

“Development Diplomacy”: The Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Philippines

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The political culture of policy making in the present regime nullifies efforts to develop and implement rational policies. The concentration of decision-making authority in the Presidency causes a lack of initiative at all levels of the government, and precludes the primacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA, now MFA) in foreign policy formulation and implementation. The weakness of the MFA in policy input may be traced to the (a) lack of effective leadership at the ministerial level and the attendant failure of the MFA to adapt its structure to change and (b) politicization of the MFA that frustrated reorganization and other reform efforts. Problems in personnel, finances, administration and policy still plague the MFA and the Foreign Service. However, improved leadership and administration at the highest levels of the MFA could produce improvements through better administration, careful planning, support for training programs, and increased allotment of funds. Since martial law, parallel foreign policy structures in the economic sphere have become very important. In contrast to the political sphere, foreign economic policy planning has been increasingly optimized under the control of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The subordination of the MFA's role to that of the NEDA is due not only to the failure of the MFA to respond to policy demands, but also to the earlier realization of the NEDA that foreign economic policy is development diplomacy.

Introduction

The function of foreign policy in development is often ignored by policy makers in the Third World. It is synonymous with rhetoric: symbols become a substitute for substantive policy goals. While development goals focus on changing domestic political and economic conditions, foreign policy goals are indeterminate. Policy is made not with objectives in view but as a reaction on an *ad hoc* basis to crises. No effort is made to examine how foreign policy could be used to promote domestic development.

The Philippines is unique among developing countries in trying to articulate a foreign policy which would reflect its development goals. Termed “diplomacy for development” by then Deputy Undersecretary¹ for Foreign Affairs Manuel Collantes, this policy change was implemented shortly after the imposition of martial law in September 1972 in conjunction with a request by President Ferdinand E. Marcos that all departments of the government revitalize their efforts for the promotion of national development.

In this paper, Philippine “development diplomacy” will be examined to understand how foreign policy can contribute to development objectives.

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¹Presidential Decree No. 1397 provided for the conversion of departments into ministries; thus the change in nomenclature from secretary to minister and from deputy undersecretary to deputy minister.

This will require, first, an examination of the organization and function of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and, second, an examination of other government policy organs which play a role in foreign policy. In this context, the effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in policy promotion will be evaluated and recommendations will be made as to possible improvements.

Historical Background

This section traces the history of the present Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also discusses problems in its operations and its role in foreign policy formulation.

The MFA started as the Foreign Relations Division established under the Office of the President of the Commonwealth in 1936 and charged with the important task of monitoring relations with the United States. This Division became the Office of Foreign Relations under Commonwealth Act No. 683, September 23, 1945 (implemented by Executive Order (E.O.) No. 76, December 3, 1945). Section 1 of E.O. No. 76 established the duties and the functions of the Office:

- (1) to recommend to the President policies affecting economic, political, and cultural relations of the Philippines with foreign countries;
- (2) to take charge of participation in international conferences;
- (3) to explore possibilities of establishing economic, social, or cultural relations with the United States and foreign countries;
- (4) to take charge of the establishment of trade or cultural offices in the United States and foreign countries;
- (5) to look after the rights and obligations of the Philippines as a member of the United Nations and other international organizations;
- (6) to take charge of treaties or agreements;

- (7) to prescribe rules and admission into service and direct exams for admission and promotion; and
- (8) to arrange contacts with foreign diplomatic representatives.

A subsequent law, Commonwealth Act No. 732 (July 3, 1946) established the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Implemented by E.O. No. 18 (September 18, 1946), the DFA was charged with the "coordination and execution of the foreign policies of the Republic of the Philippines and the conduct of its foreign relations" and the "Secretary of Foreign Affairs shall be responsible to the President for formulating and carrying into effect the foreign policy of the Republic. . . ."

These acts form the legal basis for the role of the MFA in policy making. Clearly, it was given authority for all relations between the Philippines and other countries, including treaty negotiations. Indeed, in appointing General Carlos P. Romulo Secretary of Foreign Affairs, President Marcos wrote: "I shall have to rely on the Department, among others, to achieve a realistic re-orientation of our foreign policy...."²

Decision-making power in foreign affairs has always been concentrated in the Executive Branch. President Quirino acted as his own Secretary of Foreign Affairs while other Presidents have appointed their Vice-Presidents to the post. While no one disputes the overall responsibility for foreign policy of the President, a tendency has developed to defer even minor decisions until they had been discussed with the President.

²Ferdinand E. Marcos, "President's Instructions to the Secretary," *Foreign Service Circular (FSC)*, No. 49-69, emphasis added.

The powers of the Congress such as the purse, two-thirds support by the Senate for approval of treaties, the possibility of rejecting the President's nominees through the Commission on Appointments and the passage of resolutions concerning foreign policy were easily circumvented by the power of the President to make executive agreements as well as by the general incapacity of Congress in policy making. There is some indication that the abilities of the two houses' respective Committees on Foreign Relations to comment on foreign policy improved prior to martial law as a result of concern over Philippine involvement in Vietnam, the issue of parity rights and U.S. bases, and the establishment of relations with Communist countries. But the quality of discussion and of position papers was not high.³ The input of the National Assembly is even less under the New Society. Their approval of treaties is not required.⁴

³See John H. Romani who argues in *The Philippine Presidency* (Manila: Institute of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1956), pp. 149-172, that under the Magsaysay administration, the President's powers were curbed by Senator Recto's strong opposition. See also Yen Makabenta, "The Myths of Our Foreign Policy," *Graphic*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 41 (April 3, 1968), pp. 20-21. The President, however, could enter into Executive Agreements with other countries with or without the approval of Congress. See Edward William Mill, "The Conduct of Philippine Foreign Relations" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, August 3, 1954), p. 48. President Macapagal often bypassed Congress using this method. See Gerald Sussman, "The Sabah Claim and Maphilindo: A Case Study of Philippine Foreign Policy Decision-making" (Master's thesis, Philippine Center for Advanced Studies (PCAS), Quezon City, 1975), p. 158.

⁴Article VIII, Section 14 of the New Constitution states: "Except as otherwise in this Constitution, no treaty shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by a majority of all the members of National Assembly." Article IX, Section

The failure of the President to adequately delegate policy making responsibility implies a lack of initiative at all levels of government. This concentration of decision-making authority has placed increased demands on the President, making it difficult for him to process all the information necessary for intelligent policy decisions and thus, encouraging the development of *ad hoc* policy bodies to advise the President. Instead of relying on his own ministry for foreign policy advice, President Marcos has depended more on such organs as intra-agency committees, the Presidential Staff, and previously the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies (PCAS).⁵

Currently, the weakness of the MFA in policy input may be traced to a corresponding weakness in leadership at the Ministerial level. Under the present administration, Secretaries of Foreign Affairs have rarely been chosen for their administrative capability. As senior officials with wide experience in the international field, they carry to the office a certain degree of international prestige and experience with policy but rarely the energy to deal with mundane duties of administration. Their appointment

16 states: "All powers vested in the President of the Philippines under the nineteen hundred and thirty-five Constitution and the laws of the land which are not herein provided for or conferred upon any official shall be deemed, and are hereby, vested in the Prime Minister, unless the National Assembly provides otherwise." The 1935 Constitution allows the President to enter into Executive Agreements without approval of Congress.

