

# Terrorism and Subversion: The Role of Communist Party of The Philippines (CPP) Networks in Post-October 7th protests

**BY KYLE SHIDELER**

Director and Senior Analyst for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, Center for Security Policy

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## SUMMARY

This article explores the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) role in American college campus protests and civil disorder post the October 7th invasion of Israel. It details the CPP's network of front groups, their longstanding connections to Palestinian terrorists and American radical leftists, and the tactics they employ to advance their agenda.

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## WHY ARE FILIPINO COMMUNISTS PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN CAMPUS CHAOS?

Organized civil disorder on America's elite college campuses and in the streets of major cities is now entrenched as a follow-on campaign to the 2023 invasion of Israel.

The U.S. government's response to these post-October 7th events has primarily addressed the challenge in one of two ways. The first is principally as a counterterrorism issue, invoking allegations of material support for terrorism. Victims of October 7<sup>th</sup> filed civil suits alleging material support for terrorism against the National Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), and their primary financial supporter, American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), both groups accused of links to Hamas fundraising networks.

Additionally, the leading Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) activist group Samidoun, which played a role in training campus protestors, has been designated as a front for the Palestinian Marxist terror group, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) by the U.S. and Canadian governments. The U.S. State Department, in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has actively pursued revoking the visas of student protestors engaging in what the State Department views as support for terrorist organizations, in violation of visa requirements and the affirmative oaths of visa recipients.

The other approach, adopted by the [Departments of Education and Justice](#), addresses the problem under the rubric of "hate crimes" and "antisemitism," focusing on the failure of U.S. college campuses to uphold civil rights, particularly for American Jewish students, by failing to provide safe learning environments.

Both approaches have merit, but they do not address the full scale of the issue. While the first approach looks primarily at support flowing from the United States to terror groups abroad, the second approach looks at the issue as a largely domestic concern.

But neither approach fully explains, for example, the extensive presence of non-Palestinian foreign subversive groups that mobilized in concert with Hamas' October 2023 call for global jihad. They do not explain why Hamas received such instantaneous and committed solidarity, or how it was able to utilize front organizations to activate Americans to promote domestic discord and revolution.

## FILIPINO COMMUNISTS ON CAMPUS

An illustrative case study regarding this challenge can be seen by looking at the wide spread presence of organizations involved with on campus protests which are affiliated with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which is officially listed as a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department together with its armed wing, the [New People's Army \(NPA\)](#).

One such group is Anakbayan, the student wing of [Bagong Alyansang Makabayan](#) (the New Patriotic Alliance), or Bayan for short. Formed in 1985, Bayan is an alliance of self-described anti-imperialist and progressive Filipino political organizations organized in support of the national democratic movement. The Filipino branch founded the U.S. branch, Bayan-USA, in 1994.

Bayan is one of several organizations that the CPP regards as part of its "echelon of alliances." According to CPP/NPA defectors who authored a comprehensive Filipino government study entitled [Unmasking The Myth of Communism in the Philippines](#), Bayan is ultimately controlled by the CPP's National

United Front Commission, which in turn answers directly to the CPP's Office of the Secretary General.

Anakbayan USA publicly issued a declaration calling on "Filipino Youth" to be "[all out for Palestine](#)," a slang term commonly meaning "to use every available means." Anakbayan has a history of participating in [violent street protests](#); the first U.S.-based chapter of Anakbayan [was founded in Seattle in 1999](#) as an outgrowth of the World Trade Organization protests, according to the group's biography. Anakbayan-USA also has a history of public support for the CPP/NPA, including [a public declaration](#) supporting the 55th anniversary of the founding of the NPA.

As citizen journalist Stu Smith ably documents, chapters of Anakbayan are playing a leading role in organizing pro-Palestinian protests on multiple college campuses [from Manhattan](#) to [Los Angeles](#). Other Anakbayan chapters have played documented roles at protests in [UC Northridge](#), [UC Irvine](#), [Chicago](#), and [Washington D.C.](#)

In addition to Anakbayan, other organizations operating under the Bayan-USA umbrella includes GABRIELA, Migrante, and the League of Filipino Students. Despite being founded by a foreign political organization and engaging in political activism in the United States, neither Bayan-USA nor any of its affiliate organizations are registered under the Foreign Agent Registration Act.

