



“Submarines provide us with strategic weight in a way that no other assets, or combination of assets does...submarines are a capability which shapes or changes the behavior of other nations and the calculus of leaders”

**-Vice Adm. Ray Griggs
Chief of Navy, Australia
April 9, 2014**

I - Introduction

In the light of the changes in the international security situation, submarines are vital operational assets that contribute significantly to all areas of maritime operations. The increasing likelihood of scenarios with local conflicts in coastal waters, such as disputes arising from contentious claims over exclusive economic zones rich in natural resources, has an influence on the current force and acquisition planning of a number of navies. No modern navy anywhere in the world can afford to ignore submarine capability development when defining its future procurement programs. This is why navies that have never operated submarines in the past, are now adding submarines to their fleets like Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, or tend to acquire submarines like Thailand and various Gulf states, the Philippines now included.

In terms of our nation's maritime security capability, submarines would play a very important role in providing our Navy a flexible and innovative way of patrolling our territorial seas and most specifically in the areas of Sea Denial, Sea Control, Strategic Deterrence, Strategic Force Multiplier, and Resource Protection. Being equipped with sensors and effectors, submarines would be able to continuously deliver its additional capabilities to include the conduct of covert Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), deployment and extraction of special operations forces, and the ability to fire even when submerged.

In line with this, the Philippine Defense Department's Capability Planning Decisions general instructions for Maritime Defense *directed the development of capability planning proposals for sub-surface assets* for maritime surveillance, maritime interdiction, and anti - access/area denial (DCAPS 2014, CPDM, pp.3-4). Thus, the Submarine Group, under the Philippine Fleet was provisionally activated pursuant to General Orders Nr. 287 of the Headquarters Philippine Navy, dated June 24, 2015, effective July 6, 2015 and officially activated as a regular unit of the Philippine Fleet on March 16, 2016.



II - Moving On

Being the Fleet's newly activated unit, the Submarine Group stands with its mission to eventually provide undersea warfare capability for naval operations in the accomplishment of the Philippine Fleet's mission. The large, complex, and complicated development programs demand personnel with background on submarine and anti-submarine warfare, which would lead to the creation of a pool of knowledge and program managers at all levels who will be trained and educated to have a successful submarine program. As such, the Group, in coordination with the Naval Research and Technology Development Center, came up with the Submarine Development Program.

As an initial step, the Fleet organized the group with personnel specifically tasked to organize, conduct research in developing submarine capabilities, develop doctrines, design basic and advance trainings, and proposed a career path for Officers and EP on Undersea Warfare Field of Specialization. Initially manned by 15 Officers and 12 enlisted personnel, the Submarine Group worked hand in hand with other Philippine Fleet offices and units in order to provide quality output in terms of our unit development for future undersea capability. To do this, an action plan was formulated covering three phases; **Organize, Research and Training Phase** (ORT Phase); **Infrastructure and Support Development Phase** (ISDev Phase); and **Acquisition and Sustainment Phase** (AcSus Phase). The general objective of the plan is to undertake necessary preparations and other related activities in order to organize and fill-up the manning, administrative and logistics requirements of the Submarine Group in coordination with Higher Headquarters; and to conduct thorough research, assessment and training in order to prepare the

Submarine Group for sub-surface capability and subsequently transform it into a total Submarine Force of the Philippine Navy.

Initiatives on D-O-T-M-L-F were also crafted and submitted to Higher Headquarters which included the identification of doctrines and manuals needed by the group in the short term period (2015-2018), organizational structure from 2015-2022, training strategy for Officers and EP ("crawl, walk, run" methodology), standard qualification of personnel and phasing of personnel fill-up, assignment of Officers in critical positions, and the basing requirements and plan development of mission-essential and administrative facility requirements.