⁵Suggestions were made earlier to change this. In House Bill (HB) 5296, Congressman Mitra during the 4th Congress' 4th Session wanted to give the Secretary of Foreign Affairs "overall authority and responsibility to initiate, formulate and execute foreign policy" subject only to the supervision and control of the President. See Department of Foreign Affairs, *Laws Governing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Manila, no date.

has rarely been based on their proven administrative ability or their proven insightful analysis of policy problems but rather on their status as senior statesmen and on their presumed ability to advocate Philippine policy on a "first-name" basis with foreign leaders.⁶

The effectiveness of promoting Philippine policy abroad on the basis of personality rather than substance has certainly diminished through time. Friendship as a resource is not inexhaustible, and it is questionable if many foreign policy makers formulate policy because of personal ties to foreign leaders.⁷

Related to the problem of effective leadership is the failure of the MFA to adapt its structure to change. The organization of the Ministry is still substantially the same as it was in 1946. It has been able to resist two major attempts at governmental reorganization: Reorganization Plan No. 35 of 1956⁸ and the reorganization

plan devised by the Presidential Commission on Reorganization in 1970 and implemented by Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 1 in 1972. The DFA was able to obtain exemptions from many of the changes suggested in these plans. Whatever changes which have occurred in the structure of the Ministry have not really altered functions.

Budgetary cutbacks partially explain the failure to adapt. For example, the Office of Political Affairs has currently allotted funds for the maintenance of geographical divisions, e.g., the Division for Asian and Pacific Affairs. However, these divisions exist only on paper and instead the Offices are broken down into more specific geographic desks, e.g., the China Desk. To make such a division official, however, would require promoting individuals to these positions.

A second reason for the failure of the Ministry to adapt is political. Reorganization would lead to some loss of power by those individuals now controlling divisions of the Ministry. One of the major reforms introduced by the Presidential Commission on Reorganization was the reduction of the number of undersecretaries from two to one. This move would have eliminated three offices from the

⁶There are some indications that criterion other than their experience was used in appointing Narciso Ramos and General Romulo as Secretaries of Foreign Affairs. Ramos' position as an uncle-in-law to the President may have influenced the decision to appoint him Secretary although he did have a long experience as Ambassador to the Republic of China. Subsequently, Ramos suffered several nervous breakdowns and asked to be replaced (Interview with Narciso Ramos, Manila, 1979). Prior to his appointment, Romulo was serving as President of the University of the Philippines and was eager to be replaced (Interviews with the University of the Philippines officials, 1979).

⁷In a sense, the Philippines is projecting its own concept of what should be the policy making environment on the world system. Personal ties and loyalties are important in the Philippines so perhaps consciously or unconsciously these same loyalties are assumed to be important to the world as a whole.

⁸Some changes were made in the DFA. See Department Order No. 251-257. The Government Survey and Reorganization Commission (GSRC)

called for only minor revisions in the DFA though it did recommend a complete change in the administration of foreign aid. The report on foreign affairs was not submitted to Congress. The Integrated Reorganization Plan of 1972 was submitted to the DFA on September 24, 1972. Ambassador Monico Vicente, then Assistant Secretary for Administration, in Foreign Service Circular (FSC) No. 184-72, stated that the DFA had taken exception to the plan and would modify it. See also Praxedes B. de Mesa, *In All Climes and Epochs - A Premier Office, a History of the Department of Foreign Affairs* (official history) (Manila: Department of Foreign Affairs, May 15, 1978), p. 68.

Department. This reform was never implemented especially as one of the undersecretarial positions had been created for political reasons.

Politicization of the MFA is not recent. During the period immediately following independence, the DFA was just one of the many administrative divisions which broke down under the pressure of new demands. The vastly increased requirements of self-government coupled with the expectations of independence were too much for a bureaucracy still reeling from the dislocations of World War II.⁹

The greatest opportunity for patronage lay within the newly created DFA.¹⁰ Ever since its creation, the pressures for patronage have been at the nexus of the struggle to create a professional Foreign Service.¹¹ Because of the failure to develop a non-political and independent Foreign Service, the department's role in policy making has suffered. To change this, attempts have been made to reformulate the structure and function

⁹Onofre D. Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines* (Manila: Institute of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1957), p. 221.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 225.

¹¹Patronage was an issue not only because the party in power made appointments but also because the party out of power could exercise influence via its control over the Department's budget. Civil servants and Foreign Service Officers owed their allegiance to the political "patron" who secured their appointment to office rather than to the bureaucracy which they served. The practice of Congress to increase or decrease salaries of ambassadors at post made them dependent on Congress rather than on the Department of Foreign Affairs. It also gave the ambassadors some leeway with the Home Office; if need be, the ambassadors could defy with impunity the Secretary of Foreign Affairs' orders. In one case, Secretary Serrano admitted he was unaware that Ambassador Fuentebella in Indonesia had been reporting regularly on the probability of civil war in that country.

of the Foreign Service; one attempt has begun only recently. The first was the Foreign Service Act of 1952, otherwise known as Republic Act (R.A.) No. 708, and the second was E.O. No. 523, "Restructuring the Foreign Service of the Philippines," (February 11, 1979).¹²

While E.O. No. 18 (September 18, 1946) called for the creation of a "single foreign service" with foreign service officers appointed after competitive examination and the creation of a "non-political" Board of Foreign Service Personnel, more specific legislation had to await the long debated Foreign Service Act of 1952 (June 5, 1952) which had been first introduced in 1950 by Diosdado Macapagal. Macapagal, a former Counselor in the DFA, was well aware of the need to create a professional Foreign Service.

Despite passage of R.A. No. 708, it was attacked; efforts at amending it both to strengthen it and to weaken it were tried. Vice-President Garcia, who was also Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the Magsaysay Administration, was in the forefront of efforts to weaken the legislation. Partially successful in his efforts, he obtained a ruling that the President's right to appoint individuals to office could not be interfered with, opening the way for political appointments.¹³

Several other attempts were made subsequently, and often confusedly, to reform further the DFA but most

¹²Republic Act (R.A.) No. 708 was amended several times but most of the amendments dealt with pay allotments. R.A. No. 708 and Executive Order (E.O.) No. 523 have been the only substantive attempts to change the DFA.

¹³De Mesa, *op. cit.*, p. 32 and Mill, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-328.

of these efforts failed.¹⁴ Neither the President nor the Congress wanted to lose the power of patronage and the plum positions abroad which were eagerly sought. In this atmosphere, the Department was not immune to lobbying for itself on behalf of better salaries and better assignments.

