

Electoral Manipulation: The Case of the February 1986 Presidential Elections

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An analysis of the February 1986 elections showed a continuing pattern of manipulation in all stages of the electoral process by the ruling party. Both internal conditions, e.g., the socio-economic and political crises, the insurgency problem, and external factors, e.g., US presence, triggered the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship, of which the elections was only a small part.

Introduction

Popular elections, whether free or manipulated, have always been a prerequisite for every type of contemporary political system, from the so-called democratic societies to the authoritarian regimes. The rationale behind this appeal to popular elections is the fact that only through elections do representatives of the people become legitimate wielders of political power. However, while the mechanism of elections is resorted to to enable the citizens to choose their representatives, the process itself may be undermined so that the end results would be different or even contrary to the wishes of the electorate. In this sense, there is electoral manipulation.

This paper limits itself to electoral manipulation that involves the use of public institutions and resources to distort election results. The focus of this paper is the February 1986 presidential elections, or what is commonly called the "snap elections."¹

The paper seeks to document electoral manipulation during the February 1986 presidential elections or what is commonly called the "snap elections." Both the internal and external factors will be examined to determine the conditions which led to the calling of the snap elections. The manipulative role of governmental institutions critical to the overall electoral process will also be discussed and analyzed.

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The Internal Factors

The Socio-economic Crisis

The economic crisis, which was triggered mainly by the massive capital flight that ensued after the Aquino assassination in August 1983, continued to worsen. For the first time since 1946, real gross national product (GNP) contracted by 5.3 percent between 1983 and 1984.² This production slump was partly due to the cutback in importations brought about by tight credit restrictions and unavailability of foreign exchange.³ With the production shortfall, unemployment levels reached record highs (7.3 percent by the second quarter of 1985)⁴ due to mass layoff of workers. Prices of commodities spiralled to an average 50 percent in 1984 as average household earnings decreased even more compared to 1983.⁵ By the end of 1985, the country's negative growth rate had "improved" to 3.95 percent leading President Marcos to proclaim that the Philippines was now on the road to economic recovery.⁶ This unjustifiably optimistic prognosis on the part of the Marcos regime was probably an offshoot of successive releases of the Philippines' standby credit agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the first of which was released in December 1984, seven months after the holding of the first regular Batasan elections. The onerous conditions which the IMF imposed to further "stabilize" the economy such as raising taxes, lifting of price controls on essential commodities, etc., exacted a heavier toll on those from the lower income brackets. The number of families below subsistence levels increased, thus further deteriorating an already depressed economic situation.

The worsening of the economy was coupled with a corresponding deterioration of social conditions. This was manifested in an upsurge in the crime rate, averaging an 11.7 percent increase over the last ten years up to 1985.⁷ The National Police Commission estimated that in 1984 five persons in the Philippines were either killed or injured and about five cases of theft and robbery were committed every hour, and rape occurred every six hours.⁸ Another indication of the deterioration of social services is the proliferation of beggars, scavengers and vagrants all over Metro Manila, including the country's showcase area, the tourist belt. Starvation and severe malnutrition have become realities in Philippine society,⁹ surpassing even average malnutrition statistics for Latin America, Africa and Asia.¹⁰

The Political Crisis

In the guise of restoring political stability through the declaration of martial law in 1972, Marcos was able to effectively silence opposition to his continued rule and pave the way for the institutionalization of his stay in power. He was able to concentrate all governmental powers in his own

hands, but this was accomplished at the expense of the detention and incarceration of thousands opposed to his regime, and increased more violent military repression in the form of extra-judicial killings or "salvaging," arbitrary arrests, zoning, hamletting, torture, bombings and strafings, massacres, etc. These countless violations of the people's human and democratic rights have continued unabated and have even worsened despite the supposed lifting of martial law in 1981.¹¹ That the military could commit such brazenly brutal acts with impunity showed the extent of the military's might under the Marcos dictatorship.

One glaring result of this concentration of political power in the hands of one man was the rise to power of personalities known to be relatives or close friends of the First Family. A distinct feature of this group of "politically favored businessmen" or cronies was their dependence on concrete government action for their business ventures.¹² The state of corruption or the use of public resources for private ends was so extensive that even the government paper *The Republic* was forced to come out with an article alluding to the seriousness of the problem.¹³ The same article quoted a study by a member of Parliament that about 10 percent of the country's GNP is lost annually to graft and corruption.¹⁴ There is reason to believe that this estimate was probably conservative given the limited access to information under the regime of Marcos. The extent of corruption was so pervasive 'that even the tuition fees of President Marcos' eldest daughter, Imee, in Princeton University was paid for by the Philippine National Bank (PNB).¹⁵

