security in the Philippines." Paper presented at the 20th General Assembly of the International Federation of Social Sciences Organizations, Batangas City.

Cruz, Rodel A. 2012. "Security Sector Reform: Philippine Perspectives on Defense Transformation." Transformation: A Security Sector Reform Reader. Pasig City, Philippines: INCITEGov.

Department of National Defense. 2012. Transforming the Department of National Defense to Effectively Meet the Defense and Security Challenges of the 21st Century. Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City: Office for Defense Reform, DND.

Geneva Center for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces. 2009. "Security Sector Governance and Reform." Backgrounder series, DCAF Research Division, Geneva.

Hanggi, Heiner. 2012. "Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Contexts." Transformation: A Security Sector Reform Reader. Pasig City, Philippines: INCITEGov.

Human Development Network. 2005. 2005 Philippine Human Development Report: Peace, Human Security, and Human Development in the Philippines 2nd Edition. _____: HDN, United Nations Development Programme, & New Zealand Agency for International Development.

Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, 1994. 1994 Human Development Report: New Dimensions of Human Security. New York, USA: UNDP.

Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme. 2010. Human Development Report 2010 20th Anniversary Edition. New York, USA: UNDP.

Jolly, Richard and Deepayan Basu Ray. 2006. "The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports: A Review of Experiences and Current Debates." Occasional paper, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA.

National Economic and Development Authority. 2011. Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016. Pasig City, Philippines: NEDA.

Olchondra, Riza T. 2013. "PH poverty unchanged," Inquirer. Manila.

Omand, David. 2012. "Securing the State: National Security in Contemporary Times." Working paper series, Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 2001. The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict Paris, France: OECD.

Philippine Human Development Network and others. 2009. Philippine Human Development Report 2008/2009: Institution, Politics, and Human Development in the Philippines. _____: Human Development Network, United Nations Development Programme, & New Zealand Agency for International Development.

Philippine President. 2011. Policy Statement. National Security Policy, 2011-2016.

Ruiz, Lester Edwin J. 1997. "The Subject of Security is the Subject of Security: APEC and the Globalization of Capital." Pacifica Review 9, no. 2.

Sedra, Mark. 2010.The Future of Security Sector Reform. Ontario, Canada: The Center for International Governance in Innovation.

Smith, Steve. 2002. "The Contested Concept of Security." The Concept of Security Before and After September 11. Singapore: Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies.

State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City on 26 July 2010.

State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City on 25 July 2011.

State of the Nation Address of His Excellency Benigno S Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, Session Hall, House of Representatives, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Quezon City on 23 July 2012