The second major effort at reform was made after implementation of President Marcos' aggressive new foreign policy, instituted after martial law was declared in 1972. The new policy placed increased demands on the thin resources of the DFA and technocrats within the government began proposing a restructuring of the Department. The changes, embodied in E.O. No. 523, were a result of a series of "white papers" originating from within the Office of Policy Planning (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the Philippine Center for Advanced Studies. It appears that PCAS cooperated closely with the Presidential Staff in drafting the final Executive Order.¹⁵

While R.A. No. 708 broadly stated the duties of the Foreign Service as representing "abroad the interest of

the Philippines," E.O. No. 523 more narrowly defines these duties, calling for the immediate restructuring of the MFA to accomplish specific development goals. The new duties of the Foreign Service are to be four-fold: (1) promote and expand Philippine exports, (2) attract foreign tourists, (3) promote foreign investment in the Philippines, and (4) protect and advance the interests of Filipino migrant workers. No mention at all is made of foreign policy.

The Order calls for better recruitment in the Foreign Service. It also allows the lateral entry of "specialists" and therefore, would permit the government to inject "new blood" into the MFA immediately and according to the needs of the moment.¹⁶ However, at the same time, the possibility of being bypassed by individuals selected into the MFA via the lateral entry has been demoralizing to current Foreign Affairs Officers. Concurrently, there is some doubt as to the legality of the Executive Order since some of its provisions are contrary to R.A. No. 708 which is still in force.¹⁷

Parallel Policy Structures

Increasing the importance of the MFA in policy making will depend on its ability to rationalize the Depart-

¹⁴For example, Senator Arturo M. Tolentino in S. 257 (5th Congress, 1st Session) stated in support of his bill that he wanted to eliminate all exemptions from the qualifying exam; he then proposed a series of exemptions to this idea which in effect nullified the intended reform. In 1962, in contrast, Carlos A. Faustino made a series of intelligent proposals which, had they been accepted, would have gone a long way to introducing professionalism in the Foreign Service.

¹⁵Discussions on intended reform had begun in 1976 but the final result indicates that the MFA had little input into this process. The inadequate drafting of the Executive Order in the light of existing law supports this conclusion. This conclusion is also based on interviews by the author with Philippine government officials, September 1978-May 1979.

¹⁶Interview with NEDA and PCAS officials, 1979.

¹⁷High officials in the MFA were very upset with the wording of the Executive Order, ridiculing it for the failure to mention "foreign policy" and for failing to meet the legal "niceties" of revoking a prior law. Interviews with MFA officials, 1979. To contrast, in May 1973, Monico R. Vicente, then Assistant Secretary for Administration, recommended a Presidential Decree, which if promulgated, would have amended R.A. No. 768.

ment's actions both in its personnel and its policies and to regain control over many of the policy making duties which it has lost since 1972. In this section, the development of some of these parallel policy structures are explored and their importance to foreign policy making evaluated.

Parallel policy structures existed prior to martial law, for example, the Foreign Policy Council and National Security Council, but they were not an important factor in policy making. However, since martial law, parallel policy structures have become very important; these structures are in the economic sphere of foreign policy. The operations of these structures illustrate most cogently the loss of policy making powers of the MFA.

In the recent past, input into foreign policy making other than from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has come from seven major groups:

- (1) Foreign Policy Council (FPC)
- (2) National Security Council (NSC)
- (3) Council of Leaders
- (4) National Intelligence and Security Authority (NISA)
- (5) Philippine Center for Advanced Studies (PCAS)
- (6) Office of the President
- (7) Prominent individuals (including the First Lady).

The *Foreign Policy Council*¹⁸ was initiated under President Macapagal

¹⁸Under E.O. No. 352 (November 16, 1971) its membership includes the Vice-President, former Presidents, former Vice-Presidents, President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Executive Secretary and other Cabinet

as a forum for advising the President on foreign policy matters. As a group of prominent public and private individuals belonging to different party affiliations, it was used to provide a veneer of non-partisanship in foreign policy decisions. Its "rubber stamp" reputation has been maintained under the present administration and continue to provide a semblance of consensus among important image-makers in the Philippines. It has continued to meet, although rarely, since martial law.

The *National Security Council*,¹⁹ just like the Foreign Policy Council, is a forum for reaching a consensus on major policy decisions. Often, however, the "consensus" or decision has been made prior to the group meeting, and the meeting is used to

officials whose departments were relevant to the agenda, the President Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives, the Majority Floor Leaders of both Houses, the Minority Floor Leaders of both Houses, the Chairman and ranking Minority Members of the Committees on Foreign Affairs for both Houses, Presidents of the political parties.

¹⁹Under E.O. No. 317 (September 2, 1958), the NSC consisted of: The President as Chairman, the Vice-President, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of National Defense, Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Secretary of Justice, Executive Secretary, Press Secretary, Majority Senate Floor Leader, Minority House Floor Leader, Minority Senate Floor Leader, Majority House Floor Leader, Chairman of the Committee on National Defense and Security in the House, Chairman of the Committee on National Defense and Security in the Senate, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, all past Presidents as Members. The Executive Secretary acted as Secretary of the Council and the Press Secretary took care of all information.

This was amended by Executive Order No. 350 (November 16, 1971) to include as members the Chairman and a ranking Minority Member of the Committee of both Houses of Congress whose functions were relevant to the subject being discussed and also other such government officials as the President may designate.

convey a sense of participation and general agreement to the public on policy matters. The NSC has a longer history than the FPC (see E.O. No. 40, January 13, 1947), but like the FPC, the NSC meets only at the President's request and is constituted according to the President's wishes. Its membership has been changed several times. In 1950 it was reformed as part of Reorganization Plan No. 38 to advise the President on national defense and make recommendations.²⁰ Under President Garcia, it was given the additional task of advising the President on national security and defense, as well as making recommendations on these matters.²¹ In 1966, shortly after his election, President Marcos created an Executive Committee of the NSC, consisting of several of his cabinet members. This smaller group was "charged with crystallization of national security and defense problems for consideration by the Council."²² The smaller group which was composed of Marcos supporters decided the larger body's agenda, thereby ensuring that dissenting opinions would be excluded. In 1971 minority party representation in the Executive Committee was included following serious electoral losses by the Nacionalistas,²³ and this may be seen as a move by

President Marcos to co-opt his opponents by seeming to include them in decision-making. Like the FPC, the NSC has met only sporadically and, since martial law, has only been called in to ratify prior decisions.

The *Council of Leaders* was originally the domestic equivalent of the Foreign Policy Council. As such it was not directly involved in foreign policy though sometimes domestic policy overlapped with foreign policy considerations. It was originally formed under President Roxas as the Council of State to advise the President on "matters of public policy."²⁴ Each succeeding president reconstituted the Council of State. However, under President Marcos it was abolished and in its place was formed the Council of Leaders with the same function as the Council of State, i.e., convening

Secretary of Justice, Secretary of Finance, and the Executive Secretary. Additional members of 1972 were the Secretary of Commerce and Industry, Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources, representative from the majority party in the Senate and the House, and representatives from the minority party in the Senate and the House.