The expansion of government activities under martial law led to an increase in the number of corporations created or acquired by the government. Many of these corporations acquired by the government were actually private companies gone bankrupt because of non-payment of debts to government lending institutions such as the Development Bank of the Philippines and the PNB. That these companies were owned by cronies of Marcos was not a matter of coincidence. Examples of these were the Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines under Rodolfo Cuenca, a personal friend of Marcos, and the Herdis Group of Companies owned by Herminio Disini, a golfing partner of the President.¹⁶ Other corporations created by the government were actually done to clearly benefit close associates of Marcos, like the National Sugar Trading Corporation for Roberto Benedicto and the Philippine Coconut Authority and the United Coconut Mills for Eduardo Cojuangco.¹⁷

Since there was virtually no area left untouched by the Marcos government, the effect was a major displacement of certain legitimate and viable groups in the business sector. Resistance to this intrusion was voiced out quite strongly and this was concretely translated into a demand to effect

changes in government. However, there is a perceptible difference of this period of protest from earlier periods because the violent option to change now became a more attractive and viable solution to sectors that usually did not even entertain such notions, including the ambivalent middle class and the ordinarily staid business sector. Thus, even the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented to the President in no uncertain terms that the problem was "political, not economic."

This situation was not helped any by the unstable health condition of the President. Different sectors of Philippine society from all sides of the political spectrum saw the urgency of placing themselves in advantageous positions should Marcos suddenly die or become incapacitated to direct the affairs of government.

The People's Response

The response of the people to the socio-economic and political crises was waged on several fronts. In the legal sphere this was manifested in the national parliament or the Batasang Pambansa and in the so-called parliament of the streets. The presence of an opposition in the Batasan, although a minority, provided a channel by which the excesses of the Marcos regime that aggravated the political and economic crisis could be ventilated. Thus, such issues as the billion dollar Bataan Nuclear Plant deal, the hidden wealth of Marcos and his family, misappropriation of Economic Support Funds, corruption, military abuses, etc., found its way to the front pages of a more militant alternative press. Even the crony press came out, albeit intermittently, with articles on such sensitive topics. Simultaneously, there was also a bolder and more expanded protest activity in the form of massive demonstrations, general strikes, pickets and marches all over the country.

In the extralegal arena, the resolve to topple the Marcos dictatorship was also waged by different groups of varying ideological orientations such as the New People's Army, the People's Liberation Movement, the April 6th Movement, the Moro National Liberation Front, etc. Among these different groups, however, the growing strength of the New People's Army (NPA) was most spectacular. This was admitted even by the Pentagon in early 1984.¹⁸ A report subsequently released by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmed that the NPA had indeed expanded its area of operations and was now active in 62 of the country's 73 provinces.¹⁹ This is a fairly good indicator that the Marcos government was losing its control over the country's political apparatus.

US: The External Factor

Faced with increased insurgent activity, and given the socio-economic and political crises and the unstable health condition of President Marcos,

the US was alarmed enough to send its own team to assess the Philippine situation, instead of relying on Marcos' understated figures of NPA strength. The US correctly deduced that the real threat to its continued presence in the Philippines was the insurgent movement and only by crushing the growing liberation movement would the US be assured of untrammelled protection of its business interests and operations of its bases. However, the reputation of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), which was supposed to lead the fight against insurgency, had been so severely tarnished because it had not only remained corrupt and unprofessional, it had become so abusive and repressive in dealing with the civilian populace that it had further alienated itself from the very people it was supposed to protect. Seen from this light, it was not surprising that initial US policy towards the Philippines had focused mainly on cleansing the army of its "bad eggs," through the institution of reforms in the military. By October 1985, there had been a noticeable shift towards "broader political liberalization."²⁰ Included inevitably in this package was the holding of elections, a small but crucial part in the overall campaign strategy of the US to crush insurgent strength, stem the tide of nationalist consciousness and woo the middle forces away from the influence of the left. The election must, however, be credible enough so that the people's faith in democratic processes, which was eroded in the regime of Marcos, would be restored.

Successive statements from US administrative officials revealed that the US was indeed alarmed at the way the Marcos government was handling the insurgency problem. Paul Laxalt, US President Ronald Reagan's personal envoy, was sent to tell Marcos to "stop screwing up the counterinsurgency effort;"²¹ Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Paul Wolfowitz, in a statement before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that only "dramatic action" could turn back the tide of communist insurgency;²² Sen. Richard Lugar, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee warned that he would advise Marcos not to reappoint Gen. Fabian Ver as AFP Chief of Staff because "time is running out;"²³ Gen. David Durenberger, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, was quoted in an interview that he would recommend that the "Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) go beyond its intelligence gathering role" should the situation in the Philippines worsen;²⁴ Sen. Bill Bradley stated in an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* that a timetable for electoral reform would have to be done if Marcos "lacks the will or is incapacitated," and in the event of his resignation, the US should offer Marcos and his family safe passage and sanctuary.²⁵ The US must also be prepared to provide Marcos' successor the necessary security assistance to enable him to restore democracy. According to Sen. Alan Cranston, the US must exert all efforts to bring about a swift transfer of power from Marcos to the "loyal, democratic and still largely pro-American opposition."²⁶

It is evident at this point that the US was already preparing the ground for a post-Marcos scenario despite the obvious personal support of Reagan for Marcos. In fact, former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark had admitted that the US had already set up all sorts of contingency plans for the Philippines. He predicted that the US would encourage a military takeover "if elections are rigged and triggered social turbulence."²⁷ Sen. Lugar has admitted that the US has "very close ties" with the reformist group in the military.²⁸ With all the foregoing, the presidential elections could then also be looked at as an acid test for Marcos to see if he was still in complete control of the situation.

