

THE AUGUST 28, 1987 COUP:
PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS IN A TIME
OF CONTINUING CRISIS

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by Felipe B. Miranda*

A. Introduction

Paradoxically, two years after the Marcos dictatorship fell, the specter of armed rebellion haunts the present government even more than it did the previous one. In addition to those posed by resurgent communists and disillusioned Muslim secessionists, new sources of armed threats include Marcos loyalists, political warlords, landowners with clear territorial imperatives, and politicized groups within the military. While all these sectors have varying degrees of armed capabilities, attention has focused lately on groups with direct bases within the military establishment. Of these groups, none has drawn as much public attention as the Reform the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] Movement, or RAM.

Almost exclusively comprised by officers trained at the Philippine Military Academy, with enhanced prestige due to their participation in the mutiny which triggered the ouster of Marcos in 1986, the RAM was responsible for the most serious armed challenge to the government of President Aquino to date. Building on military complaints that the Aquino government was dealing ineffectively with the communist threat and that the government had neglected the material welfare of soldiers and their families, the RAM leaders generated sizeable military support and came uncomfortably close to attaining its main political objective in their coup of August 28, 1987.

The seriousness of the August 28 coup provoked a series of probes into the dynamics of Philippine coups and the role played by military men in such challenges to political authority. These probes revealed a paucity of serious material regarding the operational dynamics of the military, the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of military men on both civilian and military affairs, as well as the citizenry's perceptions of politically-active military men. For various reasons, government agencies, private sector firms and academe largely neglected serious, systematic inquiries into the character and propensities of the military, even as there was widespread consensus that the military had been politicized during Marcos' rule and needed re-orientation, even re-formatting after his fall. The press did

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much better in covering developments involving the military in politics. Still far too much of what the public gained from media was impressionistic, reflecting the pressures of deadlined work on even the most conscientious journalist.

The present paper is an attempt to at least partially address one of these inadequacies.** The author tries to present and analyze civilian perceptions of coups and coupmakers, relying largely on data from a Greater Manila survey done by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) last September 1987, within weeks after the failed coup. The main findings of this survey are supplemented by findings from a later November 1987 nation-wide survey, jointly undertaken by the SWS and the Ateneo University. Since the SWS September survey was specifically focused on the August 28 coup and the nation-wide survey looked into coup perceptions only as one of several other survey interests, the present paper extensively uses the earlier survey data. It bears noting that the later November survey, in its relevant coup portion, largely confirmed the SWS September findings. (Unless otherwise explicitly noted, all references to survey findings in this paper allude to those of the SWS September 1987 survey.)

B. The SWS Coup Survey: Summary Findings

Public awareness of personalities and agencies is quite high and the public's evaluation of their performance during and soon after the coup is mostly positive for those who acted to neutralize the coup and its adherents

Awareness is markedly high for rebel leader Colonel Gregorio Honasan and key government officials like President Aquino, General Fidel Ramos, and Police General Alfredo Lim. Senator Juan Ponce Enrile together with the Manila Police are known in relation to the coup by slightly over half of the survey respondents. Other defense and military officials do not appear to have elicited public recognition. The Armed Forces spokesman is known only to 36% of the respondents while the commander of the crucial Marines is known to even fewer people. No pattern appears discernible in relation to awareness levels for either the constitutionalist government officials and agencies on one hand, or those who launched or supported the coup against them. (See Table 1.)

**An earlier (August 1987) paper by the author and Col. Ruben Ciron, "Military Perceptions in a Time of Continuing Crisis," probed into the political opinions and attitudes of military men, using a sample of 452 military officers from the four major services of the armed forces. The paper documented the restiveness of the officers, their feelings of being unfairly suspected and materially neglected by the government they are sworn to protect and, consequently, their demoralization.

Coup performance ratings are generally better (i.e. higher proportions of respondents express satisfaction) for constitutionalist government officials and agencies than for those who worked with the coup. Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo and Presidential Counsel Teodoro Locsin are the exceptions to this rule. The Department of Defense and its Secretary, together with constitutionalist military men, also merited better performance ratings than those identified with the coup. (See Table 2 for the September 1987 findings. Charts 1 and 2 present a similar pattern of national and Metro Manila responses later in November, 1987.)

Margins of satisfaction: The balance of opinion between those satisfied and those dissatisfied with the performance of public officials and agencies in the last coup indicates significant support for the constitutionalists. Two significant exceptions are the negatively-rated constitutionalists, Presidential Counsel Teodoro Locsin (minus 43 percentage points) and Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo (minus 28 percentage points). Their negative ratings are among the poorest scores usually reserved by the survey respondents for those who launched or supported the coup. Only the acknowledged coup leader, Col. Gregorio Honasan, rated worse than Mr. Arroyo and Mr. Locsin. (See Table 2.)

Changes in public performance ratings for officials as affected by their perceived actions and statements relating to the coup also reflect a clear bias for constitutionalist officials. Positive margins of improvement generally are associated with those who defended the government against the coup. Negative margins of improvement (i.e. respondents aver that their performance ratings for the concerned officials worsened as a result of these officials' actions or statements during the coup) are usually reserved for the coup makers and their supporters, or people who did not denounce the coup efforts and their leaders (e.g. Senator Juan Ponce Enrile). Again, two significant exceptions are constitutionalists like Executive Secretary Arroyo (minus 42 percentage points) and Presidential Counsel Teodoro Locsin (minus 49 percentage points), who are among the worst-rated officials. Only Colonel Honasan (minus 51 percentage points) fared worse than these two. (See Table 3.)

Awareness for the President and presidential performance ratings show some erosion but remain fairly impressive. Survey respondents reserve the second-highest awareness rating (85%) for President Aquino, next only to Colonel Gregorio Honasan's rating (91%). Their margin of satisfaction (31%) for the President, however, places her as tenth among 23 officials and agencies

rated for performance relating to the August 28, 1987 coup. As regards margin of improvement ratings (signifying changes in ratings of Presidential performance as affected by her actions and statements relating to the coup), respondents rate her eighth among 18 officials they evaluated. (See Tables 1-3.)

Public assessment of the complaints aired by military men involved in the coup finds some to be with justification, but most are perceived to be either controversial or without sufficient grounds. The dominant view is that all the complaints do not warrant resorting to a coup. A remarkable difference of opinion obtains between class AB (the socioeconomically better-off respondents), who find the set of complaints to be mostly with justification, and other classes (constituting the great majority) who disagree with this assessment. (See Chart 10.)

The plurality sentiment rejects military coups even in a situation where President Aquino fails to perform her duties properly. Less than one out of three respondents agree that, in such eventuality, military men would have reason to overthrow her government through force. (See Chart 7.)

As regards military men who participate in coups against the present government, the public sentiment is generally one of lenient treatment, with only about one in ten calling for all soldiers who participate to be prosecuted and given the most severe punishment allowed by law. This attitude is shared by more respondents against the leaders of the coup, but even in this case less than one out of five recommends both prosecution and heavy punishment. A similar proportion of respondents even suggests neither prosecution nor punishment for anyone involved in coups. (See Chart 11.)

Despite their generally lenient sentiments on coupmakers, there is nevertheless an equal split between those who view the Aquino government's handling of threats from the military rebels as being too lenient and those who say the handling is just right. The too lenient bloc had grown in the last six months, drawing supporters from those characterizing government action as too severe or just right in March, 1987. (See Chart 5.)