²⁴E.O. No. 5 (July 12, 1946). See also E.O. No. 12 (February 11, 1954); E.O. No. 297 (May 14, 1958); E.O. No. 222 (March 21, 1970) creating the Council of Leaders and E.O. No. 349 (November 16, 1971), amending E.O. No. 222. Members under E.O. No. 222 were: the Vice-President, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, President of the Governors and City Mayors League of the Philippines, former Presidents, Presidents of the political parties which fielded national candidates in the past election, Chairman of committees of both Houses whose functions are relevant to the agenda, and Members of the Cabinet whose departments are relevant to the agenda. E.O. No. 349 amended the membership to include the Executive Secretary, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker Pro Tempore of the House, Majority Party Floor Leaders of both Houses and Minority Floor Leaders of both Houses, the Chairman and ranking Minority Members of the Committees of both Houses relevant to the agenda items, and other such government officials as the President may designate.

²⁰E.O. No. 330 (July 1, 1950). See also E.O. No. 473 (April 28, 1951) amending E.O. No. 330.

²¹E.O. No. 317 (September 2, 1958).

²²E.O. No. 13 (February 24, 1966).

²³E.O. No. 350 (November 16, 1971) amended E.O. No. 317 to allow minority representation. E.O. No. 396 (June 19, 1972) allowed minority representation on the Executive Committee. E.O. No. 402 (September 14, 1972) made the Secretary of Education a member of the Executive Committee. As originally formed, the Executive Committee consisted of the Secretary of National Defense (chairman), the Secretary of Foreign Affairs,

only to ratify existing policy. It has not been important in foreign policy determination.

Of greater importance in policy but little understood is the *National Intelligence and Security Authority* (NISA), formerly the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), whose purpose has recently been redefined as the "focal point of direction, coordination and integration of government activities involving national intelligence and security." The NISA functions are similar to the National Security Council and the Intelligence Oversight Committee in the United States although without the same independent stature. The NISA has been given "functional supervision over all intelligence agencies" and its control has been moved from the Ministry of National Defense to the Office of the President.²⁵ The NISA also controls the various intelligence groups operating throughout the government bureaucracy (including the MFA) charged with supervising government employees. This ensures the President of an independent monitoring service of government workers, similar to KGB functions in the Soviet Union. Since the NISA is a state secret, it is of course difficult to evaluate its effectiveness in policy making. NISA agents have been identified as serving with several Filipino embassies abroad and are reputed to be fairly active in the United States although their principal function is surveillance of exiled opposition forces. However, this is no indication of their effectiveness and they do not appear to evaluate information and provide policy options

to the President. Their role appears to be that of a security police.

The formation of the *Philippine Center for Advanced Studies* (recently abolished during the summer of 1979) indicates the President's feelings of inadequacy in foreign policy making. Established by P.D. No. 342 (November 22, 1973) because "one of the goals of the New Society is for the Philippines to take a more active role in international affairs" (paragraph 3), one of its purposes was to examine issues of central concern to the government, such as "... international developments and their impact on our national life, as well as security and strategic problems" (paragraph 4). As constituted, PCAS' mandate stretched across the spectrum of foreign policy issues: political, economic, and security.

Established as an autonomous unit on the University of the Philippines' campus with unrestricted funding and permission to hire outside the normal restrictions of the civil service law, PCAS was to be a quasi-official "think tank" for government policy, especially foreign policy. It was the "brain child" of the then Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor.²⁶ As interpreted by Secretary Melchor, PCAS was to operate like the Rand Corporation in the United States, providing objective and serious policy studies on government issues. Whether or not Secretary Melchor was engaging in a bureaucratic tussle with the MFA is pure speculation. Certainly Secretary Romulo supported the measure even though PCAS relieved the MFA of its primary duties in policy making.

²⁵ See Presidential Decree No. 51 and Letter of Instruction (L.O.I.) No. 771, November 27, 1978.

²⁶ Unfortunately, Melchor was "deposed" in a subsequent government shake-up for reasons which are as yet unclear.

The creation of PCAS fostered a series of internecine rivalries both within the academic community and the government which were jealous of PCAS' premier position. Unfortunately too, PCAS' output was not commensurate with its promise. The Center suffered from political infighting leaving it for a long period without leadership. The demise of PCAS provided the MFA with an opportunity to develop policy making capability. PCAS' existence is a lesson in the inability of objective policy making organs to function in martial law society.²⁷

The *Office of the President* remains the premier organ in foreign policy making, though this is often on an *ad hoc* basis, depending on issues and crisis task forces set up at the President's behest. The President is widely read on foreign policy matters and especially on those topics pertaining to national security. But he relies mainly on his executive secretaries²⁸ and trusted friends both within and outside the government, including Alejandro Melchor, for advice on foreign policy. The last person to speak with the President may often be the most important.

Given such an informal policy advisory group, it is difficult to determine the exact manner in which decisions are arrived at, but based on an analysis of major foreign policy

areas, e.g., the United Nations, relations with the Soviet Union, etc., it appears that the President's style is essentially conservative and consensual. President Marcos does not institute dramatic changes in foreign policy without first trying to build wide support for those changes. The major changes in Philippine foreign policy should not be viewed as resulting from the President's new freedom of action — many of these changes, such as relations with Communist states, had been under discussion prior to martial law which President Marcos had been hesitant to implement. These changes may be viewed instead, as the end result of a long period of consensus-building begun before martial law.

Individual actors continue to dominate foreign policy making. It is often suggested that the First Lady makes policy. In some instances this may be true, but for the most part the First Lady takes her lead from the President. Whatever contribution she makes is not in substantive policy discussion but in the area of public relations. Minister Romulo probably is most influential on issues pertaining to the United Nations, the only area in which the MFA has great influence. Alejandro Melchor still appears to be important even though he is now out of the government.

On political issues in foreign policy there exists no major group given the responsibility of providing detailed and objective position papers on government action. There are a series of consultative groups meeting occasionally just before major decisions are taken, whose purpose is to forge a consensus both from within and outside the government. They ratify

²⁷ Interviews with Philippine Government officials, 1979.

²⁸ Currently the Presidential Executive Assistant is Jacobo C. Clave, the Presidential Assistant is Juan C. Tuvera, and the Presidential Finance Adviser is Cesar A. Dumlaog. These positions were created by P.D. No. 831 (November 27, 1975). Clave is considered to be the most closely involved with foreign affairs.

decisions already made and do not suggest possible courses of action.²⁹ Policy position papers are written by individuals at the request of the President but on an issue-by-issue basis rather than as an ongoing responsibility.³⁰ The one organization (PCAS) which was created with that objective in mind failed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has yet to fill this void, either in a public or a private manner. Decisions are still made privately by the President with no attempt at involving the public in a wider sense in decision-making.³¹

While foreign policy planning in the political sphere has been erratic, in the economic sphere it has been increasingly systematized under the control of NEDA. The MFA, as a result, is no longer in charge of the many issues related to economic foreign policy which often have a more important bearing on the future of a developing country than the political issues. This is caused in part by the MFA's own lackadaisical response to the main issues of foreign policy today. Despite the declaration of a "development diplomacy," the MFA has been progressively removed from the major concerns of development diplomacy — trade, aid, and

investment negotiations, and these concerns have been taken over by NEDA.