Creating the Scenario: The Institutions

While the US had its own interests to consider, the Marcos administration also had its own, namely the perpetuation of its power which it naturally could not give up without a fight. Although Marcos acceded to the US demand to hold elections, he had to first set the legal framework for electoral manipulation. This meant the control of various institutions necessary for the electoral process to operate, i.e., the legislature, the courts, the local governments, the military and the Commission on Elections.

The Batasang Pambansa

From the outset, the Batasang Pambansa had always been under the control of Marcos. As an institution created under the 1973 Marcos Constitution, the Batasan functioned merely as a rubber stamp parliament. Its functions as legislator of laws were rendered virtually inutile since President Marcos himself could legislate laws through presidential decrees, letters of instructions and other similar devices which he declared were to be considered as part of the law of the land. A clear illustration of the uselessness of this institution was the fact that after 62 sessions from the time the Batasan convened in July 1984, it had passed only three bills, two of which are minor ones, and adopted only 13 resolutions out of 294 filed.²⁹ The opposition, being hopelessly in the minority, could not really effectively block any proposal coming from the administration party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL).

For the February 1986 elections, the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, or Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, was passed barely 70 days before the scheduled elections on February 7.³⁰ Thus, although the law provided for a 90-day campaign period for presidential and vice-presidential elections polls, only a 57-day campaign period was allowed for the February snap elections. This was definitely too short a time for the opposition to come up with a machinery strong enough to overcome the KBL bandwagon. Another provision which definitely favored the incumbent con-

cerned the counting of votes for the president and the vice-president by the Batasang Pambansa.³¹ Since the final and official counting was to be done by the Batasan, this implied that appreciation of certificates of canvass was also to be done by them. Since the KBL was the majority party in the Batasan, it would be preposterous to assume that certificates which were defective but which nevertheless favored their party would not be considered. In any case, any controversy arising out of the election contest was to be settled by a specially constituted Presidential Electoral Tribunal composed of nine members, three from the ruling KBL Party, three from the opposition party and three from the Supreme Court.³² Since the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, a personal appointee of the President in lieu of the more senior justice and administration critic Claudio Teehankee, had also been empowered to appoint the two other representatives to the tribunal, it would not be far fetched to assume that the justices he would appoint would be those beholden to the President. The opposition was therefore outnumbered by a ratio of two to one.

The Supreme Court

The Supreme Court was not spared Marcos' scheme to institutionalize his dictatorship. With the declaration of martial law, the independence of the judiciary was systematically undermined through the power of the President to remove any judge or official in the Department of Justice, the curtailment of certain civil and political rights, reduction in civil court jurisdiction and the existence of military courts.³³ His appointment of Ramon Aquino as Chief Justice instead of Claudio Teehankee was a clear attempt to ensure that the sensitive Supreme Court position would be in the hands of someone known to be loyal to him. It was quite obvious that Teehankee was bypassed because he had consistently shown through several dissenting opinions that he was not willing to tow the official line. As far as the biases of the other members of the Supreme Court, however, their opinions had consistently supported the administration side. A review of electoral cases filed with the Supreme Court show that there were very few decisions handed down in favor of opposition candidates, certainly none that challenged the excessive powers of the President.

The Local Governments

The political machinery of the KBL would not have been effective without the active support of the local governments. Since KBL partymen as of 1986 controlled 69 out of 73 provincial governments, 53 out of 59 city halls, 1,218 out of 1,469 of municipal governments and 99% of 41,619 barangays, the incumbent's material advantage was already secured.³⁴ The outcome of elections at the precinct level must be managed so that there would be absolutely no chance that the opposition would win.