Much public apprehension is expressed concerning coups and coup-related developments. More than half the respondents estimate up to 25% of the military to be actively supportive of coupmakers, with an additional 38% of the respondents actually saying 50% or more of the military are similarly inclined. More than half of the respondents describe the danger from military rebels to be big/very big. Virtually half of those surveyed also consider the possibility of more military coups to be big/very big, although the possibility of a successful coup, in the sense of a government controlled by the military emerging, is downplayed. Only about three of ten respondents rated the latter possibility to be big/very big. (See Charts 3 and 4.)

In the event of another coup attempt, the majority of respondents agree that civilians should avoid active involvement or taking sides and advise at best prayers that the forces of good should prevail. (See Chart 13.)

Should the survival of President Aquino's government require it, the majority of survey respondents nevertheless anticipate that the citizenry would be ready to employ "people power" once more. However, the current 62% majority represents a sizeable 25% reduction in the proportion of people confirming this belief in March, 1987. (See Chart 13.)

In the perceived unlikely event of a military government being established, the plurality of respondents anticipate neither active opposition nor collaboration by the citizenry. Although the probability of citizen collaboration is acknowledged by about a third of the respondents, one-fourth also predict active opposition, in the form no less of a widespread resistance or guerrilla movement. (See Charts 4 and 14.)

The extent of public anxiety notwithstanding, martial law declaration is not deemed advisable given current circumstances except by a minority. The great majority of respondents fail to endorse this alternative, with a plurality (41%) openly disagreeing with the recommendation. Furthermore, one out of four also manifests indecision regarding the need for declaring martial law at present. The current distribution of opinions bears a striking resemblance to that obtaining in July 1985, about half a year before Marcos' fall. (See Chart 6.)

Avoiding a successful coup primarily through the build-up of a constitutionalist military calls for several urgent measures, the most concurred in calling for the soonest upgrading of military pay and benefits and an educational campaign to make soldiers more knowledgeable on the principles of democratic government. In addition, the majority of respondents clearly recognize the urgent need for similarly educating civilian officials on military organization and administrative operation. Finally, a majority perception affirms the immediate utility of providing soldiers with appropriate arms as well as other supplies in their fight against the rebels. (See Chart 10.)

Other measures are not endorsed by a majority of respondents, reflecting less consensus regarding the urgency of these other actions. As a preventive measure, a plurality of respondents believe that all military men participating in coups must be prosecuted and punished, with the heaviest penalties allowed by law being reserved for their leaders. Better than three out of five respondents contest the urgency attributed to this punitive measure, reflecting the earlier-cited sentiment (see section 3.0 above) towards leniency in dealing with coup participants. (See Charts 10 and 11.)

Replacing the military leadership with more popular officers as well as reducing the size and budget of the military also are not perceived by most people to be urgently necessary measures. Only one of three respondents calls for an immediate revamp of the military leadership. Less than one out of five respondents considers an immediate military reduction as important in firming up constitutionalist convictions within the military. (See Chart 10.)

There is considerable skepticism regarding the effectiveness of peaceful means in bringing about a democratic Philippines. Virtually half of the survey respondents acknowledge the possibility that Filipinos may lose faith in peaceful means of effecting democracy. Only one of five respondents believes this cannot happen. Over the past three years, surveys have charted the build-up of this public skepticism in the last years of Marcos, its drastic reduction soon after the installation of the Aquino government, and its resurgence since then to about the same levels as during Marcos' time. (See Chart 8.)

C. SWS Coup Survey Analysis

Beyond underscoring the respondents' constitutionalist preferences and their continuing apprehension as regards military coups, the cited survey findings may point to a crucial tension which Filipinos are currently in a process of resolving. While their constitutionalist preferences are clear, political pragmatism could yet drive Filipinos to extra- and even anti-constitutionalist measures which a constitutionally-established but persistently ineffective government forces the citizenry and other political groups to consider. Should the political crisis not abate and government, despite its huge public support, be perceived as unwilling or unable to do much on issues of public order and social justice, there could be a decline in the current public preference for legal and peaceful means of effecting social change. Many of the socio-economically better-off among Filipinos may have already crossed the limits of uncompromising constitutionalism, as they confront the continuing deterioration of public order as well as other developments which undermine the delicate process of sustained national economic recovery.

Later national survey findings are largely confirmatory of the SWS coup survey findings. The ominous implications of these findings must therefore be considered as integral components of the national survey analysis.

Constitutionalism and Pragmatic Politics

The perceptions of Metro Manilans soon after the August 1987 coup confirm the high value Filipinos generally place on constitutional as well as pragmatic politics. The SWS survey respondents' awareness and performance ratings for coup personalities clearly indicate much sympathy for those who resisted and eventually neutralized the coup rather than those who supported it. The high proportions of awareness for constitutionalists are associated with positive satisfaction ratings. And, in those cases of military officers who are not quite household names, defense of the government merited performance ratings comparable to or better than the President's. (See Tables 1 and 2. Subsequent national and Manila findings, as reflected by Charts 1 and 2, reflect the same preferences.)

There are interesting but also understandable exceptions. It stands to reason that the main coup leader, Colonel Gregorio Honasan, would be the focus of awareness by the respondents, but this awareness is more like notoriety. Thus, his performance rating is the worst among those provided by the respondents. The poor evaluation of Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo and Presidential Counsel Teodoro Locsin, constitutionalists that they undoubtedly are, probably must be understood as a consequence of public backlash for two reasons. The two were often projected as being hostile to the military and, in a sense, partly responsible for the restiveness and, ultimately, the coup-inclination of many military men. Furthermore, during the coup itself, the reportedly strident manner in which the two officials demanded countercoup action from constitutionalist military leaders also probably displeased most respondents. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

The continuing public anxiety reflects the uneasiness with which Filipinos view military involvement, particularly extra- and anti-constitutional involvement, in Philippine politics. Although public confidence in the loyalty of the military to civilian authority has been charted well in Social Weather Stations surveys in the last two years, the belief that many military men conspire to take over political control has also persisted.* The August 1987 coup dramatically added to this public anxiousness. The military leadership's oft-repeated assurance that coupmakers within the military enjoyed no significant amount of support and that military factions have been reduced to insignificance were belied by the numbers, organization and near-decisiveness of results achieved by coup forces and their leaders in last year's campaign.

*See Ateneo-Social Weather Stations, Public Opinion Reports (June 1986 and October 1986/March 1987), particularly the author's sections politically analyzing the three surveys' findings.

Public estimation of the active support enjoyed by coup leaders within the military is probably exaggerated. The fact remains that the last coup failed precisely because enough military men themselves acted to neutralize it. Without taking anything from the police who acted unusually valiantly in battling the coup forces, the coup was way beyond being a police situation and was resolved only after the military moved to crush it.