Inter-Agency Committees

In this section the various inter-agency committees and subcommittees now concerned with major issues of foreign economic policy will be reviewed on an issue-by-issue basis. The major committees are: (1) Committee on ASEAN Cooperation, (2) Committee on ESCAP Matters, (3) Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation with Socialist Countries, (4) Investment Coordination Committee, (5) Trade, Tariffs, and Related Matters.

Of these the most important is the Inter-Agency Committee on Trade, Tariffs, and Related Matters (TTRM). There are six major subcommittees of the TTRM in which most of the business of the full committee is resolved. These are the (1) Subcommittee on International Trade and Textiles (SITT), (2) Subcommittee on Trade, Economic, and Technical Cooperation, (3) Subcommittee on Investments, (4) Subcommittee on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), (5) Subcommittee on UNC-TAD, (6) Subcommittee on Tariffs. Major decisions concerning the Philippines' foreign economic policy, including negotiations with foreign countries, are made within this subcommittee structure. In order to more clearly understand this, the committee structure within the context of major economic foreign issues will be examined.

ASEAN

ASEAN was originally formed as a purely economic organization avoid-

²⁹Emmanuel Pelaez, now second to General Romulo as a Minister of State, once stated: "Marcos' foreign policy is pragmatic, it is formulated on a day-to-day basis." See Napoleon G. Rama, "The Foreign Affairs of Marcos," *Philippine Free Press*, Vol. LIX, No. 24 (June 11, 1966).

³⁰"If one tried to chart the drift of Philippine foreign policy, one would go nuts." See Napoleon G. Rama, "Foreign Policy — Philippine Style," *Philippine Free Press*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2 (January 9, 1971), p. 2.

³¹However, a good case can be made that public discussion about relations with communist countries prior to martial law made the final decision to establish such relations palatable to the majority of Filipinos.

ing political issues and concentrating on economic cooperation among member countries. Lately, political issues have been dealt with but the major theme of ASEAN remains regional economic cooperation for development. Under the original terms of agreement among the member countries, the MFA would have had a major role in negotiating common positions within ASEAN. In name it has this role but its functions have largely been taken over by NEDA.

Prior to martial law, an Inter-Agency Committee on ASEAN Affairs was created (E.O. No. 354, November 23, 1971). Members included representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Commerce and Industry, the Board of Investments, Tariff Commission, Central Bank, Development Bank of the Philippines, National Economic Council, Presidential Economic Staff, and Congressional Economic Planning Office. The chairman and vice-chairman were selected by the committee of the whole depending on the dominant issue on the agenda and which organization was concerned with it. The purpose of the committee was to formulate and recommend appropriate policies and programs on areas of economic cooperation with ASEAN. The DFA's ASEAN National Secretariat provided staff support and convened meetings. Thus, decisions concerning Philippine ASEAN matters remained largely under the control of the DFA.

The Ministry's role in ASEAN matters appears to have gained even more importance when, as a result of an ASEAN meeting, the ASEAN National Secretariat was elevated to

a separate office within the MFA.³² The Secretariat was renamed the Office of the Director-General, ASEAN Philippines and charged with national coordination and implementation of decisions reached among ASEAN members.

The relevance of the MFA to ASEAN matters was dealt a severe blow when L.O.I. No. 470 (October 4, 1976) directed NEDA to organize a cabinet level committee to accelerate the implementation of all economic matters with ASEAN. The Committee on ASEAN Economic Cooperation was formed with members from the Departments of Industry, Trade, Finance, Public Works, and Agriculture, and the Governor of the Central Bank. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs was named a member for "coordinative purposes" only. L.O.I. No. 470 originated within NEDA and was strongly opposed by the DFA who, with help from the Development Academy of the Philippines, presented their own L.O.I. which would have given the DFA increased responsibility over ASEAN affairs. However, the DFA failed to win the President's support for its proposal.³³

The Office of the Director-General, ASEAN Philippines, remains in the MFA, but its functions are largely supportive, providing some communication links and logistical support for conferences, etc. Substantive policy decisions are now made by NEDA.

³²L.O.I. No. 393 (April 8, 1976).

³³Interview with MFA and NEDA officials, 1979.

ESCAP

Philippine participation in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is another example of the MFA losing a voice in policy making. E.O. No. 462 (1976) established an Inter-Agency Technical Committee on ESCAP which abolished the Philippine Committee on Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) matters (created under Administrative Order No. 157, June 5, 1951, as amended). E.O. No. 462 transferred all functions and records of the Philippine Committee on ECAFE to NEDA and designated NEDA as the coordinating body on ESCAP matters. A small ESCAP unit was retained in the Department of Trade as a liaison unit under P.D. No. 721 (June 2, 1975).

Relations With Communist Countries

The main reason behind Philippine willingness to establish diplomatic relations with the Communist countries was the strong belief that such relations would provide a bonanza in trade and economic assistance. Many Filipino businessmen believed in the promise of large, new markets for their goods while those businessmen already selling their goods via third parties in Western Europe to the Eastern European countries thought their profits would increase after eliminating the middleman. The rewards of trade have not been as great as first imagined.

In response to the failure to develop trade on a wider basis and also in response to an effort, instigated by NEDA, to "rationalize" Philippine relations with foreign countries, an

Inter-Agency Technical Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation with the Socialist Countries was formed in 1978.³⁴ Its purpose was to explore, discuss, and recommend areas of technical cooperation with socialist countries. Chaired by a NEDA representative, while a member of the MFA served as vice-chairman, the committee's other members were drawn from the Ministries of Public Works, Natural Resources, Industry, and Agriculture. The Director-General of NEDA could designate additional members as he saw fit.

Though this committee does not remove all control over relations with the Communist Bloc countries from the MFA, it does provide a forum for the organized development of policies vis-a-vis the Communist countries in the areas deemed most critical to the Philippines: trade and assistance. In the past the MFA has been slow to develop appropriate policies promoting trade with the Communist countries. Indeed, the MFA has been perceived by some observers as "dragging its feet" in response to Communist initiatives to open relations. This committee now provides an alternative policy forum.

It can be argued that as most of these inter-agency committees allow membership by the MFA, the MFA is not being excluded from policy representation. But neither membership nor the chairmanship of committees is any guarantee that one's voice will be heard; the real work of committees is done by the staffs, and in the overwhelming number of cases, the staffs for these committees and subcommittees are provided from

³⁴L.O.I. No. 742 (September 25, 1978).

within NEDA, ensuring NEDA of a dominant voice in deliberations.