The Military

President Marcos had to make certain that the AFP Chief of Staff would be someone personally loyal to him. Since his cousin General Fabian Ver, one of the co-accused in the Aquino murder case, was on forced leave, Marcos needed to have Ver exonerated so the latter could once again assume his position as chief of staff. Thus, on December 2, 1985, after a year-long trial, Ver and 25 other defendants accused of assassinating Benigno Aquino were formally acquitted by the Sandiganbayan. This paved the way for his resumption into office and firmly secured the military under the control of Marcos in time for the February 86 elections. Despite this, there were still certain sectors in the military affiliated with the reformist group who launched a campaign called Kamalayan '86 to ensure clean and honest elections. As Chief of Staff, Ver immediately threatened those involved in the campaign that he will go after the military reform movement after the February 7 elections.³⁵

The Commission on Elections

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) as a constitutional body, was envisioned to be an independent agency to take charge of "safeguarding at all times the purity of the ballot."³⁶ Under the regime of Marcos, however, the Comelec has been transformed into a vital link in the machinery used to perpetuate Marcos' stay in power. Nowhere was this more blatant than in the February 1986 elections. In at least two resolutions, Comelec had already showed its clearly partisan stance. One of those involved the deputization of the entire armed forces despite the fact that several had already been deputized in previous resolutions. These are Resolution No. 1762 where Comelec deputized the Regional Unified Commands, the Western Command and the South Command, and the Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police (PC-INP) under Resolution No. 1763. All six members of the Comelec including Chairman Victorino A. Savellano except representative Commissioner Ramon H. Felipe, Jr. signed the resolution which in effect rendered futile the prohibitions contained in Sec. 261 (s) of the Omnibus Election Code. According to the dissenting opinion of Felipe, the resolution gave the "color of legality" for military men to circumvent the prohibitions of the Code. It also created a situation which made possible the commission of possible abuses before and after elections, such as the ban on the carrying of firearms outside the residences/barracks by military personnel.³⁷ Since the military had been the principal instrument used by Marcos to perpetuate his regime, the resolution of Comelec was drafted obviously to pave the way for the manipulation of the conduct and results of the election.

The other resolution, Resolution No. 1766, prohibited heads of religious organizations, parish priests, pastors and ministers from influencing "in any manner, directly or indirectly" their members to vote for any particular candidate in the elections, citing Sec. 361(d) of the Omnibus Election Code on coercion of subordinates. Coming in the heels of a pastoral letter read in Catholic churches all over the Philippines, the Comelec reaction cannot but be construed as an attempt by the Marcos administration to intimidate the Catholic Church to take a decidedly passive stance in the conduct of elections. Even a cursory reading of the provision in question, however, would show that the reading of a pastoral letter asking parishioners to vote according to their conscience did not constitute coercion.

Other pre-election acts which showed Comelec bias was its initial resistance to accredit National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) as its citizen arm, its insistence at controlling the conduct of the quick count through the use of its computers at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), its recognition of other quick count groups like the Media Poll Count, which, like the Comelec and Namfrel counts, were all unofficial anyway. All these acts showed a systematic attempt on the part of the Comelec to undermine the whole electoral process and stack the cards in favor of the political party of Marcos.

Electoral Manipulation: A Repeat Performance

As in all other electoral exercises done under the regime of Marcos, manipulation, both overt and covert, was evident in all stages of the electoral process, from the registration process up to the proclamation. However, in some respects, manipulation for this election departs from all other experiences not only in terms of the magnitude but also in the methods used to effect electoral manipulation.

Manipulation in Registration

Covert manipulation during the registration was evident in the requirements which the Omnibus Election Code spelled out for new registrants. Aside from a voter's affidavit which the registrant had to accomplish, four copies of the latest identification photograph had to be supplied by the applicant.³⁸ This not only entailed expense on the part of the applicant but was also in itself a bothersome procedure, and in effect discouraged a lot of qualified voters from registering. Comelec also provided only two days, both holidays (Saturday and Sunday) for registration, without any extension. Thus, many were unable to register because of the photo requirement. In Bicol, for instance, there was only an average of four registrants per district.³⁹ Despite this, Chairman Savellano refused to set a new registration day citing as the reason a provision in the Omnibus Election Code.⁴⁰ In

previous elections and referenda, the Comelec had not been so strict with the law.

Thus, for the February elections, there was only a slight 6.6 percent increase in the number of voters over the 1984 register.⁴¹ However, there were certain areas, including Makati, where the registered voters exceeded the projected voting population.⁴² A Namfrel study similarly showed that 542 towns and cities had more than the usual percentage of new voter registration.⁴³ These areas were in known KBL bailiwicks such as Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao and Cavite.⁴⁴

Comelec had estimated a 27 million voting population as against 24.9 in 1984. In anticipation of this, it printed 3 million ballots to allow for spoilage, etc. As it was fairly evident that the 27 million target could not be met, Comelec was left with more excess ballots which became one source of vote padding.⁴⁵

As in other previous elections, there were also cases of overt manipulation in registration. Namfrel volunteers and United Democratic Opposition (Unido) inspectors were harassed⁴⁶ and some evidence presented of armed men using government vehicles disrupting registration proceedings in known bailiwicks of the opposition.⁴⁷ Photographs of armed men in certain registration centers were even showed by residents and opposition representatives to Comelec officials.⁴⁸