The public's inclination towards overestimation is nevertheless probably the more prudent attitude considering the circumstances. Given a military whose material conditions could be described as generally abject, in terms of hazardous working conditions, low pay, and marginal fringe benefits at the time of the August coup, it is not difficult to anticipate that restiveness could indeed dramatically increase. Together with complaints of continuing high levels of graft and corruption in government, the lack of effective mechanisms for quickly relaying grievances to the President and the lack of arms and other suitable equipment in fighting the dissidents (complaints which the survey respondents acknowledge to be with basis), the poor material conditions of military men make them soft targets for coup organizers. Without immediate ameliorative action by the Aquino government, these circumstances could drive even more soldiers towards active support of future coups.

The apprehension, at least in the short run, does not appear to be that the next coup would be a successful one. While a majority of the respondents acknowledge the big danger of a rebel military and practically half say more military coups are possible, the emergence of a government run by the military is clearly not anticipated except by a small minority. (It must be noted, however, that a sizeable proportion of people also appears to be undecided as to the likelihood of military government. A different line of analysis is indicated should these people eventually decide with those anticipating military rule. Apprehension must then be treated as a concern for successful coups.) The somewhat hopeful context of popular anxiety is probably reflected by the plurality opinion counseling against martial law declaration given present conditions.

The feeling that there is some time left to address the conditions which inspire coup attempts makes it all the more crucial for government to act promptly on these conditions. The legitimate complaints of military men must be looked into. The urgent measures which government must undertake go beyond improved military pay and benefits as well as appropriate weaponry and logistics in fighting the rebels. These areas must be immediately attended to, but perhaps of even more vital importance is civilian-military relations and the degree of coordinative work which civilians can effect with military men.

There is some sophistication in the respondents' realization that both civilian officials and military men need to better understand each other's organization and functions. Familiarity does not necessarily lead to contempt and the respondents urgently recommend a campaign to inculcate among soldiers the principles of democratic government. Conversely, they also almost equally strongly endorse a program for civilians to familiarize the latter with military organization and administrative operation. This two-pronged strategy is a mix of liberal idealism and hard-nosed realism. It reflects a lack of arrogance, unfortunately affected by some of the highest civilian government officials in dealing with the military, as well as the liberal's optimism in the ability of both military and civilian personnel of government to learn from each other and, eventually, to coordinate their work. Even perhaps more crucially, the strategy realistically assumes that Philippine politics after two decades of Marcos cannot simply wish the military genie back into its barracks, confined there by provisions of a 1987 Constitution which the majority of military men repudiated in the national plebiscite. If the military is to remain loyal to this government, that loyalty has to be earned through government policies which take the military as one of the legitimate sectoral interests in Philippine politics. Political dynamics, rather than constitutional law, increasingly appears to be a more reliable guide in understanding as well as anticipating the behavior of military men nowadays.

In attempting to minimize the chances of a successful coup through building up a truly constitutionalist military, the respondents manifest less reliance in a punitive approach to those who participate in coups. Although there appears to be a strong plurality sentiment for prosecuting all coup participants, the idea of severe punishment is largely limited to coup leaders. When prosecution and punishment are not explicitly understood as having exemplary impact or are directly linked to the issue of establishing a constitutionalist military (i.e. when respondents are simply asked what should be done with participants in coup attempts against the present government), the punitive attitude is reflected by even fewer respondents. Only 11% of the respondents would prosecute all participants and mete them the heaviest legal penalties; 17% would reserve the same treatment for coup leaders alone. On the other hand, as many as 70% of the respondents would choose more liberal alternatives like not to prosecute or punish anyone (18%), prosecute leaders alone but not to punish them severely (15%), or prosecute all of them but also not to punish them severely (37%). (See Chart 11.)

The motivation here might be to at least minimize if not eradicate divisiveness or prevent the solidification of factional lines within the military. Corrolarily, the respondents might also be reflecting a pragmatic attitude which inclines towards some leniency with actual or current offenders and greater severity with prospective ones. (Filipinos are quite adept at

letting bygones be bygones, unless they are personally, directly the victims of criminal injustice. They are also equally adept at forging resolutions which promise decisive and severe sanctions against future infractions.)

The same calculus might also be at work in the respondents' general hesitation to recommend an overhauling of the military leadership so soon after the coup, even as the move is intended to install those who have the support of more military men. At this point in time, it could really be a provocative, even foolhardy act to force the issue of popular leadership within the military. Many practical difficulties attend this recommendation and they need thinking out by military re-organizers. Not least of these is the grim possibility that such a change could precipitate the very thing civilians would like to avoid, a successful military coup, this time conducted and decisively resolved within the military camps.

The concern for minimizing factiousness within the military also probably underpins reactions to proposals for immediate personnel as well as budgetary cuts. Given conditions which respondents acknowledge as legitimate grounds for current military disaffection, conditions whose improvement necessitate a fairly substantial investment of budgetary resources in the military, it is understandable that the respondents do not favor reducing either military manpower or finances at present. Furthermore, as in the case of immediate changes in the military leadership, politically volatile situations could develop should the civilian authorities seriously attempt budgetary or manpower reductions in the military now.

Even as the pragmatic character of the respondents is indicated by these apparently prudent views, one should not suspect that they have lost their ability to be critical of the military. This is reflected in the manner they distinguish legitimate military complaints from those that they judge to be largely groundless. Thus, even as clear majorities endorse some complaints (poor military pay and benefits, lack of effective mechanisms to efficiently communicate grievances to the President, lack of appropriate arms and sufficient logistics in fighting rebels, too much graft and corruption by government officials), the bulk of complaints aired to justify coup participation is either inconclusively assessed (nepotism in government, too strict human rights policy, favoritism in military promotions, low regard [for the military] by government officials), or rejected also by clear majorities. Charges of weak and indecisive leadership in the military, government partiality to the dissidents, the presence of pro-communist government officials, as well as alleged cheating in the last May, 1987 elections are complaints most respondents find quite

unconvincing. And even as they acknowledge the grounds for some of these complaints, the respondents' fundamental criticism of anticonstitutionalist military activity is clearly communicated. Whether military men's complaints be with or without grounds, respondents aver that they cannot justify resorting to a military coup.

The Crisis of Constitutionalism: A Warning Note

This constitutionalist bias bears reiterating for Filipinos appear to seriously commit themselves to its operationalization. (This sentiment has been monitored not only by the present SWS survey, but also by other national surveys of the Social Weather Stations in the last two years.) However, it also bears repeating that Filipinos appear to have a strong pragmatic turn of mind. Various stresses that weaken the constitutionalist commitment may be indicated by responses which point to a pragmatism which has crossed the borders of constitutionalist politics. When asked about their perceptions of probable public reactions to another coup attempt, or military government as a fait accompli, the responses of those surveyed last September, 1987 could indicate some incipient vacillation as regards the absolute merits of an activist constitutionalist position. The majority prescribe largely passive, spectator-public reactions in case another coup is attempted. Civilians, they say, should avoid being involved and should not side with anyone. At best, the public could pray for the forces of good somehow to prevail. (See Chart 13.)

This non-active sentiment is carried over into responses of probable, not necessarily appropriate, public reaction to a successful coup which replaces the present government with a military government. Close to half of the respondents anticipate that the citizenry would neither oppose nor support the military government, but close to one-third also predict a probably collaborative citizenry. The firm, uncompromising constitutionalists, a minority of one-fourth, foresee active opposition by the citizenry, with no less than a widespread resistance or guerrilla movement opposing the military government. (See Chart 14.)