NEDA's International Arrangement and Development Branch (IADB) of NEDA's Policy Coordinating Staff (PCS) provides most of the secretariat support. In addition, under P.D. No. 1450, NEDA's Director-General has been given authority to reorganize committees upon Presidential approval. The NEDA Board, which includes Ministers from several departments and has titular responsibility over the actions of the Inter-Agency Committees, rarely reverses a committee recommendation (though committees often provide alternative policies from which the Board can make their decision).

The NEDA Board is chaired by the Minister of Economic Planning and the Director-General of NEDA, Gerardo P. Sicat. Original members included the Secretaries of Finance, Trade, Labor, Agriculture, Public Works, Education, Industry, Natural Resources, Public Highways, and the Commissioner of the Budget and the Governor of the Central Bank. For several years the Secretary of Foreign Affairs was excluded from deliberations of the Board, but with P.D. No. 859, the Secretaries of Foreign Affairs, National Defense, and Industry (who was substituted for the Chairman of the Board of Investments) were admitted, attending their first meeting on December 18, 1975. Shortly afterwards, with P.D. No. 933, the Chairman of the Human Settlements Commission (the First Lady) was made a member of the Board.

Despite these additions, the Minister of National Defense and the Minister of Foreign Affairs have the worst attendance records at

NEDA Board meetings. Minister Romulo, reportedly, often does not send a deputy as a replacement. Moreover, given the other luminaries at these meetings, junior staffers would not be expected to voice much comment anyway.³⁵ Therefore, though the MFA has been given some voice in NEDA Board deliberations, it does not make use of it and even if MFA does, NEDA's decision would predominate.

There has been a general erosion by NEDA of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' influence on economic foreign policy. This erosion, while gradual and not irreversible, is a result of the MFA's own failure to respond to policy demands. NEDA members were more far-sighted than those in the MFA, realizing early that foreign economic policy is development diplomacy.

The MFA has tried to reestablish a preeminent responsibility for policy. To date, it has always failed as the rest of the government expanded around it. For example, the MFA has not been able to assert its control over official communications between the government of the Philippines and other states. In 1946, E.O. No. 84 ordered all correspondence between the government and foreign governments, including the United Nations and Specialized Agencies, to be channelled through the Department of Foreign Affairs. E.O. No. 216 (1970) restated the DFA's mandate as the *main* channel through which all government agencies were to communicate with the United Nations, Specialized Agencies, and other international organizations. Memorandum

³⁵Interview with NEDA officials, 1979.

dum Circular No. 819 (1975) stated that all questions of foreign policy and protocol should go through the Department. This was followed several years later by F.S.C. No. 12 (January 4, 1977) which declared: "The Department of Foreign Affairs remain (*sic*) and continues to be the focal point or coordinating center for all communications emanating from all Philippine foreign service establishments and foreign governments and intergovernmental institutions."

The MFA's main function now appears to be the processing of communications by other government agencies. Because of this failure to plan and prepare, activities which would normally require the full participation of the Ministry, e.g., negotiating treaties and preparing policy statements on major issues, have been taken over by others.³⁶ As one government official has stated: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is understaffed; it responds to crises; it cannot plan for a crisis."³⁷

Aid and Assistance

One of the earliest proposed reforms of the DFA had called for a complete revamping of the machin-

³⁶The MFA of course does not share this view. Note a comment by Sergio A. Barrera (then Acting Secretary for Economic Affairs) entitled a "Function of Foreign Policy in Economic Development": "To accomplish its foreign economic policy objectives the Department has formulated specific studies and action programs covering the economic relationships between the Philippines and individual countries and groups of countries. Thus, alternative negotiating positions and proposals to fit rapidly changing conditions and different circumstances are continuously being prepared and updated vis-a-vis such trading partners. . ." *Foreign Affairs Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 1 (April 1973), p. 5

³⁷Interview with Philippine Government officials, 1979.

ery for handling economic aid.³⁸ By the 1960s, this function was no longer part of the DFA's duties. Memorandum Circular No. 737 (1974) required all requests for foreign technical assistance to be coursed through NEDA while the TTRM's subcommittee on Trade, Economic, and Technical Cooperation negotiated all cooperation agreements. The subcommittee is chaired and its secretariat provided for by representatives from the Ministry of Trade.

Curiously, the MFA co-chairs with the BOI a TTRM Subcommittee on Investments. The MFA also provides the staff for this committee, but the Inter-Agency Investment Coordination Committee (P.D. No. 1450, 1978) is co-chaired by the MFA and NEDA and the staff is provided for by NEDA. The role of the MFA in these committees appears to be a "pay-off" in order to avoid giving the Ministry a role on a more prominent committee.³⁹

Trade

The management of Philippine trade policy provides several examples of the MFA's futile attempts to retain a role for itself in economic foreign policy.

In 1969 Minister Romulo created an Inter-Agency Committee on Foreign Trade Policy to represent the government in General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT) negotiations. During the same year, each Philippine embassy was required to form committees on export and tour-

³⁸Edwin O. Stene and Associates, *Public Administration in the Philippines* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1956), p. 363.

³⁹Interview with NEDA officials, 1979.

ism promotion.⁴⁰ However, these committees quickly ceased to function. In the 1970s a government-wide program of export promotion was announced (L.O.I. No. 217, October 7, 1974). In response, the MFA ordered its missions to reconstitute their previous Committees on Trade, Investments and Tourism promotion.⁴¹ Again the program accomplished little. In 1976 again the President instructed all officials to participate in efforts to promote exports.⁴² Each time attempts were made to establish a continuing role for the MFA in export promotional activities, the MFA failed to sustain the effort.

The MFA's role in export and investment promotion was seriously hampered by the formation of the Department of Trade in 1975. Within the Department of Trade, an International Trade Organization Section was established to prepare drafts, position papers, and technical studies on trade agreements. The MFA was no longer to play an important function in negotiating vital agreements with other states and international organizations.

The MFA's position in negotiations was even more seriously eroded by the formation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Trade, Tariffs, and Related Matters (TTRM). L.O.I. No. 601 (September 20, 1977) called on NEDA to form several inter-agency committees, among them TTRM, in order to "ensure quick and effective inter-agency coordinations in the formulation and implementation of

government policies relating to social development, trade, tariff, and related matters, infrastructure development, and statistical development." TTRM is chaired by the Director-General of NEDA and, though its staff is inter-agency, the majority of work is done by NEDA. Members include the Ministers of Trade, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Industry, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and the Governor of the Central Bank and the Chairman of the Tariff Commission.

The purpose of the committee is two-fold: (1) to advise the NEDA Board and the President on trade, tariffs, and related matters, including those pertaining to bilateral and multilateral economic negotiation and (2) to coordinate individual agency positions and formulate and review national positions for international economic negotiations. It may *coordinate* with the MFA on the organization of negotiating panels. The structure of the TTRM is such as to exclude the MFA from major involvement in international economic negotiations. In practice, the Ministry is excluded because of its lack of resources to allocate to the elaborate questions of international trade policy.