On the other hand, the obvious bias of local officials was clearly manifested in documented cases of barangay officials meddling in registration proceedings.⁴⁹ Barangay captains were seen making rounds of their areas and soliciting signatures and thumbprints of qualified voters for the election register in exchange of P50-100.⁵⁰ Some school teachers were coerced into signing the election register.⁵¹

Local Comelec officials were also active participants in the fraudulent registration of voters. One registrar from Caloocan City was accused of registering voters despite the fact that the December 28-29 registration period had already lapsed. Another registrar from Baguio City was seen taking copies of the list of voters from the board of election inspectors.⁵²

In order to remove flying voters from the permanent list of voters, the Omnibus Election Code provided a procedure with which to institute exclusion proceedings against the voter being challenged. However, the process was so tedious that it was difficult for the court to exclude even 50 persons a day.⁵³

Test Case: Makati

Partly in response to the clamor to purge the voters' lists of fictitious voters, the Comelec created a special committee to handle petitions in exclusion proceedings. Makati was chosen as the test area since it was the most notorious among the 51 cities and towns identified by Comelec as having fraudulent or inaccurate voters' lists.⁵⁴ The committee was composed of one representative from Comelec and two registered voters from Makati representing Unido and Namfrel respectively. The voters Identification Division of Comelec then conducted a random analysis of 23 voting centers in Makati. A total of 6,661 thumbprints in registration lists were analyzed by 20 fingerprint experts. Of these, 1,572, or 24 percent, were found to have identical thumbprints. In one voting center, one person had affixed his thumbprint in 102 registration papers. In another voting center, four persons had placed their thumbprints in 370 papers, and in still another voting center, one person had his thumbmark in 73 papers.⁵⁵ On the other hand, in a street in Makati where there were only eight houses and 28 actual residents, 300 voters were discovered to have been registered.⁵⁶ In one house, 27 residents had the same birthdate. Computer analysis also showed 206 people living in one address and 147 in another.⁵⁷

Exclusion proceedings were then instituted against 1,167 voters in 137 petitions before the Makati municipal courts, but despite the *prima facie* evidence of identical thumbmarks and voters sharing birthdays and addresses, only one judge acted favorably to the petition by excluding 159 fictitious voters.⁵⁸ Four other municipal judges dismissed the petition filed by the special committee ostensibly because Comelec had no "legal personality" to file exclusion proceedings. Under Sec. 142 of the Omnibus Election Code, however, any registered voter of the municipality may petition the court to exclude any voter from the list. In any case, even if all the petitions were granted, only a very small percentage (1.1 percent), would have been purged in Makati's estimated total of 89,413 flying voters.⁵⁹ Even Comelec Commissioner Froilan Bacungan had no choice but to admit Comelec's failure to cleanse the voters' lists of fraudulent registrants, saying that "if it can't be done in Makati, it can't be done anywhere else."⁶⁰

Nevertheless, it would have been possible to purge the voters' lists if the permanent list of voters in the 51 cities and towns suspected of having fraudulent voters had been annulled and a new list prepared instead. Had Comelec been successful in its purging, some one million registrants would have been removed.⁶¹

Manipulation in the Campaign

The short 57-day campaign period had at the outset tilted the balance in favor of the incumbent and his party. Unable to match the enormous financial and material resources of Marcos, the opposition was left on its own to accept whatever meager help was offered them. A comparison of the campaign paraphernalia of the KBL and the Aquino-Laurel tandem would show that whereas KBL campaign materials such as posters, pins, hats, T-shirts, etc. were all expensively and professionally done, those of the opposition looked crude and cheap. What was clearly noticeable was that one advertising agency was handling the overall concept design of the KBL's campaign strategy while the opposition had to make do with donated materials of varying design, color and quality.

Media coverage for the snap elections, from print to radio and TV, favored Marcos and the KBL. In a study conducted by the UP Institute of Mass Communication covering a six-day period, TV spots for Marcos at the government channel (MBS-4) added to 56 minutes and 62 seconds in comparison with Aquino's total of five minutes. This was in obvious violation of the equal time rule under Sec. 86 of the Omnibus Election Code. MBS-4 skirted this issue with the lame excuse that whatever the President said was news.⁶²

Election expenditures for the KBL was estimated to run into one billion pesos,⁶³ which, upon close scrutiny, would seem to be a very conservative estimate. Indeed this was one of the costliest elections held so far. Estimates of the cost of producing TV commercials ran to about P1-1.5 million; bills from ad agencies about P20 M; TV spots about P50,000/day; radio commercials P100 M; and newspaper ads to about P500,000 daily.⁶⁴ This list did not even include expenses for other services such as transportation expenses; rent-a-chair services for rallies; sound system rentals; manufacturing costs for various give-away items, cash support of ward leaders, etc.⁶⁵ Obviously, only the KBL had the resources at their command to produce the necessary cash to run such an expensive campaign. Indeed reports were received of governors and mayors of the ruling party bringing in sackfuls of money; of barangay officials being given "fistfuls of legal tender;" hundreds of people being enticed to attend and applaud at KBL rallies in consideration of the sum of P50-100 each.⁶⁶ In one instance, the KBL hauled in people from as far south as Sorsogon to Naga City to make sure that the KBL rally would be well attended.⁶⁷ Government officials and employees were required to attend these rallies and their attendance was even checked. Again, in Davao, the KBL was reported to have given P150/school teacher; P100/day for doctors manning KBL-sponsored medical clinics; P20-50/member of the Kabataang Barangay; and P200-250/radio announcer or mediaman giving commentaries which favored the KBL.⁶⁸