Vacillation needs to be read into these responses, although the figures by themselves appear to suggest a significantly non-constitutionalist frame of mind. In the first place, of those respondents counseling the citizenry to be passive spectators in the event of another coup, fully two-thirds nevertheless anticipate that the citizenry is ready to employ "people power" once again if it becomes necessary to save President Aquino's government from danger. Furthermore, one must not forget that the possibility assigned by respondents to the emergence of a military government (that is tantamount to saying, the a successful military coup) is not remarkably high. Thus, the

question should probably be interpreted as meaning more, "In the unlikely event that a successful coup manages to install a military government, what do you think would be the likely public reaction?"

Given this fuller context, the responses to both probes (the appropriate public reactions to another coup and the probable public reactions to a successful coup leading to the establishment of a military government) suggest a different and possibly more insightful analysis. They may be viewed as reflecting not so much on the strength of the citizens' commitments to a constitutionalist order as the growing public suspicion of unbounded constitutionalism as a principle of government. (Just for the record, the evidence from the survey findings of this SWS survey as well as other SWS surveys in the past two years, is that Filipinos indeed highly value constitutional politics. Marcos' political durability must be attributed, at least in part, to his shrewd recognition of the constitutionalist propensities of Filipinos and his consistent strategy to project the constitutional and legal foundations of his authoritarian rule.) More pointedly speaking, these apparently non-constitutionalist views could reflect an emerging cynicism for a government which, despite unstinted and sustained public support, remains incapable of ending destabilization attempts particularly from within its own military. Such a weak, inveterately dependent government might not justifiably continue to invoke and confidently rely on "people power" saving it from danger.

A Class Analysis of Survey Results: The Pessimistic Better-Off

Soon after Marcos' fall in February 1986, public euphoria was high and mostly everyone had similar dreams, hopes, wishes and shared perceptions of what was, is, and could be. It was inevitable that a high degree of commonality, one might say of community, obtained and public opinion reflected this early fact.

A public sense of being high is understandably difficult to sustain. Yet, one of the remarkable features of Philippine public opinion in the last two years (long after euphoria had dissipated) is its relative homogeneity considering demographic variables like age, sex, education and locality (rural/urban residence) of the respondent. While there are a few specific item differences which may be related to any one of these discriminant variables, no general cluster of opinions or attitudes emerges which might be ascribed to survey respondents specifically on account of their demographic properties.

An equally remarkable thing is that this homogeneity of opinions/attitudes often breaks down when the responses are analyzed in terms of the respondents' socio-economic class. There are few survey items on which responses by class AB people (the socioeconomically better-off) do not stand out from those of

other classes. The SWS coup survey findings reveal that AB respondents are indeed often a distinct group, with opinions and attitudes that significantly differ in substance or degree from those held by all or the general sample of survey respondents.

A significantly much higher proportion of AB respondents is aware of personalities and agencies which figured much in the last coup. In several instances, compared to the proportion of general sample respondents who are aware of a specific coup personality, as many as twice more AB respondents are aware of the same person. In performance-rating the same personalities and agencies, AB respondents generally give satisfied ratings more to the military and police officers rather than to civilian officials. AB respondents' dissatisfied ratings observe an opposite pattern. President Aquino herself is not spared from this AB rating bias, with almost 50% more AB respondents being dissatisfied with her performance. Furthermore, the President's margin of satisfaction (the proportion of those saying they are satisfied minus the proportion saying they are dissatisfied) as defined by AB respondents (15 points) is less than half that defined by all respondents (31 points). (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Military men clearly benefited more from AB performance ratings. In comparison with all respondents' positive (i.e. satisfied) ratings of military men who acted against the coup, AB ratings are generally significantly higher. Military men benefited from AB ratings even in the case of those who led the coup. As a matter of fact, one in three AB respondents says he is satisfied or very satisfied with the actions of the coup's most visible leader, Colonel Gregorio Honasan. The proportion of satisfied AB respondents (36%) is more than twice that from all respondents (17%). On the other hand, AB dissatisfaction (45%) for the colonel is only two-thirds that registered by the general sample (63%). Finally, while margins of satisfaction for the colonel are negative for both AB respondents as well as all respondents, the AB negative margin (minus 9 points) is only one-fifth that of the general sample of respondents (minus 46 points). (See Table 2.)

Using performance ratings, it is difficult to speak unqualifiedly of the constitutionalist preferences of AB respondents. They negatively rate coup personalities regardless of how these people aligned themselves for or against the coup, even including the Vice-President in their list of the more negatively appraised. While their greater approval is reserved for military men who acted against the coup, AB respondents appear to be less severe in docking the coup leaders.

The AB's less favorable image of civilian leaders becomes even more glaring when asked whether the actions and statements of coup personalities, during and immediately after the coup, improved or worsened their ratings. With the exception of Speaker Mitra and Senator Manglapus, neither of whom scored in

the upper half of the group positively rated in terms of margins of improvement (the proportion of those who say "improved" minus the proportion of those who say "worsened"), AB respondents top-rated only military men. President Aquino was rated ninth (with a zero margin of improvement) by the AB respondents. (Although the general sample respondents also rated her a low eighth, they at least gave her a 22-point positive margin of improvement.) (See Table 3.)

Despite their relatively depressed performance ratings for President Aquino, about half of the AB's still disapprove of a military group using force to unseat her even if she should fail to perform her duties properly. In the event that her government needs to be saved from danger, AB respondents do not appear to be as confident as the general sample respondents in claiming that the citizenry is ready to resort to "people power" once again. (See Table 5.)

The more developed sympathies of AB respondents for the military are nowhere as clear as in their evaluation of the complaints alleged by military men for resorting to a coup. Of twelve complaints lodged by coupmen, the majority of AB respondents find nine to be with justification. The general sample majority, on the other hand, affirm only four complaints as having grounds. Furthermore, directly contradicting the general sample majority's view, the AB majority aver that the complaints constituted enough reason for participating in a coup attempt. The AB position predictably leads to recommendations for relatively lenient ways of dealing with the military men who are involved in coups. The general sample respondents have essentially the same sentiments on this point as the AB's, but the latter appear to be more consistent than the former in their preferences for leniency to the coupmen. (See Tables 4 and 6.)

Like other respondents, much anxiety attends AB opinions on coups. Although they estimate the amount of active military support for the coupmakers to be much lower than the general sample of respondents does, they also equally worry that the extent of danger from military rebels is quite big. (See Table 5.)

A higher proportion of AB's anticipate more military coups than all respondents. Like the general sample of respondents, AB's also appear to recommend no active involvement by the citizenry in case of another coup. One may note, however, that there are proportionately more AB's who disagree with a prayerful stance as an appropriate response to coups. Practically half of the AB's, much more than the proportion of general sample respondents, think there is little likelihood of a military government coming about. Their pattern of responses in anticipating probable public reaction to a military coup is much like that of all respondents: (See Tables 5, 8 and 9.)

They discourage a declaration of martial law, given the present circumstances, to about the same extent as all respondents. As for AB's who believe the measure would help, it is worth noting that relative to similarly-inclined respondents in the general sample, their (AB) proportion would be only two-thirds that of the latter. (See Table 5.)

