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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE PHILIPPINE ARMY, 1935-39 EISENHOWER'S MEMORANDUM TO QUEZON

CONTRIBUTED BY LOUIS MORTON*

On June 22, 1942, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower—then a major general and chief of the Operations Division of the General Staff—wrote a memorandum to Manuel Quezon, President-in-exile of the Japanese-occupied Philippine Commonwealth. In this memorandum, written the day before he left Washington to assume command of American troops in the European theater of operations, he traced briefly the origins of the Philippine Army. General Eisenhower had been associated with the Philippine Army since its inception and had been one of the two officers selected by General Douglas MacArthur, the Military Advisor of the Philippine Commonwealth, to assist "in the establishment and development of a system of National Defense" for the newly created Philippine government. From 1935 to 1939 General Eisenhower served in the Office of the Military Advisor in Manila, and dealt daily with the problems of creating and training a new national army for the Commonwealth. For this reason and because of his subsequent experience with Pacific problems while he was in the Operations Division, General Eisenhower's account of the origins of the Philippine Army is a valuable and interesting analysis.

June 22, 1942

MEMORANDUM TO PRESIDENT QUEZON:

In the fall of 1935, General MacArthur accepted from the Philippine President-elect Quezon, the post of Military Advisor in the Philippines.

Preceding the actual consummation of the agreement, there was conducted a variety of negotiations involving an amendment to existing United States law in order to permit U. S. Army officers to accept positions with the Philippine Government. The approval of the President of the United States and a vast amount of preliminary study in preparation for the development of the Philippine Army was necessary. General MacArthur selected two officers to constitute his General Staff. They were Majors Dwight D. Eisenhower and James B. Ord. Two other officers were selected as members of the party; one medical officer, Major Huttes, and the other a personal aide and administrative officer, Captain T. J. Davis. In General MacArthur's preliminary discussions with Mr. Quezon, the necessity for the utmost economy was agreed upon. Conversations on the subject as reported to me by General MacArthur were to the following general effect:

1. General MacArthur assured Mr. Quezon that it was entirely practicable to provide, over a ten year period of preparation, adequate security for the Philippines, provid-

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ed that the Filipino Government would support a system of universal conscription and would provide not less than fifteen to twenty million pesos a year for military purposes, including support of the National Police.

Based on this general understanding, Majors Ord and Eisenhower, assisted by a special committee made available by the Commandant of the Army War College, proceeded to develop a Defense Plan.

The entire plan comprised:

- a. An introductory speech to be made by the President before the National Assembly.
- b. The draft of a bill for establishing the National Defense System.
- c. A comprehensive training, organizational, and equipment plan extending over the 10-year period of anticipated preparation.

The gist of the plan was:

1. Establish throughout the Philippines about ninety training camps.
2. Absorb a sufficient portion of the existing Constabulary to serve as commissioned and enlisted officers in these training camps.
3. Induct trainees, under a conscription policy, on a basis of six months for privates; one year for non-commissioned officers and specialists; and eighteen months' training for selected individuals for commission in the reserve corps.
4. Accumulate savings each year from the total amount allotted, to purchase reserve equipment during the latter part of the ten year period.
5. Initiate an Air Corps Training program.
6. Establish a military school, on the pattern of West Point, for the production of junior officers.
7. Set up administrative and logistic groups, to be manned principally by officers that had been engaged in simi-

lar activities under the old Constabulary system.

8. Develop a Marine Force, exploiting, principally, the small motor torpedo boat.
9. Provide a system for organizing and giving yearly refresher and unit instruction to graduated trainees.

The law placing this plan into effect was the first law passed by the Philippine Assembly.

Impelled by economy and terrain conditions, the tactical organization adopted was based upon a very small division of about 7,500 effective strength, with a minimum of transport and with services largely improvised. Armament and equipment was adopted to the terrain of the Philippines and to the Defensive Mission of the Army.

The number of individuals to be trained *annually* was expected to reach a total of about 35,000 trained in two classes. It was intended to call into service on January 1, 1937, 3,000 men. The year 1936 was to be devoted to the building of camps, the organization of overhead, the organization of cadres, and the special training of instructors for the first contingent of trainees. The first group of trainees was expected to give a thorough test of the organizational and training methods. Each six months thereafter the number of trainees was to be stepped up until in the fifth year, the ultimate figure was to be attained.