Even in the type of transportation used, the KBL had the upper hand. In KBL campaign sorties all over the country, Marcos and his party travelled in helicopters while Cory Aquino had no choice but to use regular commercial flights.

A physical comparison of the national campaign headquarters of the two parties would show that the KBL coffers were well stacked with money. Whereas the KBL had for its use 40 air-conditioned rooms well furnished with executive coaches and other facilities, the Unido-Laban had unpainted plywood for walls.⁶⁹

How was the KBL able to finance its well-oiled political campaign? Recent evidence confirmed that Marcos was able to siphon from US \$250 M to \$500M of government accounts to finance such an expensive campaign.⁷⁰ Marcos could very well do this because under P.D. No. 1171 he was authorized to transfer funds to other offices as he saw fit. However, since the government knew that the 1985 revenues would not be able to finance its programmed expenditures, it asked the IMF on May 1985 for higher ceiling on its budget deficit. In November, right after the President announced the holding of the snap elections in February, the IMF increased the country's original limit of P6.5 to P13 billion. With the IMF approval, the government was able to release an enormous amount of money for the month of December alone. Thus, although for the third quarter of 1985 the budget deficit was only P5.5 B, by the end of the year, this had almost doubled to P10.5. By the middle of January 1986, there was already a P2.7B increase from December in funds released by the Central Bank which were credited to the national government.⁷¹ Prime Minister Cesar Virata, when asked to explain why the government had to release such a large amount during the last quarter, gave as reason the very late approval of the IMF for a higher budget deficit. Certain sectors in the finance community have been more unequivocal in alluding to American influence in the IMF. Indeed, it was no mean coincidence that the IMF grant of the budgetary leeway and the holding of elections came at about the same time.⁷² Administration campaign funds were reported to be so overflowing that there were even squabbles among KBL leaders who felt that some of the money which should have been used to pay people attending the KBL rallies instead went direct to the pockets of the ward leaders. In one instance, Pasay City residents who were asked to attend a KBL rally for P100 were only given P50 each.⁷⁵

Electoral manipulation was also evident in the attempts of the Marcos regime to present some kind of a situation, although quite covertly, that they, indeed, were responsive to the needs and demands of the people. In a move intended to give the facade that the government was concerned with alleviating the economic burden on the ordinary masses, Marcos announced in January an 11% reduction in the prices of gasoline and other petroleum products. He also announced that there will be another round of

price reduction after the February polls.⁷⁴ He also directed the National Power Corporation to reduce power rates of industrial users.⁷⁵ To attract votes from the agricultural sector, he ordered the reduction of the price of urea fertilizer and issued a presidential decree which contained a provision reducing by as much as 30 percent the taxable income arising from investments in agricultural projects.⁷⁶ He also issued another presidential decree granting tax relief to the mining industry.⁷⁷ Realizing the unpopularity of compulsory contributions of thousands of Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS) members of the Pag-IBIG (Ikaw, Bangko, Industriya at Gobyerno) fund, he announced that he is seriously considering the conversion of the compulsory nature of this fund to that of a voluntary contribution.⁷⁸

In an attempt to play at the anti-communist sentiment of many Filipinos, the red scare was used by the KBL as a campaign ploy to discourage voters from voting Unido-Laban.

Abuse of the franking privileges of the President was also evident in the millions of letters sent to taxpayers, government employees and SSS members outlining the regime's accomplishments in the last 14 years since martial law was declared in 1972.

Use of government resources to manipulate election results did not stop at this level. Cases of terrorism by the military were also recorded. One of these even involved the sister of Ninoy Aquino, who, together with her daughter, a friend and some foreign correspondents, were mauled and threatened at gunpoint by Philippine Constabulary soldiers at a checkpoint while on their way to attend a rally in Concepcion, Tarlac.⁷⁹ Expensive camera equipment of National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) crewmen were also smashed and confiscated by the military.⁸⁰ Moreover, the petition for relief of five military officers in Tarlac for electioneering was never acted upon.⁸¹

In another instance, a grenade exploded in Zamboanga City during an opposition rally barely 300 meters from where Cory Aquino was speaking.⁸² UNIDO campaign headquarters in some towns of Pampanga and Tarlac were shot at.⁸³

Harrassment of opposition candidates was also resorted to with the revival of murder charges against the long murdered-and-buried Ninoy Aquino and the issuance of a court order expropriating the Hacienda Luisita owned by the family of the opposition's standard bearer, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino.