Thus, these organizations operate as legal fronts and are ultimately under the control and direction of the banned and terror-designated CPP. While they claim to be legally distinct from the CPP, these organizations adhere to the CPP's strategic political line, which [calls](#) for a "national liberation and democratic revolution" as a precursor to full Communist revolution.

Since its creation in 1968 by Jose Maria Sison, the CPP has been fighting a guerrilla war against the Filipino government. The conflict has continued for over five decades and [claimed the lives](#) of at least 40,000 people. Sison, in keeping with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist doctrine, [argued](#) that a "broad anti-fascist, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist united front" was necessary to advance Communist revolution in the Philippines by first conducting a rebellion against the Filipino government, which is described as a "semi-colonial, semi-feudal" system as a precursor for the implementation of socialist/communist revolution.

The CPP exerts control over the various Anakbayan chapters and their parent organization, Bayan-USA, by utilizing the Marxist-Leninist principle of democratic centralism, which conditions organizations to fall in line with the "mass line" adopted by the CPP. Compliance is assured through a mixture of embedded underground CPP cadres.

These organizations are not the only examples of CPP fronts supporting the Palestinian cause. The International League of People's Struggle (ILPS) was founded in 2001 "with over 350 member organizations spanning 40 countries." ILPS describes itself as coordinating "anti-imperialist and democratic struggles worldwide." It serves as an international coordinating body of CPP fronts and aligned organizations, supervised by the CPP's International Department. CPP founder Jose Maria Sison served as ILPS Chairman Emeritus until he died in 2022.

ILPS featured Samidoun and PFLP leader Khaled Barakat [in a 2022](#) conference. Infamous PFLP hijacker Leila Khalid [was keynote speaker](#) to the League's 7<sup>th</sup> International Assembly in 2024. During that time, the League passed a People's Declaration [which declared](#):

"One of the greatest achievements

of October 7th through Palestinian armed resistance is it raised the consciousness of the masses; solidifying a weakness of the Zionist narrative to a point of no return. The fight for a free Palestine is at the very heart of the international battle between oppressed and oppressor, between imperialist monopoly capital and the people of the world. It has also reignited the U.S.-Russia and China rivalry. The ILPS unconditionally supports the struggle of the Palestinian people to free their homeland.”

Utilizing the ILPS as an international assembly – made up mainly of Communist parties with a Maoist tendency and affiliated organizations in countries around the world– enables the CPP to exhibit outsized influence and raise the profile of its struggle against the Filipino government. ILPS has also helped provide the CPP with inroads to American Marxist organizations, such as the Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO).

## LONG TIES TO PALESTINIAN TERROR

The nexus of Filipino Communists, Palestinian terrorists, and radical American leftists goes back at least 40 years. During the Cold War, subversive campaigns against Western states were frequently conducted under the auspices of aligned Communist intelligence services, each responsible for its area of operations. The Soviets also created a conglomeration of anti-colonial and anti-fascist terror networks, as described in Clare Sterling’s *The Terror Network*. These subversive national liberation groups provided political and logistical mutual support. In the late

1960s, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was the [epicenter of training](#) for the network.

As the Sino-Soviet split emerged, the Chinese Communist Party competed with the Soviets for influence among Communist-led national liberation fronts and terror groups, including in the United States. By the time the Soviet Union began to collapse and shut off material support for the network, worldwide radical movements had already started to look toward the successful Maoist model of revolution and control. Many groups turned to China for ideological inspiration and sponsorship.

Formed in 1985 by the union of several U.S. Maoist “[New Communist](#)” organizations which favored the line of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) over the Soviet-controlled CPUSA, the FRSO has a history of ties to foreign Marxist terror groups. It developed alliances and other affiliations with a range of federally designated terrorist organizations, from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is the Marxist-Leninist faction of the PLO, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known as FARC.

In 2010, the FRSO was investigated after members [reportedly told an undercover police officer](#) that the organization had plans for “armed struggle” and that members had provided material support to the FARC and the PFLP. Bayan-USA, rushing to the FRSO’s defense, issued a statement comparing the FBI raids with accusations that Bayan had ties to the CPP/NPA [and linking itself](#) to CPP/NPA founder Jose Maria Sison and the ILPS.

FRSO played a significant role in the political formation of several of the leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement and subsequent 2020 riots and protests, as documented by Heritage Foundation

scholar Michael Gonzalez in his book *BLM: The Making of a New Marxist Revolution*.