Finally, the AB respondents reflect the general anxiety of all respondents. Even as AB responses reflect the general consensus that there is time for the government and the citizenry to address the various crises of Philippine society, they also indicate a concern that time might be running out. Like all other respondents, a significantly high proportion of AB people think it possible that Filipinos may lose faith in peaceful means of effecting democracy in our country. (See Table 5.)

Metro Manila and the Nation: Shared Perceptions in a Time of Continuing Crisis

Whether one uses the SWS' September 1987 Metro Manila coup survey or the Metro Manila component of the later October 1987 nationwide survey in comparing Manila and national views, one has to conclude that there is little substantive difference between national views on one hand and capital region views on the other. The findings and the indicated analysis support a view of Filipinos as preferentially constitutionalist, yet pragmatically acknowledging the possibility that constitutionalism could be a limited political principle under certain trying circumstances. The anxiety over coup possibilities, the manner of dealing with coup participants, as well as sentiments regarding protecting the Aquino government with people power in the face of coup threats, or the rightfulness of overthrowing it should there be inability on the part of the president to properly perform her duties -- these are matters on which substantive differences between Metro Manilans and the national sample of respondents do not obtain, although differences in degree or strength of sentiment occasionally may be noted. (It is extremely rare that a reversal of national perception is indicated by Manila responses, as in the October 1987 survey when 45% of Metro Manilans reject declaring martial law given current circumstances. The national plurality view (40%) believes martial law declaration could help, an opinion opposed by a significantly large (33%) minority.) The full analysis of the SWS September 1987 coup survey undertaken in this paper could be reiterated practically point by point and supported with both national as well as Metro Manila responses.

The conjunction of national and Metro Manila views specially on political issues deserves further examination. Before the martial law regime of Marcos, Filipino views and preferences in the capital region appeared to crystallize much faster than those from other areas. Opposition parties won in Manila before they

became ruling parties voted into power in the subsequent elections. Conversely, the disaffection of Manilenos with ruling parties anticipated by almost two years those of other Filipinos. Manila politics, taking into account an appropriate time lag, was often a reliable indicator of prospective national politics. This political lead was usually explained in terms of the greater sophistication of Manila voters, their faster access to political information and the presence of some political groups within which many of the citizenry could function relatively cohesively.

Towards the end of the Marcos regime, it became apparent that the rest of the country was fast catching up with the capital region in the formation and expression of political views and preferences. By May of 1986, within three months after his fall, it was possible to speak of a national viewpoint which welcomed the ouster of Marcos as well as the installation of the Aquino government soon afterwards. While ethnic considerations probably still shaped some of the Ilocano attitudes as regards Marcos' political demise, the pervasive anti-Marcos attitude distributed itself well across the various geographic areas of the Philippines and did not develop in Manila way ahead of the other regions. As a matter of fact, the anti-Marcos sentiment could be argued as having firmed up earlier in non-Manila areas, where tyrannical policies could be implemented without worrying much about the sensibilities of representatives of a fairly active international press or liberal-minded, still influential Filipino oppositionists.

The growing identity of Manila and national public opinion, with hardly any significant lead time in favor of the capital region, could be attributed to a host of factors. Critical masses of educated, politically aware and often active people began to proliferate in most regions of the country. These people often were educated in Manila or lived sufficiently long in the capital area to imbibe relatively urban values and inclinations. Improvements in communication as well as transportation technology of course facilitated the permeability of fringe areas to Manila influences. In addition, the Marcos government's program of state-power build-up required a systematic linking of outlying regions to the political center for their more effective penetration and exploitation by regime oligarchs. This conjunction of (1) urban like-mindedness among sufficiently large numbers of people all over the country, (2) technological capabilities for the rapid and effective diffusion of information on, as well as effects of, any given political or economic development and (3) government commitment to political corporatism made it possible for most Filipinos to have a common experiential base and to manifest enough consensus regarding the character of that shared experience. If this line of speculation is basically correct, it becomes understandable why there is not much substantive, regionally defined differences in political opinions and attitudes and why the traditional regional time differentials in reaching an opinion or manifesting a preference

analytically becomes less and less crucial. Significantly similar as well as synchronous perceptions and attitudes will probably characterize survey findings across regions, except where much localized issues (e.g. the creation of the Cordillera Autonomous Region) are focused on.

This is not to say that there will be no significant substantive differences or time lags in surveyed opinions and attitudes. But the differences will have to be accounted for by variables other than regionality. (As noted above in the analysis of class AB responses, socioeconomic class make for distinct differences in perceptions.) Manila may no longer be the trendsetter of political perceptions and preferences as various forces successfully conspire to eliminate the political naivete of other regions and incline them towards greater political awareness and dynamism.

Presidential Popularity and the August 28, 1987 Coup

Much speculation has centered on how the most recent coup might have affected the level of public support for the Aquino government and its authorities. The SWS September survey suggests that the coup probably improved the Aquino government's political capital in terms of consolidating greater public support for the authorities and, in particular, President Aquino. The survey also vindicates the suspicion that the level of public support during the four or five months before the coup might already have decreased, relative to what it had been from May 1986 to March 1987 as reflected in comparable surveys jointly managed by the SWS and Ateneo University. In a manner of speaking, the coup leaders might have served the Aquino government in much the same way the devil in Goethe's *Faust* laments his cosmic role: "I am he who while ever conspiring to do evil somehow manages to do good."

Precisely because the popularity of public officials is often equated with public satisfaction, approval, and support for the officials concerned, much interest focuses on popularity ratings particularly for the President and her cabinet members. Critical events, such as the August 28, 1987 coup attempt, predictably sharpen this interest and both public officials and the general public eagerly await information on how these events have affected the popularity of key government personalities.

For understandable reasons, no popularity ratings have been as exciting as President Aquino's. Dramatic circumstances attended her rise to political preeminence and continue to characterize her political administration to date. The latest attempt at

forcibly unseating her, by far the most serious challenge to her constitutional leadership, provokes serious questions regarding the extent of continuing public support for her and her administration.

Presidential popularity had been on the upswing from May of 1986 (with 60% of the nation-wide survey respondents indicating satisfaction with President Aquino) through October 1986 (78%) and March 1987 (76%). Alternatively, one could chart the margin between those satisfied and those dissatisfied with her performance and the results for the same time frames would be: +53 percentage points (May 1986); +72 percentage points (October 1986); and +69 percentage points (March 1987). Both measures indicate a high proportion of satisfied (and, by inference, supportive) respondents for the President at the beginning of her administration; a rapid build-up of this popular base in the next six months; and its successful maintenance as late as a full year from the time of Aquino's political ascendancy. (See Table 10.)

Various reasons are alluded to in explaining this unprecedented level of public support for President Aquino. From available survey data, the more convincing ones appear to combine an extensive public realization of the enormity of the problems confronting the nation, an accompanying pragmatism regarding the pace at which material improvements could be effected, and a widespread perception that far too many threats imperil the Aquino government's stability and ability to govern, requiring that the public give unstinted support if Aquino's government were to survive and effectively perform.

