

**THE IMPACT OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY BASES ON
THE AETAS (NEGRITOS): VICTIMS OR BENEFICIARIES?
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TO: ALL NEGRITOS RESIDING ON NAVAL RESERVATION

BE IT KNOWN THAT THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST MARSHAL HAS NOTICED MANY NEGRITOS WALKING, TALKING AND JUST BEING SEEN IN PUBLIC PLACES IN AND AROUND THE GOLF COURSE AREA.

ALSO, LET THIS SERVE AS A NOTICE THAT NEGRITOS ARE TO LIVE *IN* THE JUNGLE AREA AND ARE *NOT* TO BE SEEN BY THE PUBLIC WALKING ON THE ROADS OR ON THE GOLF COURSE AREA.

IF VOLUNTARY ACTION BY THE NEGRITOS' IS NOT TAKEN TO HIDE THEMSELVES IN THE JUNGLE, OPM WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENFORCE STRICTER MEASURES.

**C.F. SMITH, GYSGT, USMC
OPM OPERATIONS CHIEF**

**SA LAHAT NG NEGRITONG NAKATIRA SA LOOB NG
RESERBASYONG BASE NABAL:**

DAPAT NA MALAMAN NA ANG OPM AY MAY NAPA-PANSING MGA NEGRITO NA GUMAGALA SA MGA PAM-PUBLIKONG LUGAR SA LOOB AT KAPALIGIRAN NG GOLF COURSE AREA.

ITO AY BILANG PAALA-ALA NA ANG MGA NEGRITO AY DAPAT NA NAKATIRA SA *LOOB* NG KAGUBATAN AT *HINDI* DAPAT MAKITA NA NAGLALAKAD SA PAMPUBLIKONG LANSANGAN O DAAN SA LOOB O KAPALIGIRAN NG GOLF COURSE AREA.

MAPIPILITAN ANG OPM NA GUMAWA NG NARARAPAT
NA HAKBANG KUNG ANG MGA NEGRITO AY HINDI
KUSANG MANATILI SA LOOB NG KAGUBATAN.

C.F. SMITH, GYSGT, USMC
OPM OPERATIONS CHIEF

Introduction

You might have wondered as to the date of issue of this circular. I would have guessed that it could have been in the 1900 when the American Military Forces had recently taken over the naval fort from the Spaniards or at any time until before the Second World War. The mimeographed copy from which the abovementioned was quoted bears the following date: January 11, 1983. After almost eighty-five years since the Americans took over the Olongapo-Subic area, the Negritos, according to this circular are to "live in the jungle area and are not to be seen by the public walking on the roads. They should "hide themselves in the jungle" or else "the Office of the Provost Marshal will be required to enforce stricter measures."

This paper is a preliminary study on the impact of the United States of America's Military Bases, particularly Subic Naval Base in Olongapo, Zambales and Clark Air Base in Pampanga and Tarlac, on the ethnic minority groups in these areas who are otherwise known as Aeta, Baluga or Negritos.

It is an assumption of this paper that the plight and situation, conditions and prospects of the Balugas are in most ways affected by the presence and influence of the U.S. Military Bases.

A statement has to be made in acknowledgment that many social scientists and scholars have undertaken studies and published materials with reference to the Negritos of this region. A long list of earlier and contemporary studies have attempted to provide us understanding and insights into the ways of life, behavior, attitudes, beliefs and the minds of the Negritos/Balugas/Aetas. It is of interest to note, that most of these so-called in-depth studies have overlooked a very essential factor and phenomenon, which directly or indirectly, has affected their existence, way of life and is a crucial determinant of the future of the Baluga/Negrito. This is none other than the U.S. Military bases.

There is also an abundance of literature on the military, social and political impact of the American military installations in the Philippines. There is, however, a dearth of materials regarding the impact of these bases on the Negritos. This possesses a very ironic situation; while ordinary Filipinos have reconciled themselves with these bases, there is a continuing displacement perpetrated by the bases on these ethnic Filipinos.