All of these manipulative acts, whether overt or covert, clearly demonstrated the lopsidedness of the contest at the campaign phase which was overwhelmingly in favor of Marcos and the KBL.

Manipulation in Voting

That there was definitely more at stake at this election than just the victory of either Marcos or Aquino was obvious with the coming of a 44-member international observer team representing 19 countries to find out how the election would be conducted. The bipartisan observer team from the US was chaired by no less than Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, and included among others six other congressmen, an adviser to Reagan, a Catholic bishop, and the former Commander of the US Armed Forces in the Pacific. This team was so special that even Comelec waived its rules to allow the foreign observers to enter the polling stations and see for themselves how the voting process was being conducted.⁸⁴

The other feature in this election was the presence of a well-organized volunteer organization, the Namfrel. This was not the first time Namfrel participated in the conduct of Philippine elections under the Marcos regime. The first was during the previous 1984 Batasan elections, where it played an important role in ensuring a relatively fair conduct of elections in certain areas, and consequently, in the victory of some 30 percent opposition candidates for the Batasan. By the end of 1985, Namfrel had gained enough experience to be able to mount a volunteer movement on a nationwide scale. Moreover, it had mustered for this election much more resources and material support coming mainly from the disaffected elements of the business sector. Subsequently, Namfrel moved for its accreditation as Comelec's citizen arm and its representation in the board of election inspectors. It also prepared a quick count scheme by which the results of the election would be immediately known. This was apparently done to counteract possible acts of fraud which maybe committed during the canvassing of votes. Indeed, while Namfrel was supposed to act as an independent watchdog, it seemed that this organization has not been entirely without the support of the other (and obviously very partisan) groups. For instance, researches conducted by Namfrel were known to have received funding from the Asia Foundation, an American Institution which at one time had been alleged as a CIA front.

One other distinct feature of this election was the presence of hundreds of foreign mediamen, representing all the major news networks and including several freelance writers. Thus, latest developments in the Philippines were seen in minutes via satellite in other parts of the world. It cannot be denied that the critical stance of the foreign media against the dictatorship helped the opposition drum up public opinion against Marcos. Thus, what the opposition lacked in local resources was more than made up for by these foreign correspondents who were literally all over the place. Instances of vote-tampering, violence and intimidation by supporters of Marcos were

reported all over the world. Many of these instances were seen first hand by these foreign correspondents. Other forms of overt manipulation reported were the ominous presence of goons, paramilitary (such as the Civilian Home Defense Force) and military forces in polling places all over the country, intimidating both the UNIDO and Namfrel watchers, and in many instances, driving them out of their stations.⁸⁵ Two AFP generals were in fact sighted hopping from town to town and island to island in Sulu using government-owned helicopters campaigning for the KBL ticket on election day.⁸⁶ Barangay officials were seen entering polling places and forcing voters to write "Marcos" in their ballots.⁸⁷ In Roxas City, a Namfrel volunteer was shot and killed while trying to stop the snatching of a ballot box.⁸⁸ In certain places in Davao, there were reports of explosions, shooting incidents and even strafing in voting centers.⁸⁹

Other anomalies observed during the February elections were the use of the unindelible "indelible" ink⁹⁰ and of carbonized sample ballots to buy votes.⁹¹ Spurious ballots which looked like genuine ones were also reportedly seen.⁹² Improperly locked/sealed or even unlocked/unsealed ballot boxes were observed all over the country.⁹³ Persons who had long died or gone abroad were listed as having voted.⁹⁴ Fictitious names were also discovered in places where the actual residents themselves were not listed.⁹⁵ Ghost or non-existent precincts were also reported.⁹⁶ Padded lists of voters, due mainly to summary inclusion orders were likewise observed.⁹⁷

Obviously, there was separate funding released on election day. A Comelec official was even caught red-handed distributing money inside a precinct.⁹⁸ Teachers assigned to man the polling places were reportedly bribed with amounts ranging from P1,000-5,000 each to do acts designed to favor the KBL⁹⁹ such as not allowing voters to personally place their ballots inside the box,¹⁰⁰ starting actual voting 8-10 hours ahead of the scheduled 7:00 a.m. opening, especially in known KBL bailiwicks,¹⁰¹ and in opposition bailiwicks, closing early even though there were still voters waiting to cast their ballots.¹⁰² There is some evidence which would seem to show that the Central Bank or some official government agency was the source of all the money which were distributed on election day. One hundred peso bills with the same serial numbers were floated which were otherwise apparently genuine.¹⁰³ What this implied was that more money was printed than that which appeared on official records.