There had been some suspicion that presidential popularity might have slipped between March and August 1987. Before October 1987, when confirmatory national survey data became available, a combination of event data and the SWS coup survey in September 1987 provided some evidence of the decline in public esteem for the President. This erosion could have resulted from the generally perceived continuing deterioration in conditions of public safety, with violent political encounters, assassination and index crimes going up, attended by the apparent inability of the authorities to stop criminal activity from being perpetrated or to apprehend and punish its perpetrators. Public depreciation could also have ensued from presidential action on the issue of agrarian reform, effectively shunting the responsibility for a comprehensive reform program to Congress, and incurring the ire of both the influential landlords as well as the expectant landless. Another event data could be the government's unpopular decision to increase oil prices, which was attended by widespread demonstrations in August, 1987.

SWS survey data for Metro Manila, from early 1986 to March 1987, provide a contrast to the decline in presidential popularity in the months just before the August 1987 coup. Up to early 1987, these data reflected the same generally positive

pattern as the national data presented earlier. Metro Manila gross satisfaction ratings for President Aquino were a high 64% in May 1986, a much-improved 72% in October 1986 and a holding 73% in March 1987. Margins of satisfaction (gross satisfaction ratings minus gross dissatisfaction ratings) for the same periods were +54, +62 and +67 percentage points respectively. (See Table 10.)

Presidential ratings in the SWS coup survey indicate a decline in popular satisfaction/support relative to the period May 1986 to March 1987. President Aquino's gross satisfaction rating of 55%, which together with a 24% dissatisfaction rate means a margin of satisfaction of +31 percentage points, is clearly below her previous ratings. (It should be noted in fairness that no public official included in any SWS survey from May 1986 to March 1987 escaped a depreciation in his public satisfaction rating in September 1987.)

This is not the most important finding, however, if one wanted to analyze public support for the President as a function of the August 28, 1987 coup. The remarkable thing is that the attempted coup actually appears to have improved the extent of public support and thus presidential popularity.

The crucial test question for probing into presidential popularity and coup operations, first asked of Filipinos only in the last Metro Manila Social Weather Report survey, was "Batay ho sa mga sinabi o ikinilos nila nuong kasalukuyang isinasagawa at pagkatapos ng nakaraang coup nitong Agosto 28, 1987, ang inyo ho bang paggrado sa kanila bilang mga opisyaales ay BUMUTL. HINDI NAGBAGO o SUMAMA?" (Based on their statements and actions during and after the August 28, 1987 coup, would you say your rating of these people as public officials IMPROVED, DID NOT CHANGE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER or WORSENE?")

About 40% of the Metro Manila respondents said that their performance rating of the President improved on account of her statements and actions during and after the recent coup. Another 41% said that their performance rating for the President remained the same and 18% avowed that their presidential performance rating worsened. (See Table 3.)

Yet, despite the 40% improved and the 41% same ratings, the gross satisfaction rating of the President in the same survey managed to reach only 55% and her margin of satisfaction only up to +31 percentage points, clearly inferior to her earlier survey gains. The only possible interpretation of this truly remarkable phenomenon is that Presidential popularity as indicated by public satisfaction/support ratings previous to the coup must have been at lower levels just before the coup and improved during or after the coup.

The Metro Manilan's protective instinct towards the government of President Aquino and probably towards her in some personal sense might have been activated by the fact of the coup itself as well as the manner it was conducted. As has been noted, the popularity and staying power of the Aquino government draws strength from a public perception and appreciation of the threatening environment within which it has had to function. The perceived dangers range from the rebellious radicals of the left, the secessionists of the south, the politicized military and fascistic reactionaries of the right, as well as the political opportunists of the center. A besieged government, installed through people power, still manages to reactivate what might already be a diminishing public sense of people power. If this line of analysis is correct, the logical course of action for those who would destabilize the government of President Aquino is to leave it largely alone, or else to prepare a truly blitzkrieg operation emasculating any conceivable public resistance with its lightning success. Filipinos, civilians or military, do not seem to take easily to surgical operations on the body politic, either as patients or as surgeons. Neither the temperament nor the will appears easy to come by, even where Filipinos rather melodramatically keep on diagnosing the most metastasized of social cancers.

Thus, the method chosen by the coup leaders appears to have also consolidated much sympathy for the President and her government. The armed, confrontational strategy effected by Col. Honasan and his followers alienated far too many civilians. The rebel alternative was graphically communicated to Metro Manilans in televised images of so many civilian victims killed or maimed by rebel military action and an angry mother, the President no less, sternly calling for punishment to be meted to those who tried to kill her only son after her own husband had been assassinated.

Presidential actions during the coup largely stripped away any patina of indecisiveness which might have afflicted her public image between March 1987 and the date of the coup. While the question of her effective control over the military remained, there could be no question that the Commander-in-Chief had indeed made the decisions which her subordinate commanders may immediately execute, tarry obeying, or even choose to subvert completely. Decisiveness as well as constitutionalism became focal considerations by the public, but the President was no longer being taken to task; the demand for decisive, constitutionalist action was shifted to her civilian as well as military subordinates. Public sympathy and support welled up for her.

Presidential actions after the coup focused on distinguishing between the substantive issues publicly projected to have inspired the coup and the method used by the military rebels in pursuing the resolution of those issues. Acknowledging the need for improving the material conditions of soldiers and their

families, more clearly enunciating the need to pursue a more resolute policy against insurgency with a better armed military, moving to re-constitute her cabinet by letting go of some members who have strained official civilian-military relations close to a crisis point, and showering praises on perceived constitutionalist military officers, President Aquino has clearly admitted to the legitimacy of many issues raised by most military authorities, but more dramatically by those who launched the August coup.

Still, the only legitimate method of redress remains those defined by law and particularly the Constitution. President Aquino has continued to adopt a hard line where the leaders of the military rebels are concerned. No amnesties are being announced, no presidential invitations for the rebel leaders to conditionally surrender are being extended. From the presidential view, the law must take its course. Until this position is significantly modified, it is unlikely that the coup leaders might be prevailed on to surrender or, if already under detention, to long resist the attractions of unauthorized leaves. It is also going to be probably more difficult for the military establishment to locate and capture any of their renegade officers.

Combined with the relatively lenient treatment afforded by the government to those who surrendered during or soon after the coup, President Aquino appears determined to consolidate the burden of guilt on the small circle of military men who led the last coup. The presidential image being projected is one of a leader sympathetic to legitimate grievances by the military, who moves to have the grievances redressed within the bounds of law within a reasonably short period of time, and who may even humanely forgo strict punishment for the misled military rebels even as she refuses to be less than severe with those who misled the rest into waging a coup.

The presidential line probably has already earned her a higher level of popularity among military men. The more serious question may well be that of continuing civilian support. It is conceivable that Aquino and her government may once more backslide towards diminishing popularity. Another coup attempt may not be enough to help prop up sagging public sympathies for a government perceived to be ineffective in coping with multiple crises.

Peace and order conditions remain woeful all over the country, but particularly in areas where insurgency has assumed bolder initiatives. Economic conditions, which had improved in 1986 and looked promising in early 1987, slipped a bit towards the end of the year. Economic recovery continues to be vulnerable due to uncertainties highlighted by coup activities, heightened insurgency operations, strikes and similar labor practices in both the private sector and government institutions, growing restiveness among the farmers, threats of armed rebellion

from landowners who feel threatened by any serious idea of agrarian reform, vigilante operations and other similarly destabilizing phenomena. In the South, the secessionist movement not only persists but shows signs of imminent volatility, with the MNLF appearing ready to give up on its ceasefire agreement with the government. Reportedly seeking the upgrading of its observer status to one of formal statehood, the MNLF is clearly soliciting active support from Islamic countries. In the North, the creation of the Cordillera Autonomous Region remains an extremely sensitive issue.