Direct relations between the FRSO and the CPP go back at least as far as 2002, when the Central Committee of the CPP provided a solidarity statement on the occasion of the FRSO's Third Congress. This shows that the relations have not been merely casual or coincidental for more than two decades. FRSO likewise regularly sends the CPP and NPA their comradely greeting on the occasion of the terror group's [founding anniversary](#). *Fight Back! News* [regularly reprints](#) statements from the CPP Central Committee, including those [providing tactical instructions](#) to the NPA [and](#) issued by the ILPS.

CPP founder Jose Maria Sison [provided the group](#) with a personalized video presentation for the FRSO conference marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in 2017.

In October 2024, FRSO Political Secretary Mick Kelly (one of the FRSO members [involved in the FBI investigation](#) in 2010) submitted a paper on the historic significance of Stalin to a Marxist Conference in Italy which members of the CPP and Communist Party of Cuba attended.

These statements and instructions are not mere comradely greetings, but a near-century-old form of ideological guidance and command common to international Communist networks. These behaviors are not merely educational or informative. They are well within statutory definitions of material support for a designated terrorist group. Yet since the 2010 FBI raid, U.S. authorities have taken no enforcement action against the FRSO for performing these functions on behalf of the CPP/NPA.

More recently, FRSO chapters have played a

leading role in helping to organize ongoing campus disruptions, both under the FRSO label [and through](#) the student organization, the new Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). SDS does not appear to be a fully FRSO-controlled organization but, like its 1960s predecessor, an umbrella organization within which various revolutionary and progressive ideologies interact, despite efforts by the FRSO to cement control. The revival of the SDS name shows the decades-long continuum over three generations. Even if FRSO does not fully control SDS, it clearly sees SDS as an opportunity for recruiting and indoctrinating college students. SDS is structured as a series of semi-independent campus chapters that receive training and information from the National Working Committee of SDS, according to a SDS "Chapter Building Toolkit" available online. FRSO and SDS chapters [have participated jointly](#) in Hamas solidarity protests on college campuses in multiple cases. The CPP gains additional access to campus activists through their relationship with the FRSO and FRSO-tied SDS.



- SDS is a structured, national organization that gets work done. In other words, we mean business.
- Every 2 weeks there's a National Conference Call-the best way to receive help and voice concerns or questions is by getting on the calls!
- ALWAYS email the listserve for both National SDS and your local chapter!
- After EVERY EVENT, create a summation and go over it with your members!
- Remember to write articles about rallies and protests and email them to National

## Follow-Up Work

*Figure 1. Slide from SDS Slideshow "How to Get Members" Accessed online by Author*

### ACTIVIST TRAINING AND CADRE BUILDING

In addition to its network of front organizations and its liaison efforts with domestic U.S. Marxist groups, American students have received CPP cadre training and curriculum through the group's PADEPA program. PADEPA, which stands for *Pambansang Demokratikong Paaralan* (National Democratic School), is the CPP educational program, tailored for each of the various "Sectors" from which it attempts to recruit allies and eventual cadre.

As documented by Smith, the UCLA SJP, held a 10-week "People's University for Liberated Palestine" Summer program from July to September 2024, during which time students were given indoctrination during the day, and during the evenings equipped with hands on protest training, including training on how to "confront police," including countering police rioting formations, carrying out "de-arrest" efforts, as

well as organize protests while countering surveillance and maintaining operational security.

One period of instruction was devoted to the study of the *Araling Aktibista* (Activist Study), one of the CPP's "special courses" geared towards the student activist sector.

The Arak, as it is also called, describes itself as being:

"...for all organized masses who have completed the study of the General Mass Course. However, it is mandatory, for activists already on the level of KP (Organizing Committee) and GP (Organizing Group) who already have experience working in the Revolutionary Movement, whether rural or urban. It is important for building a strong backbone and core leadership for the

revolutionary associations and mass organizations.”

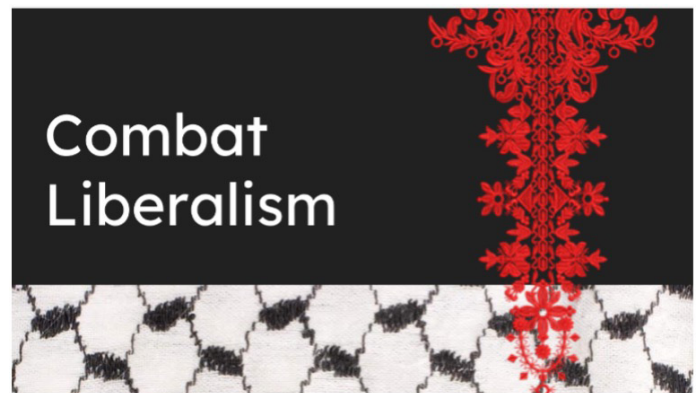
Activist Study is rigidly ideological. The *Araling Aktibista* consists of five lessons, the first of which is a series of five short articles written by Mao himself and known as “The Five Golden Rays” (FGR). According to the authors of “Heavier than Mount Banahaw: Five Golden Rays and the Filipinisation of Maoism” in [Experiments with Marxism-Leninism in Cold War Southeast Asia](#), the FGR holds a preeminent place in CPP thought, over and above “The Little Red Book,” Mao’s better-known work. The authors note that the FGR was distributed to activists “to prepare them to become candidate members of the Communist Party...”

Two of the five essays are worth noting regarding CPP efforts abroad. The first is “In Memory of Comrade Norman Bethune,” in which Mao extols the virtues of Dr. Norman Bethune, a member of the Canadian Communist Party who travelled to serve the CCP in the second Sino-Japanese War. The essay highlights the importance of internationalizing the Communist struggle and the need for first-world Communists to provide direct support to third-world guerilla warfare campaigns.

It is [notable that in an interview](#) conducted with *Militant Wire*, the Chief Information Officer for the CPP/NPA, Marco Valbuena, affirmed that the CPP/NPA receives and utilizes foreign fighters from abroad. The total number of such foreign fighters is unclear. Neither are their methods of recruitment and travel. However “National Democratic” fronts, such as GABRIELA New York, advertise “exposure trips” for members and allies “[ranging between 2 weeks to 3 months](#)” during which time they are introduced to Philippines-based CPP fronts which supply cadre and

support for the NPA, according to *Unmasking The Myth*.

In the second essay, “On Combating Liberalism,” Mao excoriates liberalism in revolutionary organizations, noting, “It is an extremely bad tendency. Liberalism stems from petit-bourgeois selfishness, it places personal interests first and the interests of the revolution second, and this gives rise to ideological, political and organizational liberalism.”



**Figure 2. Slide from “UCLA People’s University for a Liberated Palestine” 7-22-24, Courtesy of Journalist Stu Smith**

This takes on added significance when one recognizes that since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the organized campaigns, both on and off college campuses, have not been primarily focused on presumably “fascist” or “right-wing” targets, as one might presume given the campaign and subsequent election of Donald Trump as president. Instead, they have most heavily targeted Democrat and progressive leaders, blaming them for insufficient zeal, particularly on the Palestinian question. This was, of course, most notable surrounding the protests related to the Democratic National Convention, where Bayan, Anakbayan, ILPS, FRSO, and SDS played leading roles in the [March on the DNC](#) coalition. Thus in addition to fulfilling the traditional role of supporting third world

“national liberation” struggles and promoting Marxist terror groups, the CPP helps make the Palestinian issue a wedge on the American left, seeking to demonstrate that support for Palestinian terrorism is not only an obligatory part of the Maoist “mass line,” but a strategic instrument to undermine liberalism among the democratic left, and to push a major mainstream foreign political party to tolerate and ultimately adopt the CPP party line.

The remaining four lessons in the *Araling Aktibista* are from the CPP. They emphasize the importance of dialectic materialism, class analysis, party organization, collective leadership, self-criticism, democratic centralism, and mass-line organizing. Without dwelling here on the complicated and esoteric details of these Marxist-Leninist-Maoist doctrinal concepts, a fair summary is that *Araling Aktibista* is geared towards inculcating student activists in Communist methods of mass organizing and how the party exhibits ideological control over a broad-based and otherwise diverse movement. This is the essence of the successful “popular front” concept developed under the Comintern of the 1930s.

## **CPP AS A PROXY?**

Given their Maoist orientation and historical ties, it would be reasonable to question whether the CPP and its fronts operate as a proxy for China. As mentioned, in the very late Soviet period and after the Soviet collapse, many Soviet-aligned networks sought collaboration with, or sponsorship by, the Chinese party. Beijing’s embrace of a United Front approach under the internationally more assertive Xi Jinping completed the circle.

Reporting has identified the PRC as taking an active role in promoting the Palestinian cause and using it to

foment discord in the United States. As identified by the Network Contagion Research Institute, the PRC [has utilized](#) its control of the TikTok social media platform to foment anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian views in the post-October 7<sup>th</sup> environment.

Additionally, the CCP-linked “[Singh Network](#)” of protest organizations has played an active role in campus protests. It is reasonable to investigate whether the CPP is operating in cooperation or coordination with these campaigns, but requires further research to be conclusive.

The PRC provided weapons to the NPA until June 1975, when the Philippine government officially recognized the PRC. The Chinese Communist Party ended its [financial support](#) for the CPP/NPA in 2011. In more recent years, the CPP/NPA have publicly denounced the PRC, and the NPA has reportedly received orders to [target Chinese assets](#) as recently as [October 2020](#).

So, rather than China as the CPP’s primary backer, the Philippine government has emphasized the support the group receives from Western sources. It [repeatedly blames](#) the [European Union](#) and networks of [American and Canadian non-profits](#) for funding CPP/NPA front organizations, which in turn allegedly filter money back to the guerrillas. These accusations [closely mirror](#) those made against EU-based non-profits that fund the PFLP network.

The same funding issue relates to movements and causes other than the CPP/NPA, which is a subject appropriate for another study.

Whether there is cooperation or coordination between the CPP/NPA and the Chinese Communist Party on foreign subversion campaigns remains an area where future investigation is required. There is little available



open-source information to suggest how the removal of former Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte and the death of CPP founder Jose Maria Sison may have impacted PRC's relations with the CPP, for example, and current China-Philippines [tensions over maritime borders](#) have grown. U.S.-led efforts to encourage the Armed Forces of the Philippines [to adjust its capabilities](#) away from an emphasis on the internal security mission against Communist and Islamist insurgencies and towards counter-Chinese maritime aggression might also incentivize the PRC/CCP to reengage with their Filipino Maoist counterparts.

## GLOBAL RED AND WHITE AREAS OF OPERATION

In understanding the CPP's subversive role in fomenting college campuses and other civil disorders, it is helpful to recognize that the CPP's adapted Maoist "People's War" model is particularly suited to being modified to fit the global environment. Mao's "People's War" model mobilized the masses through guerrilla warfare during a protracted conflict.

Under CPP/NPA doctrine, the battlespace is divided into "Red" areas (where the NPA is active in establishing governance activities) and "White" areas (where the Philippine government is in control). Unlike Mao's guerilla doctrine, however, where Red areas represent permanently "liberated" zones, CPP Red areas [historically were focused](#) on a series of non-contiguous fronts, separated by "White" or contested "Pink" zones. [Unmasking the Myth](#) cites the 1976 CPP document "Our Urgent Tasks" to describe the vital role played by subversive mass organizing in the White areas:

"The revolutionary mass movement in the cities (and town centers)

is basically and primarily "open, legal, defensive, democratic" mass movement that is anti-imperialist and anti-fascist in character, (for a relatively longer period); but with distinctly complimentary role with the main underground armed revolutionary movement ...

The CPP white area operation is a manifest expression of the party's "revolutionary dual tactics" turning the table against the enemy. (utilizing the legal and democratic space of the state and circumventing the laws)...

The Revolutionary character of the CPP white area is achieved by implementing the underground mass movement as an inherent and integrated component- (mandatory and not optional) for every open, legal democratic mass organization. ..."

This cooperative Red/White combination, where armed insurgency is supported by essentially legal subversive supporting actions in "white" zones, is in accordance with the overall CPP Strategic Political Line. The document continues:

"Cease [sic] the political power through the armed struggle, through support of democratic and revolutionary mass movement, in order to cause the downfall of the ruling class in order to establish the democratic coalition government nationwide. At the eve of the victory of the National Democratic Revolution, the second phase of the

revolution which is the establishment of Socialism shall commence...”

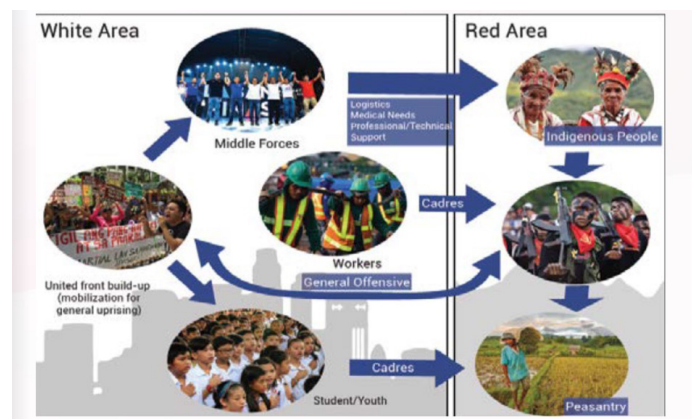
Mapped onto a global battle space, “Red” areas can be represented as “the global south,” where armed militancy is viewed as a possibility, ranging from Gaza to Yemen, to the jungles of the Philippines. In contrast, the West is viewed as a “White area” where the correct orientation is activity through legal front organizations and protests aimed at destabilizing the opposition and causing “the downfall of the [global] ruling class.” As the UCLA People’s University training documents notes after citing the *Araling Aktibista*,

“As oppressed peoples and people part of the movement for the liberation of Palestine, we understand that armed struggle is a necessary strategy of resistance. Abolition of police and the prison industrial complex is a core point of unity in the anti-imperialist struggle. In the last several months, we have frequently been dealing with militarized police violence, which has led us to take up militant strategies and points of view. Many of us have experienced radicalization and political growth through these actions. However, the revolution toward liberation requires rigorous study of scientific political thought alongside these actions.”

The document later asks: “What is the difference between military action living in the empire versus military action by liberation movements in the global south?”

One can see the CPP influence in the emphasis on the anti-imperialist and “anti-fascist” character of the

“White” campaigns inside the United States, even as they are undertaken in cooperation with the armed militancy of those outside the U.S. The emphasis is on undermining U.S. support for allies (whether Israeli or Filipino), not to achieve a battlefield objective for those armed terrorist groups fighting abroad, but as part of a longer-term effort to induce political incoherence and collapse in the primary adversary, the United States.



**Figure 3. From *Unmasking: The Myth of Communism in the Philippines* pg. 45, published by The Task Force To End Local Communist Armed Conflict (TFELCAC)**

Armed resistance in the global south is both supported by and helps to feed the militancy of the popular uprising in the “white area,” only after which (according to CPP doctrine) victory follows. One might as easily say that the doctrinal purpose of armed resistance in the global south is to facilitate general uprising in the capitalist North as say that the disorders and protests in the “white areas” are intended to promote and support armed resistance in the “Red” parts of the world. Thus, approaching these disorders solely through a lens of “material support” is unlikely to provide a full picture of the strategic depth and purpose of the campaign.

A comparison might be made between this approach, and the doctrine utilized by the Vietcong in South Vietnam in the 1960s, later also adapted worldwide to include Latin American revolutionaries, including the Popular Liberation Forces of El Salvador, a fringe group begun in 1970 and merged, forcibly at a 1980 meeting with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, with four other Marxist-Leninist factions to become a successful insurgent movement called the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). After that merger, the FMLN immediately received worldwide political and financial support through a Soviet-sponsored network of “solidarity committees,” the largest in the United States. These solidarity committees had been rooted in the Viet Cong/Hanoi support movement on American college campuses, which radicalized the anti-draft and anti-war movements and created a new generation of more extreme political activism.

## CONCLUSION

It should be noted that the presence of CPP fronts is only one example of several foreign entities supporting subversive campaigns inside the United States in solidarity with Hamas’ call for global jihad after its October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. A more detailed examination of each campaign is necessary. The CPP example is particularly illustrative, in part because organizers have emphasized instructing activists on the CPP model, with its focus on utilizing underground cadres to control larger mass movement organizations, enforcing the mass line through democratic centralism of decision-making, and hiding behind seemingly “progressive” organizations and structures. All of this is done in coordination with, and on behalf of, a comparatively minuscule armed terrorist element (in CPP/NPA), yet when carried out in conjunction with other foreign influence and subversion efforts, they are capable of driving U.S. political outcomes, media

coverage, and policy.

As a case study, the involvement of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its fronts should serve as a reminder that American counterterrorism theory is not only obsolete but also has never grasped the full threat spectrum. The counterterrorism mindset that has dominated U.S. national security thinking for the past several decades was not paired with an adequately robust counterintelligence mindset and is betrayed by an almost nonexistent countersubversion mindset. A new approach must view terrorism as a violent dimension within a larger spectrum of threats. Without including counterintelligence and countersubversion at the core of any counterterrorism approach, the ultimate purpose of such campaigns will be lost to American intelligence analysts, resulting in ineffectual responses.



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