This exclusion is continued among the various subcommittees organized under the TTRM umbrella. The Subcommittee on International Trade and Textiles (SITT) provides technical support to the negotiating panel in textiles under the Multi-Fiber Agreement talks. It is co-chaired by the Minister of Trade and the Minister of Foreign Affairs but the Minister of Trade provides the supporting secretariat.⁴³ The Subcommittee on GATT

⁴⁰ Foreign Service Circular (FSC) No. 202, December 24, 1969.

⁴¹ FSC No. 191, November 5, 1974 as amended.

⁴² FSC No. 111, June 10, 1976, the President made his announcement in May 14, 1976.

⁴³ L.O.I. No. 558 (June 17, 1977).

is chaired and staffed by the Tariff Commission as is the Subcommittee on Tariffs. The Subcommittee on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is chaired by a representative from the MFA but the secretariat is provided for by the NEDA.⁴⁴

Because of the MFA's lack of resources, both human and material, it has not been capable of playing an active role in complicated trade negotiations. They are therefore excluded from this central aspect of modern foreign policy.⁴⁵

UNCTAD

Philippine involvement in UNCTAD conferences has been one area where the MFA recently has had an active involvement. But it is important to separate the substance of its involvement from the form. While the Office for United Nations Affairs and Conferences of the MFA has been involved in organizing Philippine participation in UNCTAD conferences, it has not been equally active in the development of Philippine positions during UNCTAD-related discussions. Here, again, NEDA has played a dominant role.

The Philippine Committee on UNCTAD was established by E.O. No. 371 (January 28, 1972) to

⁴⁴During the formation of this subcommittee, the Board of Investments wanted to have the chair because of the negotiations' impact on production, the Ministry of Trade wanted the chair because of the central aspect of trade to GSP negotiations, and the MFA wanted the chair because it handled much of the correspondence. NEDA mediated and as usual retained control. Interviews with Philippine Government officials, 1979.

⁴⁵Conclusion based on statements by government officials of the National Economic and Development Authority, Ministry of Trade, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1979.

coordinate and make more effective Philippine participation in UNCTAD. Its duties were to prepare position papers and through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs recommend to the President the composition of Philippine representatives from the Departments of Commerce and Industry, Finance, and the National Economic Council, the Central Bank, Presidential Economic Staff, and the Board of Investments. The secretariat for the committee came under the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Subsequently, after the establishment of the Department of Trade and the Inter-Agency Committee on Trade, Tariffs, and Related Matters, Philippine participation in UNCTAD was brought under the control of the UNCTAD Unit in the Ministry of Trade and the subcommittee on UNCTAD of TTRM, which was chaired and staffed from the Ministry of Trade.

During the recent UNCTAD V meeting in Manila, several additional committees were formed to plan for Philippine involvement in that meeting. Under E.O. No. 497 (January 31, 1978) a Committee on Substantive Matters, co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Trade, with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Planning as vice-chairman, was formed and also a Committee on Conference Arrangements, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Trade with the Assistant Secretary for United Nations Affairs and International Conferences (MFA) as vice-chairman. The MFA established the secretariat for these committees. While the Committee on Conference Arrangements performed well in set-

ting up the conference, the Committee on Substantive Matters was slow in developing a Philippine position on major issues. The Committee on Substantive Matters relied on the UNCTAD Unit of the Ministry of Trade for support and that support proved slow and inadequate to the reported displeasure of the President.⁴⁶

Responding to these problems, the President created a steering committee for UNCTAD V.⁴⁷ The First Lady was named honorary chairman and General Romulo was named chairman. The Ministers of Finance and Trade were vice-chairmen. The Minister of Tourism, the Commissioner of the Budget, Governor of the Central Bank, the two Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and the Assistant Secretary for United Nations were named members, the last as secretary. This committee was given overall control for policy direction and coordination although staff work was done by NEDA. In essence, the MFA's involvement in UNCTAD has been relegated to the housekeeping chores of conference preparation while control over more substantive issues remains with NEDA.

Conclusion

There is considerable ambivalence as to the appropriate role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the policy of "development diplomacy." Is the MFA to be a policy initiator, a policy implementor, or both? Is it to serve as the "handmaiden" of other departments as President Marcos

stated in 1973,⁴⁸ assisting those departments in carrying out their policies abroad, or is it to be the "premier ministry" of government, as President Marcos so defined in 1978, serving a "trinity of ends": "to assert and protect the sovereignty, independence, integrity and security of the country, to contribute to the accelerated development of the nation, and to promote regional and global stability."⁴⁹ These diverse ends imply a capability for initiating policy rather than serving the policies of other departments. Indeed as Deputy Undersecretary Manuel Collantes suggested, when coining the phrase "diplomacy for development," the MFA was to be at the center of development efforts, not the periphery of policy:

The thrust of Philippine diplomacy is directed toward full economic and social progress of the Filipino nation. . . . Therefore, Philippine diplomacy in the conduct of our foreign affairs today, is sharply attuned to this national preoccupation of building a New Society that aims to actualize the aspiration for rapid and full economic progress of our nation: It is actually another way of saying that diplomatic efforts have to be marshalled to concentrate on undertakings that are likely to promote the objectives of economic development and social progress.⁵⁰

However, the continuity of public statements by government officials concerning the MFA's primary role

⁴⁸Foreign policy should serve as the handmaiden of the New Society in order to project its image abroad and to attract tourism and capital investment considered essential to the transformation of our agricultural economy into an industrialized society. . . ." President Ferdinand E. Marcos, "Friend to All, Enemy to None," *Foreign Affairs Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 3 (May 1973), p. 1.

⁴⁹*Ministry of Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. V, No. 6 (June 1978), p. 1.

⁵⁰Manuel Collantes, "Collantes Defines Economic Diplomacy Under New Order," Speech delivered before the members of the Rotary Club of Quezon City, April 2, 1973, *Foreign Affairs Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 1 (April 1973), p. 3.

⁴⁶Interview with NEDA officials, 1979.

⁴⁷E.O. No. 522 (February 6, 1979).

is as a "handmaiden." The 1973 elaboration of the MFA's functions by President Marcos are fairly consistent with (and have been given renewed emphasis in) the recent E.O. No. 523 (February 11, 1979) concerning the MFA. The policies which the Ministry are to serve — not develop — concentrate first on image-building, secondly on the promotion of foreign investment, and thirdly on the promotion of Philippine exports. In actual practice, the emphasis placed on these various policies does differ. As will be seen, the primary emphasis of the MFA is still not in promoting development.