The gains of civilian government, largely in the formal area (adoption of a Constitution, holding national and local elections, and reconstituting Congress and other constitutional bodies), need to be fortified with clearer material gains in terms of more jobs, more gainful employment, increasingly accessible housing, education and other welfare opportunities together with a more secure physical environment. Most Filipinos do not expect their enormous problems to be eradicated within President Aquino's term. Still, it would be irresponsibly optimistic to believe that they will not demand clearly productive efforts in addressing their national concerns.

Failing in this reasonable expectation, one must not put it beyond the Filipinos to also lose faith in more peaceful means of effecting democratic change. Last October 1987, 49% of Filipinos nation-wide already believed this possible. About a year earlier, in May 1986, the proportion was only 31%. In April, 1985, less than a year before Marcos' political demise, 42% shared the same dark conviction. Metro Manila data closely reflect the national trend. As of October 1987, fully half of the Metro Manila survey respondents confirmed the same fear. (See Table 11.)

After supporting President Aquino against the military rebels in this last August 1987 coup, any perceived continuing debility on the part of her administration may be overly costly. Still it is clear that the civilian government has first to defeat itself, to lose its political will, before any military coup can succeed.

Popular support for President Aquino and her government is no longer at the same heady levels of a year or half a year ago. What probably has been lost between President Aquino and most Filipinos is political romance, what could be earned, should the President and her team work assiduously on it, is political respect. This would not be such a bad deal. Romance flows from dreams and, often, illusions; respect is nurtured by realities and, inevitably, veritable achievements. Political leaders learn

to be manipulative and build on illusions only when they cannot or will not achieve enough for their people. "Cory magic" must be sustained on firmer grounds than Marcos' necromancy. Otherwise it could transmogrify into the same monstrous thing people power had to be marshalled against.

TABLES

Note: Figures may not sum up to 100% in the following tables. The difference between the sum shown and 100% is accounted for by Don't Know or No response when these are not shown.

Sources: Unless otherwise identified, all the tables are based on data generated by the SWS September 1987 Coup Survey in Metro Manila.

Table 1. Awareness for Key Officials/Agencies Involved in the August 28, 1987 Coup Incident

Official/Agency	Awareness (%)	
	All Respondents	Class AB
President Corazon Aquino	85	98
Col. Gregorio Honasan	91	98
General Fidel Ramos	77	93
General Alfredo Lim	66	86
Manila Police	55	67
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	51	56
Philippine Military Academy	47	58
Speaker Ramon Mitra	46	72
Senate	46	63
Office of the President	45	60
Exec. Secretary Joker Arroyo	45	51
Vice President Salvador Laurel	44	51
Presidential Counsel Teodoro Loocin	43	67
Secretary Rafael Ilete	43	54
Senator Raul Manglapus	41	58
Col. Honesto Isleta	36	54
Dept. of National Defense	34	35
Pro-administration politicians	33	46
Presidential Security Group	32	56
House of Representatives	31	42
Maj. Gen. Antonio Sotelo	30	54
Anti-administration politicians	29	42
Lt. Gen. Renato de Villa	28	37
Brig. Gen Edgardo Abenina	26	*
Brig. Gen. Rodolfo G. Biazon	13	28

Table 2. Coup Performance Rating of Officials/Agencies

Official/Agency	Performance Rating (%)							
	VS/S*		UNDECIDED		VD/D*		MS*	
	ALL	AB	ALL	AB	ALL	AB	ALL	AB
President Corazon Aquino	55	48	21	19	24	33	31	15
General Alfredo Lim	78	73	11	16	10	11	78	62
Manila Police	65	55	18	31	15	14	50	41
General Fidel Ramos	64	78	15	12	21	10	43	68
Senator Raul Manglapus	62	44	22	40	16	16	42	28
Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Biazon	61	75	21	17	17	8	41	67
Lt. Gen. Renato de Villa	55	56	28	31	16	12	39	44
House of Representatives	54	50	30	33	15	17	39	33
Col. Honesto Isleta	52	65	32	26	16	9	36	56
Dept. of National Defense	52	47	26	47	20	7	32	40
Speaker Ramon Mitra	52	52	27	26	21	23	31	29
Senate	48	41	28	41	23	14	25	27
Secretary Rafael Ilete	48	43	27	30	25	26	23	17
Presidential Security Group	47	50	29	33	24	17	23	33
Vice President Salvador Laurel	45	36	25	23	30	50	15	-14
Pro-administration politicians	34	35	32	40	34	25	0	15

Philippine Military Academy	30	28	27	32	41	32	-11	-13
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	25	8	37	48	38	44	-13	-36
Brig. Gen. Edgardo Abenina	26	27	29	40	45	33	-19	-6
Anti-administration politicians	24	11	28	33	47	56	-23	-45
Exec. Secretary Joker Arroyo	25	32	22	27	53	50	-28	-18
Presidential Counsel Teodoro								
Locsin	15	17	27	31	58	52	-43	-41
Col. Gregorio Honasan	17	36	19	19	63	45	-46	-9

*VS/S Very Satisfied/Satisfied

VD/D Very Dissatisfied/Dissatisfied

MS = Margin of Satisfaction (VS/S minus VD/D)

Table 3. Changes in Performance Ratings of Officials/Agencies on Account of Perceived Coup Performance

Official/Agency	Performance Rating (%)							
	Improved		Same		Worsened		MI*	
	ALL	AB	ALL	AB	ALL	AB	ALL	AB
President Corazon Aquino	40	31	41	38	18	31	22	0
General Alfredo Lim	68	70	24	19	6	8	62	62
General Fidel Ramos	50	60	35	30	14	10	36	50
Senator Raul Manglapus	40	24	47	64	11	12	29	12
Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Biazon	38	50	46	33	11	8	27	42
Col. Honesto Isleta	36	43	52	43	10	13	26	30
Lt. Gen. Renato de Villa	39	44	44	38	14	19	25	25
Speaker Ramon Mitra	39	39	44	45	16	16	23	23
Maj. Gen. Antonio Sotelo	35	30	47	52	15	17	20	13
Secretary Rafael Ileta	33	30	47	35	19	35	14	-5
Vice President Salvador Laurel	29	23	47	36	23	36	6	-10

Pro-administration politicians	24	20	48	50	27	30	-3	-10
Senator Juan Ponce Enrile	19	8	42	44	38	48	-19	-40
Anti-administration politicians	12	0	44	56	39	39	-27	-39
Brig. Gen. Edgardo Abenina	17	13	35	53	45	33	-28	-20
Exec. Secretary Joker Arroyo	11	18	34	41	53	41	-42	-23
Presidential Counsel Teodoro Loosin	8	3	32	48	57	48	-49	-45
Col. Gregorio Honasan	16	26	16	24	67	48	-51	-22

*MI = Margin of Improvement (Improved minus Worsened)