The law provided that each Filipino between the ages 21-50 was liable to military service. During the first 10 years of this period, the man was to belong to the First Reserve, which he would join immediately upon completion of his training period. In the next 10 years, he would belong to the Second Reserve. In the final ten years he would belong to the Third Reserve. It was calculated that by the end of the first ten year period, allowing for normal wastage and the fact

that the system would not reach its full productive capacity until the middle of the period, that the Army would have an over-all strength of about 200,000. Thereafter, with the system continuing to work at full capacity, it was calculated that this figure would increase to 275,000-300,000.

While General MacArthur hoped that eventually the Second Reserve could be partially equipped, it was obvious to the staff that with the money available, this could not be done and therefore the Second Reserve, in the event of war, could be considered nothing but a replacement pool for the First Reserve.

During the year 1936, General MacArthur informed his staff that the President of the Philippines was not content to develop his Army as slowly, particularly during the first few years, as the program above-outlined contemplated. He stated that it was essential to begin the training of 20,000 on January 1, 1937. This decision caused considerable changes in construction, in training and organization programs, and eventually resulted in a growing shortage of qualified instructors when trainees reported to training camps. This change of planning, moreover, eliminated the financial reserve that was expected to pile up during the first few years and so created difficulties in the purchase of equipment that was desired.

During all this time, the major problems of Philippine Defense were discussed with the American War Department. 75,000 rifles were purchased at a price of \$7.50 each. Later, the War Department decided that it was preferable to give additional rifles to the Philippines on a loan basis and a total of some 300,000 were secured without cost. Much small-arms ammunition was purchased, likewise, at reduced prices. The U. S. Department Commander in the Philippines made available to the Philippine Government a number of Philippine Scout enlisted men to serve as instructors in the Training Camps.

He also provided a number of officers on detached service to help in the general organizational and training problem. This number included all the scout officers of Philippine birth.

On the other hand, the beginning of an Air Corps was attended with considerable success and it was found that young Filipinos showed a satisfactory aptitude for flying. The two American officers responsible for this development were successful in establishing a high morale and a splendid state of discipline in the Air organization. Maintenance of air equipment, which was likewise under the supervision of an American, was of a very high order. In the first three years of the venture, there was no air accident due to mechanical causes.

The Academy established at Baguio attracted a good class of young Filipinos and the school gave every evidence of its ability to produce a satisfactory officer corps, given the necessary time in which to do it. Artillery personnel was trained at Stotsenburg under an arrangement by which the American garrison at that post undertook most of the instructional work. Coast artillery instruction was carried on at Grande Island in Subic Bay. This venture had the cooperation of the Commanding General of Corregidor, who provided a major part of the instructional personnel.

Individual training stations throughout the Philippines, particularly those in remote places, did not show the progress that was found in the special organizations just mentioned. It was difficult to attain desired training standards and to maintain buildings and equipment properly. The problem engaged the entire attention of the advisory staff, but at the beginning progress was slow. It very early became evident that the average Filipino would quickly make a very good soldier given qualified instruction, but it was just as evident that the production of a satisfac-

tory instructional staff could not be accomplished except with the passage of years and with strict adherence to rigid standards.

Meantime, the program was staunchly supported by the President of the Philippines. In 1937, due to difficulties in administration of the Police Forces, the President separated from the Army that portion of the old Constabulary that was engaged in police work and was not involved in actual training of the Army. For the next year or so that Police Force was supported separately so far as finances was concerned—although the original understanding was that the cost of the Constabulary would be included in the 16,000,000 pesos annually appropriated.

AIR CORPS

The Air Corps development was started by the purchase of ground northeast of Manila to build the first Philippine Army Air Field. Three excellent training ships were purchased and by the time the first runway was completed, the planes were in Manila to begin the training of the first cadets.

The training scheme in Manila was organized as a combined primary, basic, and advanced course in flying. This was supplemented by sending selected individuals to Military Flying Schools in the United States to include training in the technical establishments and in tactical squadrons. In this way, specialist instructors in each type of military aviation and in each classification of technical air work were secured. Photographers, engineers, radio experts, and similar specialists' courses were started in Manila.