The primary goals of Philippine foreign policy are, first, to solidify regime security, secondly, to help strengthen internal security, and thirdly, to promote development efforts. The emphasis on image and economics is understandable as this is the overall thrust of government policy today. The implementation of martial law, which was widely criticized abroad, required a public relations effort⁵¹ in order to buttress regime legitimacy. A corollary to this effort was the promotion of the Philippines as a stable and favorable environment for foreign investment and the encouragement of tourism to promote legitimacy and an image of pros-

⁵¹The public relations effort led to the well-publicized hiring of an American public relations firm, Doremus and Company and its subsequent firing when its efforts were not productive. The Philippine Embassy in Washington even recommended that a U.S. based organization be established to publish and to distribute materials "on a periodic basis aimed at a broader public, including influential individuals and institutions," which would involve "both Filipinos and friendly Americans and convey an impression of independence from the government." Embassy of the Philippines, Washington, D.C., *Annual Report FY 1975-1976*, p. 11.

perity.⁵² The secondary emphasis of this image-building policy was the promotion of a favorable view of Philippine policy towards its Muslim minorities. The government was intent on showing to the members of the Islamic Conference that it was doing all it could to develop the Muslim areas to the benefit of those peoples.⁵³ The government wished to secure pledges of non-interference in its internal security problem by Muslim countries, particularly Libya, and to seek promises of aid and assistance from those wealthy Muslim countries who are OPEC members.

Image-building is a traditional function of any nation's diplomatic corps. The Philippine Foreign Service functioned prior to martial law. But what the support missions used to receive for such activities, i.e., brochures, films, cultural groups, etc., do not appear to have been as readily available as it is now,⁵⁴ and therefore can be identified as a new focus of policy. In order to help the New Society's image, the government instituted special briefings for all officials departing on foreign missions. These briefings were conducted by now defunct Philippine Center for Ad-

⁵²See Embassy of the Philippines, Brasilia, Brazil, *Annual Report FY 1973-1974*, p. 11, on the need for an "intensification of Philippine propaganda about the New Society."

⁵³Often these efforts at explaining Philippine policy were futile. The Philippine Embassy in Pakistan complained that despite all the press releases sent out about the New Society and the Muslim problem practically none was printed in local papers. See Embassy of the Philippines, Islamabad, Pakistan, *Annual Report FY 1973-1974*, p. 17. See also Embassy of the Philippines, Paris, France, *Annual Report FY 1974-1975*, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁴This is not to imply that support is now readily available; obtaining sufficient, high quality public relations materials remains a problem.

vanced Studies and explained to the official how to function abroad and how to promote government policies.⁵⁵ Correspondingly, the promotion of exports, one of the traditional functions of the foreign service prior to martial law did not receive continuing emphasis. In L.O.I. No. 217 (October 7, 1974), President Marcos called for a "more direct role" by all government personnel assigned abroad in export promotion:

... every officer of the Philippine Government on foreign assignment should function as a salesman of his country, his Government and its policies, and on a more visible plane, its products available for export.⁵⁶

The Foreign Service had to be continually reminded of its role in promoting exports while being given little voice in the determination of the government's export policy.⁵⁷ The MFA functions as a conduit through which other government agencies pursue their policies abroad. In practice the MFA's role is subordinate to that of the NEDA.

"Development diplomacy" can be interpreted as a thematic excuse for a role by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a foreign policy process which has been preempted by NEDA and the various committees under its umbrella. The MFA has tried to develop a mission for itself in an area

where it may not belong while neglecting its primary mission to develop a foreign policy suitable to the needs of the country. The rise in world energy prices has underlined the primacy of economic factors in the Philippines' external relations. Unfortunately the MFA was ill-equipped to respond to these new factors.

The failure to respond may be partially explained by the weakness in the national organizational structure for foreign policy making. The Department of Foreign Affairs was strongly influenced in both structure and approach by the Department of State of the United States.⁵⁸ Rather than developing an organization suitable to its own needs, the Philippines established a Department of Foreign Affairs functionally structured along the lines of a developed country's foreign affairs department. The needs and the resources of a developing country are different from those of a developed country; yet, this is rarely realized when a developing country establishes its foreign relations. Not only the organizational structure but policy attitudes were also inherited by the Filipino Foreign Service from the Americans. This explains the long hesitancy by the DFA towards establishing relations with Communist countries. In addition, the DFA became a favored dumping ground

⁵⁵Memorandum Circular No. 954 (Office of the President), January 26, 1977.

⁵⁶L.O.I. No. 217 (October 7, 1974). See *The DFA Review*, Vol. II, No. 1 (January 1975), p. 13.

⁵⁷Deputy Secretary Jose D. Ingles has said that the primary thrust of development diplomacy is in the trade sector, promoting non-traditional exports and securing an adequate supply of essential imports, such as petroleum, grains, and fertilizer. See "Ingles Outlines RP Foreign Policy," *The DFA Review*, Vol. IV, No. 12 (December 1977), pp. 8, 10.

⁵⁸In July 1945, the U.S. Department of State started the Philippines' first Foreign Affairs Training Program for selected Filipinos. It graduated 40 and was then discontinued. A.V.H. Hartendorp, *History of Industry and Trade of the Philippines* (Manila: American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Inc., 1958), p. 250. Such training as well as continued membership in U.S. associations are a means of ensuring that Filipino diplomats will respond to a U.S. policy with a minimum of dissonance (though by no means guaranteeing a positive response).

from political rivals and for satisfying political debts.⁵⁹ Given these problems, it is no wonder that the MFA has failed to establish for itself a more prominent role in foreign affairs. The history of the MFA is one of reform frustrated by political expediency. Since its inception, political patronage has prevented the development of a thoroughly professional diplomatic service. This problem was well recognized by the Marcos Administration. To quote Ambassador Monico R. Vicente:

Too long has the Foreign Service suffered under the impression that it is the exclusive preserve of the old-style politicians; of the "untouchable" proteges; of foreign service

⁵⁹General Rafael S. Iletto is reliably reported to have been assigned as Ambassador to Iran in order to remove him from the Manila political scene and possible rivalry with the President. The second position of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs was created in 1966 with a rider to the General Appropriations Act (Republic Act No. 4642), implemented by Department Order 7-66 (1966), "apparently for reasons of political expediency." See Presidential Commission on Reorganization, Reor-

personnel who, for overstaying abroad, have become more capable of representing their own country of assignment than their own native Philippines... With the advent of the New Society, a better image is emerging.⁶⁰

But despite many new areas of foreign policy interest, a better image has not yet emerged. The new emphasis placed on multilateral organizations, such as GATT and UNCTAD, on new relations with Socialist countries and the Third World, on the promotion of regional unity in ASEAN, and on new initiatives in the Middle East, indicates the wide range of increased demands which are being placed on the MFA and the Foreign Service.⁶¹ However, there has been no change in the manner in which the Ministry operates.

ganization Panel Reports, Panel 10-17, Vol. II, October 1970, pp. 10-13.

⁶⁰Monico R. Vicente, "New Sense of Vigor in DFA?" *Foreign Affairs Monthly*, Vol. I, No. 2 (May 1973), p. 1.

⁶¹Carlos P. Romulo, "The Common Task of Asians and Australians," Address before the Australian National University, September 12, 1973.