Table 4. Respondents' Evaluation of Complaints by Military Men

Complaint -----	Justified (%)		Not Justified (%)	
	ALL ---	AB --	ALL ---	AB --
Very low pay and poor material benefits	71	84	26	14
Absence or lack of means to quickly and effectively relay complaints to President Aquino	64	77	32	23
Too much graft and corruption by government officials implying government has not changed much	54	70	41	30
Lack of arms and other equipment for battle	54	70	41	28

Nepotism in government	48	65	47	30
Too strict human rights policy	48	65	46	30
Favoritism in military promotions	48	58	45	37

Low regard by government officials	44	51	52	49
Weak and indecisive leadership in the military	42	58	51	37
Government overly favors rebels	37	46	58	51
Pro-communist high government officials	37	39	57	56
Cheating in the last May, 1987 elections	36	42	57	49

Question	Yes (%)		No (%)	
	ALL ---	AB --	ALL ---	AB --
Are these complaints enough reason for undertaking a coup?	32	54	65	44

Table 5. Coup Apprehension

Item	ALL	AB
Estimate of number of military within the AFP actively supportive of those attempting coups against the present government	---	---
Less than 10% of the military	27%	23%
Up to 25% of the military	28	35
Up to 50% of the military	15	19
More than 50% of the military	23	16
Extent of danger from rebel military	ALL	AB
	---	---
Very Big/Big	56%	58%
Cannot Decide	19	16
Very Small/Small	22	23
Possibility of more military coups	ALL	AB
	---	---
Very Big/Big	49%	74%
Cannot Decide	30	9
Very Small/Small	19	14
Possibility of a government run by the military	ALL	AB
	---	---
Very Big/Big	29%	35%
Cannot Decide	31	16
Very Small/Small	46	49
Aquino government's handling of threats from rebel military	ALL	AB
	---	---
Too lenient	43%	49%
Just right	43	33
Too Severe	11	16

Table 5. (continued)

Given present conditions, it would help to declare martial law

	ALL	AB
	---	--
Strongly agree/agree	33%	19%
Undecided	25	33
Strongly disagree/ disagree	41	46

If, in their opinion, President Aquino is not performing her duties properly, any group in the military has reason to overthrow her government even if this means using force

	ALL	AB
	---	--
Strongly agree/agree	30%	26%
Undecided	24	26
Strongly disagree/ disagree	46	49

The citizenry is ready to employ "people power" once again should it become necessary to save President Aquino's government from danger

	ALL	AB
	---	--
Strongly agree/agree	62%	49%
Undecided	20	21
Strongly disagree/ disagree	17	28

Possibility that Filipinos may lose faith in peaceful means of effecting democracy in our country

	ALL	AB
	---	--
Very possible/possible	49%	46%
Undecided	29	35
Definitely not possible/ not possible	22	19

Table 6. What should be done with military men who participate in coups against the present government?

<u>Measure</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>AB</u>
	<u>---</u>	<u>--</u>
Do not prosecute or punish anyone	18%	16%
Prosecute only their leaders but do not punish them severely	15	23
Prosecute only their leaders and give them the most severe punishment allowed by the law	17	14
Prosecute all of them but do not punish them severely	37	33
Prosecute all of them and give them the most severe punishment allowed by the law	11	14

Table 7. What should be done to increase the probability for a constitutionalist military and avoid a successful military coup?

Measure	ALL	AB
Raise military pay and give soldiers better benefits as soon as possible	---	---
Very important/important to immediately do	78%	93%
Good to do but no need to rush	16	5
Can't say if needed	6	0
Not needed	1	0
Give military men enough knowledge regarding the principles of democratic government	ALL	AB
Very important/important to immediately do	68%	79%
Good to do but no need to rush	20	12
Can't say if needed	8	9
Not needed	4	0
Give civilian officials enough knowledge of military organization and administrative operation	ALL	AB
Very important/important to immediately do	60%	70%
Good to do but no need to rush	21	16
Can't say if needed	13	14
Not needed	6	0
Give soldiers appropriate arms and other supplies in their fight with the rebels	ALL	AB
Very important/important to immediately do	55%	65%
Good to do but no need to rush	17	19
Can't say if needed	15	2
Not needed	12	12

Table 7. (continued)

Prosecute and punish all military men who participate in coups and make an example of their leaders who should be given the heaviest penalties allowed by law

	ALL	AB
	---	---
Very important/important to immediately do	38%	40%
Good to do but no need to rush	20	21
Can't say if needed	24	21
Not needed	18	19

Replace the present military leadership with military officers who have the support of more military men

	ALL	AB
	---	---
Very important/important to immediately do	33%	28%
Good to do but no need to rush	24	26
Can't say if needed	22	26
Not needed	19	19

Reduce military manpower and budget

	ALL	AB
	---	---
	AB	
	---	---
Very important/important to immediately do	18%	19%
Good to do but no need to rush	19	19
Can't say if needed	22	16
Not needed	38	46

Table 8. Probable Public Reaction to a Military Government

<u>Anticipated Action</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>AB</u>
	---	---
Active opposition, with a widespread resistance/guerrilla movement	24%	30%
No opposition by the citizenry to the military government	42	44
Probable collaboration by the citizenry with the military government	31	23

Table 9. Appropriate Public Reaction to Another Coup Attempt

<u>Prescribed Action</u>	<u>ALL</u>	<u>AB</u>
	---	---
Civilians should avoid being involved and should not side with anyone		
Strongly agree/agree	52%	51%
Undecided	24	19
Strongly disagree/ disagree	25	28

Civilians should not actively do anything but pray that the forces of good should prevail

	<u>ALL</u>	<u>AB</u>
	---	---
Strongly agree/agree	63%	56%
Undecided	15	9
Strongly disagree/ disagree	21	33

Table 10. Presidential Performance Rating, 1986-1987
(Metro Manila)

	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Margin of Satisfaction</u>
May 1986				
National	60%	29%	7%	53 points
Metro Manila	64	24	10	40
October 1986				
National	78	15	6	72
Metro Manila	72	17	10	62
March 1987				
National	76	17	7	69
Metro Manila	73	17	7	67
September 1987				
Metro Manila	55	21	24	31
October 1987				
National	55	18	20	35
Metro Manila	46	16	33	13

*Margin of Satisfaction = proportion of "satisfied" minus the proportion of "dissatisfied" respondents

Table 11. Faith in Peaceful Means of Promoting Democracy

<u>Survey</u>	<u>Agree*</u> <u>(Possible*)</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Disagree*</u> <u>(Not Possible*)</u>
April 1984\ <u>a</u>			
National	38%	38%	22%
Metro Manila	44	35	17
July 1985\ <u>a</u>			
National	42	39	17
Metro Manila	42	43	14
May 1986			
National	31	42	22
Metro Manila	26	47	25
March 1987			
National	42	26	29
Metro Manila	30	28	37
September 1987\ <u>b</u>			
Metro Manila	49	29	22
October 1987			
National	49	23	18
Metro Manila	50	19	23

 *Although phrased almost identically, the test item used here was at times couched in an agree-disagree and at other times in a possible-not possible format.

Sources:

- \ a Bishop-Businessmen Conference (BBC) Nationwide Socio-political Opinion Surveys of 1984 and 1985
- \ b Social Weather Stations/GMA Coup Survey

The other surveys were run by the Social Weather Stations and Ateneo University through their joint project Public Opinion Report.