This paper is an attempt to fill some gaps in this area of study on the impact of the bases and provide a new angle to the study of the American bases in the Philippines: how they have affected and influenced the Aetas/Balugas/Negritos whom our history books admit and call as "original residents and owners of the land."

The Negritos

It is commonly accepted that the Negritos were probably the first inhabitants of the islands. Blumentritt noted that the Negritos or Aetas are found (though not in large numbers) in almost all the islands of the Philippine Archipelago. It is only in the northern coast of Luzon where they have remained as coastal dwellers, otherwise they are to be found in the mountainous vastness or in the forested areas in the interior, or in any place where they remain in friendly relations with the Malays and the Spaniards. Those living in the interior used to visit the Malay communities near the seacoast in order to barter their goods. They form, especially in Luzon, a large number of isolated groups which are found scattered in large areas already peopled by the Malays.

Those who have descended from the Negritos stock are known by various names: *Aetas* of Zambales, *Dumagats* of the Sierra Madre, *Agtas* of Bicol, *Atis* of Western Visayas and the *Mamanwas* of Mindanao. They are also variably called *Ita*, *Baluga* and more fondly as *kulot* (curly-haired) in contrast with the lowlanders who the Negritos call *unat* and at times, Filipino.

Blumentritt made references to the Negritos in the areas of Zambales, Bataan (Sierra Mariveles), Tarlac and Pampanga regarding their descriptions and ways of life. Special mention was made of the group called Balugas who were found in Pangasinan and in the Central Plains of Luzon. Semper himself visited the Balugas and is of the opinion that they are a mixture of Malays and Negritos. The term *Baluga* is a Tagalog word meaning black half-breeds or black bastards. The mixture however, is not very predominant so that the Negrito characteristics have been totally lost. In the past centuries, the *Balugas* lived a life that did not totally differentiate them from the other Negritos so that they have always been thought of as being an unmixed people. It must not remain unmentioned that the Spanish authorities, according to Mas, gave them the names *negrillo*, *aetas*, *itas* and *Balugas*. Schednagel remarked that they are called even by the Malays as *Baluga*.

The Aetas of Central Luzon were reported in 1904 by the American ethnologist William Allan Reed as occupying the mountainous portion of the lower half of Zambales, Pampanga and Tarlac, extending southward to the Bataan peninsula.

For places like Angeles City and the town of Mabalacat, Pampanga, historical notes mentioned that these were formerly thickly forested areas. Angeles City was previously known as "Culiat", named after the vines in abundance in the area while "Mabalacat" refers to the virtual forests of "balacat" trees. A Negrito chieftain named Caragan was head of the Baluga communities in Mabalacat before they were driven away by the lowlanders to the mountains and hillsides in 1712.

The vast forests and mountain ranges which stretched the length of Zambales on the Western side bounded by Pangasinan on the north, Tarlac on the northwestern side, Pampanga on the east side and Bataan on the southern side, have been home for the Aetas/Balugas since time immemorial. As the aborigines of the land, forests and mountain resources, they freely enjoyed and lived on the abundance which nature provided.

But there are determinants in terms of access and control over these areas and resources. Meyer was cited by Blumentritt as having described the social organizations which might be called as local group or "family group". The isolation of the Negrito groups make them almost powerless to resist their enemies. These groups with twenty or thirty members have a social organization where the older members, due to their greater experience, enjoy a privileged position. The headman determines the place where the settlement may be put up and also the time that they may abandon the place.

The incursions by the lowlanders over the territories and resources of the Negritos have been consistent, at times gradual; and in some cases abrupt. The Aetas have traditionally been hunters and gatherers. Some of them as noted by Maceda, have partially given up food-collecting and hunting and are classified as belonging to the transitional culture group. In Tarlac (Pampanga), there are Negritos who are also farmers. In the case of those in Camarines Norte, they have been forced by the Bicolanos to work in the ricefield, but generally they have no fixed settlements and are often nomadic.

With the encroachment of lowlanders, landlords, farmers and settlers, the traditional hunting and planting areas were converted into barrios and towns. The Aetas, considered docile and peaceful, quietly moved on to the recesses of the forests and mountain areas to avoid conflicts.

