

Chapter 16

Basic Need: Peace and Order

I. SITUATIONER

Peace and order is an essential ingredient to maintaining economic development, social order and political stability. A condition of peace and order facilitates the growth of investments, generates more employment opportunities and attracts more tourists.

Foremost in the government's agenda is the promotion of peace and order. This is exemplified in its continuous and active campaign against terrorism and criminality, including kidnapping, illegal drug trade and smuggling and street crimes among others. As a result, the average increase of the crime trend of 5 percent from 1998 to 2002 declined to 2.4 percent in 2003.

In the drive against Kidnap-for-Ransom (KFR), 16 most wanted KFR leaders and 101 suspected KFR members were arrested during the period July 2003 to June 2004. Out of the 64 kidnapping incidents, 49 were solved during the same period reflecting a 77 percent crime solution efficiency rate.

However, threats to peace and order continue due to a higher-than-tolerable level of criminality caused by an ill-equipped and undermanned police force and the lack of desired holistic and integrated approach to address rising criminality and terrorism.

In particular, the regular upgrading of the skills and knowledge of police personnel for efficient and effective policing is limited. Likewise, police lack adequate provisions of basic police equipment such as firearms and ammunition, communications and investigation equipment, vehicles and police facilities. The inadequate logistical support given to a police station account for much of its limited effectiveness. Police officials report that only 20 percent of the police stations were constructed in police-owned property while 80 percent are housed in rundown structures usually without the standard facilities like computers and fax machines. The police needs an additional 1,826 patrol cars to be able to effectively run after criminals. However, it has only 872 patrol cars available. Likewise, the police still needs an additional 65,119 pistols to supplement its current stock of 48,025 pistols. Hence, the inadequacy of funds affects the overall operations of the police force, particularly in investigation, operations, intelligence and police community relations.

Criminal elements engaged in illegal activities and syndicated crimes continue to pose threats to the country's peace and order. The government has responded by integrating efforts against major crimes such as kidnapping through the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF), illegal drugs through the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and smuggling through the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force (NASTF).

In the drive against illegal drugs from July 2003 to June 2004, more than PhP22 billion worth of shabu and ephedrine were seized, 15 clandestine laboratories and 7 storage warehouses that contained significant volume of chemical precursors and laboratory equipment were dismantled, 12 international drug rings and 239 local drug syndicates were neutralized, 35,514 pushers and users were arrested and 5,344 drug affected barangays were cleared.

In support of the antismuggling campaign of the government, the Philippine National Police (PNP) carried out 4,154 operations that resulted in the confiscation of PhP7.568 million worth of goods during the first semester 2004. Despite these organizational improvements, the government still needs to find additional resources to fully contain these illegal activities.

The threat posed by both local and international terrorist groups still remains. The campaign against terrorism led to the crushing of Saddam Hussein's terrorist network through the expulsion of 11 Iraqi nationals including three diplomats engaged in terrorism, the arrest of Abu Sayyaf group members who were involved in various bombings in Mindanao, the arrest of Mukhis Yunos, for his involvement in the Rizal Day bombing in 2002, the arrest of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) member Taufek Refke and the raiding of JI warehouse in Cotabato City in October 2003.

Despite efforts to reduce the threats posed by these groups through intelligence gathering and cooperation with the country's bilateral partners in the Association of South East Asian Nations, much still needs to be done to totally eradicate the threat.

Finally, community participation in peace and order initiatives need to be enhanced. The community must be a partner with the police force and other law enforcement agencies to maintain peace and order. Efforts to tap the community in the fight against crime through PATROL 117 has been launched. Its continuous implementation and advocacy should also be pursued.

Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Committees (BADACs) had been organized in 35,655 or 84 percent of all barangays nationwide except in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) with 320,058 members. The BADACs provided information to law enforcers that led to the confiscation of billions of pesos worth of shabu and the dismantling of several shabu laboratories.

Barangay Peace and Order Committees (BPOCs) were likewise organized in 37,535 or 95 percent of all barangays nationwide except in ARMM. Of these barangays, 29,701 or 75.17 percent have formulated and implemented their Community Public Safety Plans. The plans enabled the concerned barangays to identify responsive peace and order and public safety-related programs in partnership with the community and law enforcement agencies.

II. GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

To address the issues affecting peace and order, the government will adopt the following strategies:

- Effective and credible law enforcement jointly executed by a trilateral partnership between the local executive, the police and the community;
- Professionalization of the PNP; and
- Continuous and intensified operations to neutralize terrorism and other organized crime groups.

Effective and credible law enforcement jointly executed by a trilateral partnership between the local executives, the police and the community would greatly help in addressing terrorism, syndicated crimes (i.e. kidnapping, drug trafficking and bank robbery) and common crimes against property. This

will be done through the intensification of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operation Task Force (AID-SOTF), the Anti-Bank Robbery Special Operations Task Force (ABR-SOTF) and the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (PACER) in coordination with the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force. To contain street crimes, additional personnel will be deployed to identified hot spots and more auxiliary forces will be enlisted.

The Arroyo Administration is committed to pursue the professionalization of the PNP to make the government more effective in the campaign against criminality. Syndicated crime groups especially kidnapers, bank robbers and drug traffickers will be targeted. Thus, recruitment standards shall be upgraded and annual recruitment of qualified personnel must be increased. A continuous career training and development program, with focus on courses that address identified training needs, shall also be pursued. Moreover, career courses, specialized courses, foreign and in-country training, in-service training will be provided to qualified and deserving PNP personnel.

The government will continue to intensify operations to neutralize terrorism and other organized crime groups. These will entail the acquisition of basic equipment and facilities, specifically, the construction of police stations and police precincts, the upgrading of crime prevention infrastructure, technology and equipment.

Police visibility in local communities will also be increased by putting up Community Police Assistance Centers (COMPAC) and checkpoints. Policemen to “walk- the-beat,” will also be deployed to improve police visibility and act as deterrent to potential crimes. In addition, the rationalization of the respective mandates and structures of institutions involved in the fight against domestic and transnational crimes will be pursued. Under this, the PNP’s role and functions vis-a vis the National Police Commission and the Department of Interior and Local Government will be reviewed. Accordingly, PNP Directorates/Units with overlapping functions will be merged and interagency linkages for intelligence and counter-intelligence will be strengthened. Finally, the PNP will sustain and comply with its international commitments to the United Nations International Peacekeeping Operations.

With these strategies, the conditions for maintaining peace and order will be established. People will see more policemen in public places and requests for police assistance will be faster. KFR and other crimes will gradually be stamped out, while more policemen will be trained to respond more efficiently during emergencies and disasters.