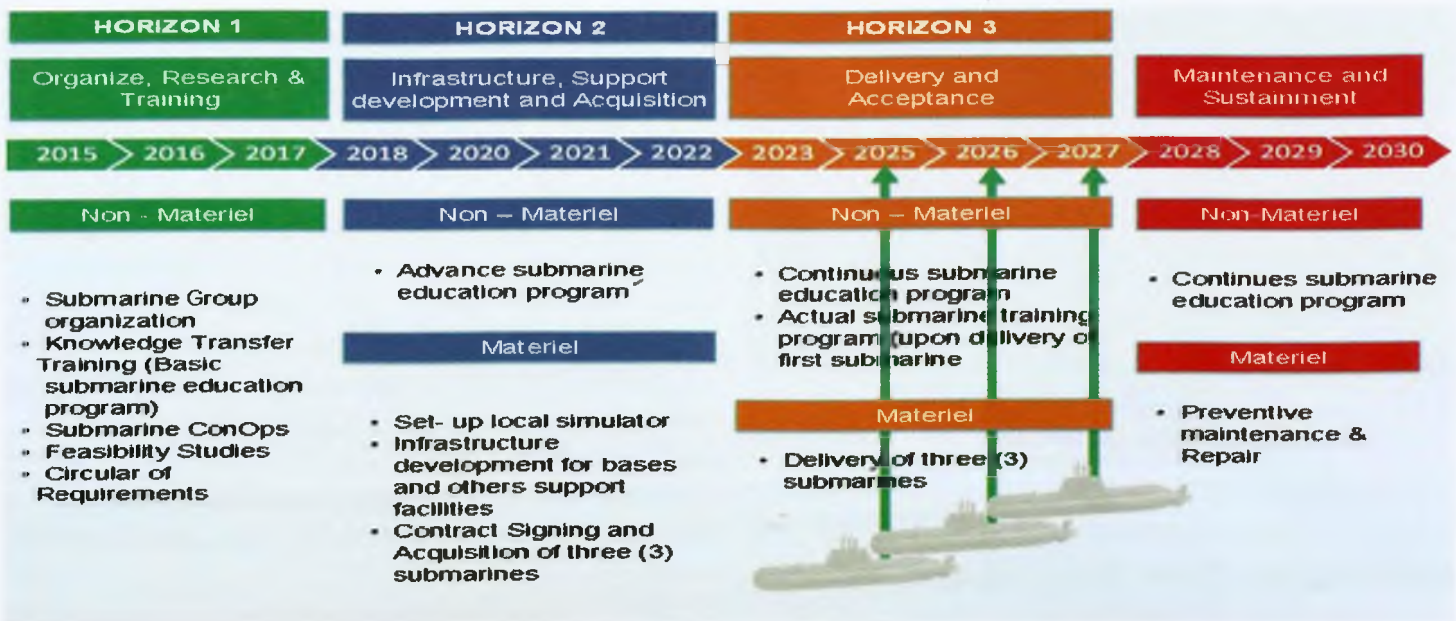
External opportunities were also availed in order to gain knowledge and information on submarine development which included the following:

Attended Submarine Conference 2015 held in Kiel, Germany which gave the group initial concepts and pieces of information that are essential to the PN submarine development.



Boarded USS Cheyenne (SSN 773) for shipboard tour and SMEE on US Sub-Safe Program and Rig for Dive procedure and processes.

Participated in the PN-USN staff to staff talks and discussed several topics which include training availability related to submarine operations, scheduled port visits, possible shipboard familiarization of PN personnel aboard US submarine, and inclusion of the Philippine Navy Submarine Group personnel as



attendees in Submarine- related symposium and conferences.

Through the HPN, coordinated with foreign submarine operators regarding the availability of submarine training opportunities for Submarine Group personnel.

Actively participated in conferences hosted by ThyssenKrupp of Germany and DCNS of France.

While the Higher Headquarters is formally coordinating training programs for the Group, personnel of this unit are continuously engaged in the following:

- In-house training through discussions and film showing from open sources every Tuesdays and Thursdays;
- Presentation and discussion of the proposed PN Submarine Operation and Management Doctrine by chapter (Chapter 1-22); and
- Collection of training reference materials and books related to submarines.

Presently, the Group is working on its building blocks as a result of a series of workshops which will serve as underpinnings in the development program as follows:

- TWG/DASAT for Submarine Acquisitions (Simulator and Projected Submarine)
- Submarine Group Personnel Career Management
- PN Submarine Capability Development Plan
- PN Submarine Operation and Management Doctrine
- Submarine Basic Training Program
- Submarine Personnel Career Administration Manual

III - Way Ahead

With the official activation of the Submarine Group under the Philippine Fleet, the challenge comes in setting out further details of the competitive evaluation process that will be undertaken by the Philippine Navy. Submarines are the most complex, sensitive and expensive defense capability acquisition our government can provide our nation. Future submarine program will determine what kind of capability we have to defend our sovereignty and national



interests in the future. As such, on the part of the Submarine Group, it is important to strengthen the foundation of the program in order to prepare the unit for the eventual realization of the Navy's submarine capability.

1. Headquarters Submarine Group

The Naval Chief Engineer has already drafted a proposed Headquarters Submarine Group in coordination with the PF. The proposal will be presented to Headquarters Philippine Fleet prior submission to FOIC, PN for approval. For the proposed unit's office at NSPL, Cavite City, design and cost estimate were already submitted for approval of the Higher Headquarters.

2. Personnel Recruitment

Continuous recruitment of Officers and enlisted personnel is on-going. Proposed academic and medical qualifications will be further validated in coordination with the Higher Headquarters.



3. Individual and Training Requirements

Training requirements were identified based on the "crawl, walk, run" methodology for improvement of submarine culture. Request for Information were already sent by the Higher Headquarters to allied submarine operators for the availability of submarine training opportunities. Hence, the unit will continue to send Officers and EP to any available training opportunities relating to submarine and anti-submarine operations, locally or abroad.

4. Research and Studies



The group is currently studying and evaluating the most appropriate submarine to be acquired in close coordination with NRTDC. This output will eventually assist the DASAT/TWG for submarine capability. The evaluation process will also help the PN balance important considerations including capability, cost, schedule, and risk. Interoperability with our alliance partners will also be a fundamental consideration.

5. The creation of DASAT/TWG

A proposed DASAT/TWG composition was already submitted to the Higher Headquarters. The organization will be focused on the basic submarine components of hull, propulsion, weapons/armaments, sensors, navigation, and communications.

In addition, the Submarine Group is also looking forward to actively participate in various international and local naval exercises involving submarines in order to appreciate the roles of submarine on maritime operations and eventually carry out the knowledge acquired from the said exercises.