But the developments in the lowland areas did not only involve territories for housing, agriculture, settlements, as well as places for business and commerce and for the establishment of political centers. With the coming of the colonizers and imperialists, much more was involved in terms of the conquest and subjugation of a people, not only of a few but of a nation. Subjugation and authority was not only over small portions of territories

but the totality of control and authority, even sovereignty, over what have been thought of as exclusively the right of the people. The original owners and settlers of the land were no longer considered as still in possession of their old native land. The right now belonged to those with authority and power and to those who got the titles as spelled out in the laws and treaties established by those in power, both national and foreign alike.

The rights of the indigenous people over their territories and birth places have been taken over. They are only tolerated over their access and use of the resources, but in essence, they have been deprived of the control of the land, the forest, the hills and mountains.

The United States Military Bases

Subic Naval Base/Cubi Point: As early as 1884, a Spanish royal decree was promulgated to set up Subic Bay as Spain's main naval station in the Far East. Filipino forced labor was used in its construction which started in 1885. By 1898, the harbor had been fully dredged and several buildings including the arsenal had been set up.

After the Spaniards' defeat, the Americans took over the fort. In 1901, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt issued an Executive Order designating Subic Bay and 70,000 acres of adjacent land, including what is now Olongapo City, as a military reservation area. The naval reservation was established in 1904, which lasted until the Japanese occupied it in 1942. After World War II, the U.S. Naval Station, Subic Bay, was activated and in 1952, Seabees began the enormous task of constructing out of jungle and mountain Cubi Point Naval Air Station which was commissioned in 1956. More than ninety percent of Subic Naval Base is in Bataan province while the rest is in Zambales. Since that time, Subic Bay/Cubi Point has been one of the principal bases which supports the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The Subic Naval Base provides upkeep and maintenance of ships, supplying the U.S. 7th Fleet with food, fuel and ammunitions and the fleet personnel an ideal haven for rest and recreation. Subic Naval Base occupies 62,000 acres altogether, 26,000 of which is water area.

Clark Air Base: On the first of January 1900, General Frederick Grant organized the first United States Civil Government in the town of Culiati (now Angeles City) by appointing an *alcalde* or mayor. By October 1902, the U.S. Army established their camp in Talimundo (now Lourdes Sur), a barrio near the railroad station. Sapang Bato was used as a grazing land for the horses of the U.S. 5th Cavalry. In 1903, it was declared as a U.S. Military Reservation and was named as Fort Stotsenburg in memory of an American

colonel who died fighting Filipino revolutionaries in Bulacan. In 1917, military aviation was started in Clark. The fort was then enlarged to accommodate Clark Air Field in 1918.

From an original 7,600 acres, Clark Air Base expanded to an area of 158,277 acres. This size is larger than the District of Columbia in the U.S.A. and about the size of Singapore. It is larger in size than the combined area of all U.S. Bases outside of continental U.S.A. The Clark Air Base lands are actually divided into several "zones."

Zone A – includes Clark Air Base proper which is exclusively for the Base

Zone B – consisting of perimeter areas:

Zone C – Crow Valley for bombing/target ranges

Zone D, E, F – consist of "settlement areas", reverted lands with roads financed through availments from the Economic Support Fund (ESF) which is allocated by the American Government for the "development" of communities around the base. So vast is the base that squatters surreptitiously farming those areas not utilized are said to be raising an estimated \$10 million worth of sugar cane on base lands per annum.

Today, the Clark Air Base proper consists of 49,000 hectares enclosed within a 22-mile perimeter. The role of Clark Air Base has been closely connected with the 13th U.S. Air Force. It is also host to the Third Tactical Fighter Wing and homebase of fifty-five units under the Pacific Air Forces Command. The Tactical Fighter Wing operates the F-102 and the F-AE jet aircrafts in the base. The Petroleum, Oil, Lubricant (POL) storage capacity of Clark Air Base is 25 million gallons. There is a large bombing range and approximately 200,000 square feet of ammunition storage space located in thirty-four "igloos". Its prime function is to provide a U.S. air logistic hub for the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean going all the way as far as the Middle East. As such, its mission is complementary to that of Subic Naval Base.