By December 31, 1939, the Air Corps development had progressed sufficiently so that some 75-100 men had become really good flyers; about 40 airplanes—mostly of a training type—were on hand; practice in gunnery and in light bombing had been given; the whole instructional system was on a very sound basis, and the first tactical unit was

formed—although equipped only with advanced trainer types.

GROUND FORCES

The ground force development followed the planned lines. By the end of 1939, approximately 100,000 individuals had been processed through the training camps and the quality of instruction was improving daily. Reserve units were gradually developing and battalion and regimental formations were slowly coming into being. In addition to the small training camps themselves, one or two larger centers, notably Camp Murphy and the Camp at Parang, were garrisoned with troops among whom were a rather large percentage of regular personnel. These two camps reflected high standards in training and discipline. The supply, administrative, and normal disciplinary processes of the Army had developed satisfactorily. In short, there was at that time present in the Philippines, a very considerable body of men reasonably well trained in the use of their weapons. Field artillery, armed with weapons loaned by the United States, and sizable contingents of coast artillery forces were in existence.

MARINE FORCES

By the end of 1939, only two small vessels of the motor-patrol type had been secured by the Philippines. This was because the beginning of the war in Europe had stopped our source of supply, which was the Thornycroft Company in England. However, great progress had been made in the establishment of small bases, and in training boatmen, mechanics, and torpedo men. In this effort, assistance was rendered by the United States Navy.

OFFICER CORPS

As would be expected, the production of a satisfactory Officer Corps became a most difficult problem. Among the Constabulary were

some commissioned individuals who were natural leaders and who possessed a rather good background of military training. In the main, however, the Constabulary was trained as a police force; its interests lay in law enforcement and its individuals were more concerned in preserving good relationships with local officials than in developing military units.

About 20 scout officers were obtained on loan from the United States Government. Some of these men, particularly people like Lim, Pastor Martelino and others were well trained and fine soldiers. The Overhead Staff had in the beginning to be built up largely around these men because no others, familiar with staff practices, were available.

The great problem, however, was to develop the lieutenants and captains who were to take charge of the training camps and command reserve units, once these were formed. Since the military school at Baguio could not begin producing lieutenants until after four years, and even then in insufficient numbers, a supplementary system had to be devised. This was done by picking selected men from each semi-annual class of trainees to take an additional six months' training as non-commissioned officers. Upon completion of a full year's course, a further selection was made and the individuals concerned were placed in an officers' candidate school of six months' duration. By the summer of 1938 this system began to turn out very satisfactory young lieutenants.

OVERHEAD ORGANIZATION

The general organization of the [Philippine] War Department followed the American pattern. There was established a small General Staff and administrative and supply services including Ordnance, Quartermaster,

Medical, Signal, Adjutant General, and Judge Advocate General Departments. The best available men were placed in these posts and very soon the Overhead organization began to develop a capacity to handle normal problems.

The first Chief of Staff was Major General Paulino Santos who served from early 1936 to January 1939. He was succeeded by Major General Vasilio Valdez.

MILITARY ADVISORS' OFFICE

Not long after his arrival in the Philippines, General MacArthur was named a Field Marshal, Philippine Islands. Except for the scout officers mentioned above, no other American officer held either honorary or official title in the Filipino Army. They served purely in advisory capacities under their own rank and titles of the American Army.

Very early in the venture, it was found necessary to secure additional help in the Advisor's Office. Commissioned officers were provided by the Commanding General Philippine Department and a number of these were attached to the mission to serve in inspectional, instructional, and administrative positions. Their help was invaluable and without them very little progress could have been made. Nevertheless, the General Staff work in the mission was carried during the early years by Majors (later Lt. Colonels) Ord and Eisenhower. Colonel Ord was killed in January, 1938, in an airplane accident. Colonel Eisenhower left the Philippines in 1939. Up until that date, no question or difference ever arose between the Advisor's Office and the Philippine Army, or between the Advisor's Office and the President that was not quickly, amicably, and satisfactorily adjusted.

(signed) DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER