

# Effects of corruption in the military

[Government](#), [Corruption](#)



It is surprising to hear from the news nowadays that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) tops the list of the country's most corrupt organizations. It seems like gone were the days when the Philippine National Police (PNP) hugs the limelight as the most rotten egg on the lot. With the current controversy hugging the country's Armed Forces, the amount that the PNP's Euro Generals took with them in their travels looked like some loose change as compared to those amassed by the AFP comptrollers and former chiefs of staff.

Even the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, whose names used to be synonymous to graft and corruption, seemed to have faded in the background to give way to the AFP's moment. They are talking about hundreds of millions here, and that is not yet the total amount. More names have yet to be named. More funds have yet to be accounted for. And as the author says, it is alarming that the people just don't seem to care. But how and why would they? Is corruption a new issue in this country? Is this the first time a government agency got involved in a corruption issue?

Former Presidents Marcos, Aquino, Ramos and Erap had had their times under the limelight. Even those presidents before them were, and people were so affected back then, thus the birth of EDSA 1, 2 and 3 and the numerous rallies and coup attempts in the past. Then GMA entered the scene and brought with her the Hello Garci scandal, the fertilizer scam, the ZTE Fiasco. The list went on and on. And nothing was resolved, and the former economist for a president was not charged with anything, and she went on to serve (if that's a fitting term) for a full, long nine years.

Now is it a wonder if people just don't give a damn? If they just choose to go on with their own lives and continue earning a living amidst the drama of Reyes's suicide and all the brouhaha of the senate hearing? It is probably because they have already got used to the idea that corruption happens in this country as often as a child is being born every three minutes in the world. And despite the numerous hearings in the senate, nothing had been resolved so far. People are fed up with the regular news on how taxpayers' money got squandered by those in the government.

Protests in EDSA, at one time, became a fad. Now it seemed to have lost its symbols too. Graft and corruption became a daily staple for the Filipino people, thanks to the media that focuses on whatever's big for the day. Reports and investigations go on for a few days, until another issue overshadows it and pushes it under the rug. As such, corruption in the military is not a surprise for the Filipinos, but just an addition to the pile of dirt being hurled around every now and then. Unlike the rest of the country, however, the controversy surrounding the AFP saddens me.

I had always been fascinated with the men in uniform. I wanted to join them, but my height didn't permit me to. I even wanted to marry a soldier, (well, I got a chance, but it just didn't work out). Seeing the organization I so admired all these years being torn to pieces by media whores and grandstanding hungry politicians makes me cringe. It is because having worked close to these people made me understand their plights, their hardships, their devotions, and their professionalism (or at least those that I worked closely with).

But the reports of corruption in the military should not be downplayed either, nor should it be buried together with former Chief of Staff and DND Secretary Angelo Reyes, who killed himself following the bullying of two senators; an underclass and a son of a former president whom he chose to betray on the so-called EDSA 2. Corruption in the AFP should not be a sympathy case now that a body lies cold and lifeless inside a coffin. (Considering the forgiving attitude of the Filipino people, this is not far from happening).

It should not spare the grieving wife too, considering how she enjoys living in a lavish house which construction expenses came, as the allegations say, from the AFP funds, which could have been used instead to increase the foot soldiers' hazard pays. The issue should be given a close scrutiny, an investigation that is unbiased, objective, fair, and as much as possible, far from the public's eyes. Some people argue that Reyes has yet to be convicted at the time of his death, and thus, should not be labeled a criminal but instead a hero considering what he did for the country during in his lifetime.

But as the saying goes, a thousand good deeds can be overshadowed by a single evil act. And there's no smoke if there's no fire. There are material proofs that exist, which, however I try to think of other possibilities on how they acquired those; I really could not find an answer. An OFW's salary is way higher than that of a general, yet very few could afford to send their wives to travel abroad, so how could Mrs. Reyes get to the US and back several times in a month and even accompanied by a comptroller's wife and other friends?

How could she afford to shop for properties in America with merely 40 or 50 thousand pesos a month and some allowances as her husband's take home pay? Or is it the allowance that matters more and not the salary? But uncovering the truth behind these things is out of my business and is beyond my capability. I am but a mere spectator to this drama that profit-oriented TV stations shove in me. But this does not mean that I could not feel the demoralizations of the lower ranking enlisted personnel in the fields.

Because there they are, patrolling the fields in search of the enemies on foot with heavy backpacks containing the provisions for the mission on their backs, or at the sea patrolling the waters in pitch darkness aboard an outdated craft, or flying in planes dubbed as "widow makers." The hundreds of millions in pesos told to have been amassed by these generals could have improved the provisions for the soldiers on patrol, or could have bought the Navy a decent sea vessel, or could have been used to buy a new aircraft instead of the usual junks from the US that the Air Force usually acquire. They have the lack of funds as the usual excuse.

Sad indeed. Prior to killing himself, Reyes said that he did not invent corruption; that he just walked into it. What a statement from a supposedly intellectual man! Even an elementary student would shake its head and say, "how come he did not do anything to change it when he got the power and the capabilities to do so?" But it is too late to ask him for he's already dead. But Reyes' death did not solve anything (unless all of his colleagues and counterparts would follow suit). It only made the people forget for a while. After all the ceremonies at the wake, the tears that were shed, and all the

intricacies of his burial, the issue still remains unsolved; the soldiers in the field are still struggling, the AFP's equipment and facilities are still dilapidated. And Reyes' family, and that of Ligot's, and of Garcia's, and all the comptrollers, budget officers, generals and chiefs of staff involved in the corruption, still live lavishly and comfortably inside their posh homes and mansions, here and overseas. And Reyes was buried at the Libingan ng Mga Bayani. Such a farce, a big farce. Although I am not a fan of the current president, I am keeping my hopes high in his fight against corruption.

I wish, I ardently do, that he would be able to curb corruptions in the AFP. If that would happen, he would reignite the fire of devotion in the lower-ranking soldiers' hearts, as well as those whose idealism did not die as they reached the mainstream. But until the day comes that the AFP could punish those that trampled its name, it will remain the way it is today, an organization looking so stiff and brave at the outside, but is actually crumbling inside caused by relentless gnawing by the greedy and gluttonous few. In the end, it is the nation that is at the losing end.