The Impact of the US Military Bases on the Aetas/Negritos/Balugas

There are a number of Aeta communities along the borders of the base. Originally, as settlers and residents of the vast area in Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales and Bataan, they had free access to every hill, forest, river, mountain and fields they used for planting. Agriculture was not practiced very much among the Negritos because most of them were wandering hunters and fishermen. They used to gather wild fruits and edible greens, honey, game, fowls and animals and fish. Some of these goods were bartered with the lowlanders.

Among Negrito groups and communities in other areas of the country, encroachment over their ancestral lands and domains was perpetrated by lowlanders, loggers and lumber companies, ranchers and miners and even by individual farmers or land speculators. In the case of the Aetas of the Zambales ranges, thousands of hectares have been appropriated for the U.S. Military Bases.

In an interview conducted by a researcher of the Episcopal Commission for Tribal Filipinos, a respondent named Pan Patri, considered as the oldest living Aeta in the area, recounted that their people inhabited the very places where Clark Air Base is now located. The area, the land and forests and resources were communally owned by the tribe. By the end of the 19th century, the lowlanders began to settle in nearby areas in search of better sources of livelihood in the land and the mountain areas.

The Spanish occupation of the country did not alter much the way of life, as well as the source of livelihood of the Aetas. Blumentritt mentions cases of subjugation of the Aetas as well as attempts at taxation. The usual reaction instead of resisting the pressures on them was to return to their mountain retreat. Some means were initiated as a policy of attraction and toleration such as the giving of presents and gifts by the Spanish officials and clergy.

The establishment of Fort Stotsenburg and the construction of a large runway at the Clark Air Force Base, paved the way for the eviction of the Aetas. With the expansion of Fort Stotsenburg began the extensive take-over and landgrabbing of the ancestral lands of the Aetas. In the process of forced evictions (with no thought of compensation), houses were destroyed and burned, the Aetas threatened and harassed. Added to these is the take-over also of communal lands by the lowlanders who set up their sugar plantation and ranch/grazing lands.

Although a few families were allowed to stay within the base, the majority of the Aetas had to move to the Zambales ranges. Others were evicted to San Joaquin or went to Bamban, Tarlac, Inararo, Porac and other places surrounding the Base perimeter. Since then, theirs has been a struggle for survival for the land of their ancestors which has been taken away from them.

Moreover, after World War II, treaties and agreements between the U.S. and Philippine governments brought about further expansion of the Base perimeters. These meant more ejections and displacements as well as more stringent policies, including the pull-out of the remaining Aetas from the Base. It is claimed that a lot of unrecorded deaths of Aetas took place because of defiance of orders restricting entry and movements in their ancestral lands which have become part of the Base territory.

In 1954, Subic Bay Naval Station expanded and some Negrito groups were forced to move and resettle in the New Cabalan Negrito Reservation. The displacement in that area affected mainly the Bataan Negritos rather than those of Zambales. From the coast moving inward past the Naval Base complex, the land starts upward and is characterized by very dense tropical jungle all the way through the mountainous interior of the province of Bataan.

The Pinatubo Negritos in Pampanga and Western Tarlac have been affected by the Clark Air Base complex. In the Crow Valley Bombing and Shooting Range, many Negrito families and family groups have been forced to leave their ancestral territories in order to live in locations which are safe from the bombing and shooting practices of the U.S. Air Force. Although many Negritos have been hired to construct targets for the airplanes, military activities have done more harm than good to economic plight. According to some informants, Crow Valley was once the location of one of the largest Negrito settlement area in the Zambales Mountain Range.

According to Gaacabucayan, Negritos who lived near the Clark Air Base or on traditional Negrito land occupied by the Base have been forced to relocate no less than five times since 1900. The movements were as follows:

- i. From their place of origin to Sapang Bato, 1900
- ii. From Sapang Bato to Evacuation Areas, 1942
- iii. From Lily Hill to Macapagal Village, 1952
- iv. From Macapagal Village to San Joaquin, 1957
- v. From San Joaquin to their present site in Marcos Village, 1967

There are moves now under the resettlement project called the Sacobia Resettlement Project, planned by the Clark Air Base officials and the Department of Agrarian Reform, to relocate those who are residing in Macapagal and Marcos Villages. The reasons given are as follows:

- i. That the present site of the two villages is part of the U.S. military reservation, and consequently, the residents are considered squatters.
- ii. That the present site is a security hazard, it being located near the communication network of Clark;
- iii. That the present site is not considered a unit for a human settlement because of poor environmental conditions and the threat of peace and order.

The U.S. Military Bases, inspite of their effects of displacing and dislocating the Aetas, have their ways of attracting and appeasing the Negritos.

Gaabucayan and some others, have attributed the movement of Negritos as a result of their attraction towards "stateside gifts like food stuff, medicines and extended Base privileges."

Delbert Rice observed a significant change in the life style of certain Negritos caused by the frequency of gifts distributed by the U.S. Naval Base to the Baliwet Reservation in Zambales. He considered these gifts to be a "mixed blessing" because Negritos learned to depend on them, making them less industrious and seriously damaging Negrito self-reliance.

The living pattern and culture of Negritos have been significantly altered by the presence of the U.S. Military Installations. The following tables by Gaabucayan (1978) provide an economic profile of Marcos Village as regards population, labor force and primary occupations:

Number and Percentage of Population in Marcos Village

	Number	Percentage
Negritos	357	25
Mixed	487	32
Non-Negritos	647	43
Total	1,491	100

(Adapted from Natividad Espiritu 1974)

Employment and Unemployment

	Employed	Unemployed
Negritos	114	289
Mixed	54	95
Non-Negritos	130	313

Primary Occupations (Clark Air Base Employment)

	Negritos	Mixed	Non-Negritos
Security Guards	35	8	23
Laborers	5	3	6
Drivers	0	0	1
Domestic Helpers	25	6	10
Jungle Survival Course Instructors	3	1	0

Off-Clark Air Base Employment

	Negritos	Mixed	Non-Negritos
Farmers	17	12	17
Arts and Crafts	18	4	1
Store Owners	1	3	14
Others	8	17	57

The Negritos have been drawn to the U.S. Military Installation in order to function as security guards, collect garbage and scrap, train military personnel in jungle survival and work in various odd jobs in base organizations. Dudley further observes that "the Military Bases utilize Negrito skills (and labor) in accomplishing the military mission of the American government," He says, "I believe that the existence of token gifts, most services and so-called 'privileges' is merely a publicity tactic which is merely genuine and seldom (if at all) lasting, but meant to demonstrate and project the goodwill and positive image of the American government overseas (opposite of the Ugly Americans)." This rather strong accusation contradicts the expressed intentions and purposes claimed by some U.S. Military Base officials, however, as Dudley retraced the policies and actions of the American government towards the Negritos and other Philippine ethnic minorities since 1900 and compared them with the policies and conditions of minorities (specifically Blacks) during the same period of time in the United States.

Garbage and Scrap Collection Inside the Base

By virtue of a treaty agreement between the U.S. Naval Base in Olongapo and the Philippine government, the base complex expanded its area in 1954, thereby absorbing the sitios of Kabalan, Boton and Kalayaan. As a result, the Negritos residing in these three places had to be moved out and resettled at an area of 192 hectares or what was then called the New Cabalan Negrito Reservation. The significance of this move was the granting of the privilege or permission to collect trash/garbage inside the base which led to the gathering and selling of scrap metals and other recycable materials.

In 1981, James Ronald Dudley made this observation: "I consider the Cabalan Negrito Reservation and the objective to develop the settlement in such a way that the Negritos will adopt a sedentary form of living by giving them a year-round gainful employment to sustain them and their families as a complete failure. From investigations and observations, only a fraction of the original Negrito inhabitants still alive in the village and those who have

remained, even among those who are still engaged in the trash/scrap collection, only a limited number derive benefits because of the selective process of hiring. Few working days and low pay have made the whole set-up of trash and scrap recycling a much-complained and criticized activity. This privilege has been suspended by the U.S. Naval authorities for a number of times for alleged misuse of resources and risk factors regarding base security.”

A study conducted by Leothiny Clavel in 1969 found the Filipino lowlanders as well as Chinese businessmen as the end beneficiaries of the scrap and recycle goods line. Gaabucayan reported that scavenging had very sensitive economic as well as political undertones which made and unmade local and national officials. Dudley believes that the intercession made in behalf of the Negritos by the Commission on National Integration (now PANAMIN) was not really motivated by such goodwill for the Negritos but was pressured by the rich and influential Filipino and Chinese businessmen who were the buyers of the recycled goods. The collection and selling of these materials has become a multi-million peso business controlled by non-Negrito businessmen .

Negritos as Security Guards Inside the Base

In a 1980 visit to Marcos Village, researchers found an estimated number of seventy-five Negritos employed as night guards in Clark Air Base. Shifts are from 5:00 p.m. to 12 midnight and midnight to 7:00 a.m. The five to twelve shift receives P7 while the twelve to seven gets P8. These do not include overtime pay. Altogether the pay would be around P200.

In some interviews, respondents related that their work as night guards meant keeping watch over a number of houses in the residential area. Each of the residents of the houses they guard would chip in P20 or more each month. Also, they would protect other buildings inside the base which the regular security force of the Base is unable to watch over. It is noted, however, that the non-Negrito civilian guards receive much higher pay and benefits than their Negrito counterparts.

Also, very few Negritos have been employed on the Base as regular civilian Filipino employees, compared to lowland , non-Negrito Filipinos, with the benefits and salary of the negotiated agreement with the Federal Civilian Employees Union. Though the Negritos have been promised and given special benefits and privileges, these were not equal to the amount of benefits and salaries for the Federal Civilian employees.

Formerly, the Negritos had the right and the privilege to enter the base from sun to sundown without a pass. They used to receive free hospitalization and medicine from the Base. For one reason or the other, with charges of abuses, misuse of privileges, security risks and thefts, these privileges

have been withdrawn or revoked. Also, a security agency composed of Negritos in Subic was abolished in 1965 because of alleged thefts and abuses.

Jungle Environmental Survival Training

The Jungle Environmental Survival Training (JEST) started in August 1965 with Negritos as Instructors. Some 58,784 American personnel have been trained under this program from 1964 to 1983. The number of those who undergo this course range from forty to one hundred a day at any one time.

The JEST started with four instructors. At one time, as many as fifteen Negrito instructors worked with this program in Subic Naval Base. In Clark Air Base, the Jungle Survival School was initiated at the height of the Vietnam War. As mentioned by Dudley, "the Military Bases utilize Negrito skills in accomplishing the military mission of the American government". Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned, that both in skills and performance, the Negritos excel in their native terrain and contexts.

In this regard, questions may be asked on whether the contributions of the Negritos in this particular area for the use and benefit of the Military personnel have been commensurate with the benefits that accrue to those who were involved in the program.

Other Benefits and Privileges

Aside from the limited work and occupations in the Bases such as guards and scrap collectors as well as hospitalization and medication, the Negritos are allowed to sell bows, arrows and spears and bolos inside the Base. There is a so-called "Negrito Handicraft Store" which sells handicrafts and wood carvings which are not made by Negritos but by lowland Filipino craftsmen. Among the limited handicrafts that still have to be encouraged and popularized are Negrito products such as baskets, hats, backpacks, chairs, and cooking utensils. Food and clothing are at times distributed among the Negrito communities as well as medicine and other consumer items. Hunting and fishing inside the Base perimeter are tolerated as well as the cutting and gathering of "buho" and rattan.

Reviewing the over-all impact of the U.S. Military Bases on the Negritos, some initial and preliminary conclusions may be made:

- a) The living pattern and culture of the Negritos have been significantly altered by the presence of the U.S. Military installations.
- b) Except for those few Negritos who have been able to work at the U.S. Military installations, it is observed that there has been very

- little influence of the U.S. Bases on the Negrito life and culture.
- c) The employment opportunities and the benefits and privileges derived from the US Military Bases were meant not to develop personal and communal self-reliance, self-sufficiency and development among the Negritos. Rather, the exchange of the G-strings with the jeans, combat shoes and uniforms of the Americans, as well as the taste for stateside consumer goods, have absorbed and integrated the Negritos into the American lifestyle, without providing the skills and means to sustain such patterns of living.
 - d) The nature of the influences of the U.S. Military Bases are such that they are neither related to agriculture nor related to any actual improvement of the Negrito life and culture. The irony of it is that the Military Bases have utilized Negrito skills in accomplishing their military mission particularly in the Jungle Environment Survival Training.
 - e) There is substantial basis to question the expressed intentions and purposes claimed by U.S. Military officials in the development and upliftment of the Negritos. The present plight and conditions of the Negritos bring to light the past actions and policies of the U.S. Military Bases. As Dudley has observed: "The Americans were not interested in subduing or changing Negrito life. Subdued, they have done. Changed, they also did, but for what is the question and issue."
 - f) The jobs available to Negritos hold neither promise for developing skills, nor contribution nor potentials for the improvement of the Negrito economy.
 - g) In recent interviews with some personnel of the Military Civic Action and Public Affairs of Clark Air Base, it was mentioned that since 1974, there has been no systematic, conscious and organized assistance to the Negritos after the Philippine government expressed its intention to relocate the Negritos.
 - h) In an interview with U.S. Assistance for International Development (USAID) officials, and a review of their publications and programmes, projects are granted on a bilateral basis (i.e. government to government basis, national, provincial, or on agency to agency basis) rather on ethnic basis or specific groups or communities.
 - i) It is to be noted that though many residents of Marcos Village have television antennae and stereos are heard as one passes by the residences, the only lamp electric post can be found at the corner of the gate leading to the Base proper. Up to the present, no electrical power is supplied to the community, which can be

reached only through a paved road passing through the Base from Mabalacat town. Water coming from the deep wells pumps have been observed to be brownish rather than clear.

- j) R. Barokas and J. Gochenour (20 March 1980) state in their Clark Area Development Assistance Report 1: "The development of an appropriate planning framework for the Clark Area Development Project presents a number of challenges. This is primarily due to the fact that as a military reservation for the last eighty years, the information needed for physical and social planning did not receive much attention until the middle of the past decade. It is true that the Command of the Base *sporadically* was involved in some of the social and economic problems of groups of inhabitants, but most of the action taken was *impromptu* and *ad hoc response* to immediate problems. Among these were the decisions to invite a *small group of Negritos* to live inside the reservation to provide area residents with limited employment opportunities such as guards (of the cable roads, gates, etc.) and to provide some basic services to communities immediately adjacent to the Base (eg. provision of a community tap water source inside the Base, construction of schools, provision of basic health care) through the Civic Program of the Base.

Prospects for the Negritos

What are the prospects for the Negritos after eighty-five years of Subic Naval Base and eighty years of Clark Air Base? What can they do for themselves and what can they expect others to do for them? U.S. government officials as well as the U.S. Bases personnel have opted for the easy way out with statements like: "With an agreement which was reached in 1979, 41,000 hectares have now been reverted to the government of the Philippines to be put into best use for the socio-economic development of the inhabitants within these lands immediately adjacent to the Base. The U.S. Government has under consideration the disbursement of a \$60M fund over a five-year period starting fiscal year 1980." In short, after eighty-five years in Subic and eighty years at Clark, the U.S. Military officials are saying "The Negritos are Filipinos. They are the responsibility of the Philippine government. Whatever needs, problems on land, health, education, food, employment. . . let them go to the Philippine government. We have given the aid/assistance in military wares and economic support funds."

The plight of the Negritos reminds me of the words of a Pacific Islander in protest of the continuing deprivation and exploitation his people are experiencing:

“They came from across the ocean
And took away my land.
They put my hands in bind,
And captured even my mind.

The forests of my ancestors denuded,
And the rivers of my forbears despoiled.
From our own domain we are forbidden.
For we, bear no title that are written in paper.

They have deprived our parents of a legacy.
They have disinherited our generation of our bounty.
And even the future of the unborn
They want to spoil and destroy.

They have to be stopped. . .
Before I breathe my last.

Even if we grant that the U.S. assistance/aid or rent were to go to the Negritos as a compensation to the more than 80 years of occupancy and use of their land, forests, mountains, rivers, valleys and fertile land;

Even if we grant that the U.S. Military Bases will provide employment for each and every Negrito;

Even if we grant that education of each Baluga up to secondary and tertiary levels was assured.

Even if we grant that medical services, from conception to old age were provided;

Even if every family was provided a house each with a room for every member of the family;

Even if basic facilities like water and electricity be given each household and together be given appliances; TV, airconditioner; stereo and even refrigerator;

Even if food were made abundant and supplies were provided for from the commissary/post exchange;

Are these enough to compensate for what has been lost and deprived them? Will these be worth in exchange for the present existence and the future threatened by extinction?

Nuclear Peril

The story of the Negritos has been a history of displacement, ejection, relocation and forced movements due to the encroachments by the lowland-

ers from different ethnic and racial groups and finally by the foreign powers, particularly the Americans. Their desire to dwell in their ancestral lands, primieval forests, abundant rivers and mountains have been thwarted by the loggers and lumber companies, by mining and grazing lords, by landlords and businessmen, by the military, local and American.

With the passage of time, the disturbance of their way of life has come not only from their opportunist countrymen. For the interests of nations and powers are in the interplay in the background. Their habitat has been the venue for the mock games of larger, international, worldwide games of the superpowers. While the old game of the colonialists and the imperialists was the subjugation of a people, the control of their resources, the takeover of their land, the domination of their way of life, new rules have been introduced that are entirely different with dimensions that are too complex to comprehend.

In this new, modern, nuclear war game, the Negritos (and the Filipinos) are no longer participants but only prospective preys, not anymore players but potential victims. The decisive element is surprise and we are kept in suspended anticipation, waiting, expecting and the only card we can play is hope, hope that the nuclear war game is not played in our own backyard. For it is a game of destruction, it is a game of devastation, it is a game of extinction. The damage is widespread and extensive to millions. And not only destructive to human life but to the land, to the vegetation, animal life, the air we breathe, the water we drink.

In the past, they could harm, endure, or kill a person with one bullet. And the dead were accused of trespassing, theft, pilferage, scavengers, smugglers or even as security risks – communists, subversives, Huks, rebels, NPAs, wild pigs, etc. If there was a need to kill more, they used a grenade, the machine gun, the bomb to attack and kill tens, hundreds and even thousands.

But the nuclear war games between the superpowers (including the non-power who have pretensions) threaten not just a few, a community, nor tens nor hundreds nor thousands, but imperils us all with a total destruction, either by accident or by act of aggression, Whether you are *kulot* or *unat*, Kapampangan or Ilocano, Tagalog or Bisaya, young or old, civilian or military.

Susan Rose Minviluz in an article "Iligtas ang Homo Sapiens Baluganensis" described the Negritos as "endangered species". But the reasons are not due to nature and their environs, not because of lack of food or water, neither due to heat or cold, the sun or the rain, neither sickness nor pestilence nor inherent weakness or genetic failures. The potential extinction can be caused by the presence of the U.S. Military Bases and in the event of a nuclear attack or accident, the Aetas will be among the first to become extinct.

The plight and the struggles of the Negritos are not theirs alone. It is shared by the Kapampangans, the peoples of Zambales, Bataan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and the Manilans. Their state of deprivation and exploitation and the threat of extinction are qualitatively and basically the same as the rest of the ethnic minorities and majorities of the Filipino people against U.S. domination and control of the economy, politics, military, and the denial of basic human rights, democracy and sovereignty.

On their own, very little could be done to make a dent on the massive, gigantic U.S. Military Bases. But together with US, the rest of the Filipino people in protesting, opposing and resisting the U.S. Military Bases, we may still redeem our country and people and survive the possible nuclear holocaust.