While the forms of manipulation described above were not any different from the experience in previous election, this election was unique in the sense that, for the first time, massive disenfranchisement of voters in known opposition bailiwicks was resorted to, aside from other forms, to prevent at least 3.3 million from casting their ballots.¹⁰⁴ Of this, at least 29 percent came from Metro Manila. Voter turnout was 76.96%, one of the

lowest for a presidential election.¹⁰⁵ Many of the voters were unable to locate their respective precincts because of the new arrangement adopted by local Comelec representatives for a voter listing on the basis of street location of residence rather than the previous alphabetical listing of voters per precinct. As a result, a lot of names got scrambled in the process.¹⁰⁶ In San Juan, for instance, at least 10 percent of voters whose names were not in the lists were asked to go to the Comelec registrar to obtain certificates attesting that they were indeed voters of San Juan.¹⁰⁷ But that was not all. They also have to get an order from the municipal court directing the local board of inspectors to include their names in the voters' lists.¹⁰⁸ This circuitously designed process discouraged a lot of voters from getting the certificates. Some precincts were also transferred without prior notification by the local board of inspectors.¹⁰⁹ The voting process was also considerably slowed down because of the sudden requirement that voters sign four times and make four thumbmarks instead of only one signature and thumbmark.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, highest percentage of voter turnout were recorded in known KBL bailiwicks, areas where Marcos emerged the winner.¹¹¹

In some areas, there was failure of election because of abnormally high voting turnouts when compared to other areas.¹¹² For instance, Tawi-Tawi had a 103 percent voter turnout, Davao City with 98 percent and Laoag City with 96 percent.¹¹³

Manipulation in Canvassing

For this election, Namfrel devised an operation quick count system which would make available to the people the results of the election at the earliest possible time. Namfrel would use the facilities of RCPI, a private telegraph company, to transmit results of the election to its central station at La Salle Greenhills in San Juan, which would then tabulate them through their computers. The basis of the transmitted election returns would be the poll tally forms of Namfrel which were certified and signed by the four members of the precinct's board of election inspectors, namely, the chairman, the poll clerk, the KBL and Unido representatives, plus the Namfrel representative. One copy of the official Comelec tally form would also be given to the Namfrel representative. However, the efforts of Comelec to systematically block this procedure and intentionally slow down the count showed that it was indeed out to manipulate the election results.

Initially, Comelec wanted to control the quick count by insisting that Namfrel-transmitted results be coursed through the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), the site prepared by Comelec. Personnel from the government's National Computer Center would man the Comelec computers.¹¹⁴ Namfrel however insisted on the use of its own facilities and

indicated it would go on with the quick count with or without Comelec approval. Comelec finally allowed separate but parallel counts. Namfrel would still be based at Greenhills, while the Comelec quick count, which would use both Comelec and Namfrel returns, would be based at the PICC. Comelec also allowed media representatives to conduct its own poll count. However, it must be recalled that all of these quick counts, including the Comelec count, would still be unofficial tallies since the Omnibus Election Code specifically provided that only the Batasan can canvass the votes for the President and the Vice-President.¹¹⁵

Comelec deliberately put pressure on Namfrel so that its quick count would not be successful. One of these was the issuance of confusing statements of telegraph companies regarding the transmittal of election returns. The day before elections, Comelec and Namfrel had already agreed that Namfrel was to use the Radio Communications of the Philippines Inc. (RCPI) facilities, which had a wider telegraph service network, to transmit returns coming from the provinces to Manila, while Comelec would use the Philippine Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (PT&T), another private telecommunication company, and the Bureau of Telecommunications for areas not covered by PT&T and the RCPI.¹¹⁶ Subsequently, however, Chairman Savellano sent a telegram addressed to all Comelec registrars asking them to instruct all Namfrel representatives under their jurisdiction to transmit the returns through PT&T.¹¹⁷ Comelec also sent a telex order to RCPI not to transmit election returns unless they were authenticated by the local Comelec officials. Disagreements as to the genuineness of the Savellano message further slowed down the transmittal of returns. Namfrel representatives had to have their poll tally forms, which were already signed by the board of election inspector, authenticated by the local Comelec registrars, who in the first place were not present when the counting in the precincts took place. They could not therefore certify as to the authenticity of the signature appearing in Namfrel's poll tally forms. Comelec, through Commissioner Opinion, denied the Comelec order to RCPI and claimed that the telexes which Namfrel volunteers got were not signed.¹¹⁸ What must be mentioned at this point is that only FAX, and not telex machines, transmit signatures. Authentication was however not required of the Media Poll Count, and even their source of data was not questioned.¹¹⁹ That Comelec should have even allowed the media such as the *Daily Express*, *Bulletin Today* and *Times Journal*, and the *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas* to conduct their own quick counts was in itself anomalous, since Sec. 180 of the Omnibus Election Code did not include the media as one of the groups which Comelec can deputize as its citizen arm. Despite all of these attempts at manipulation, Cory Aquino was leading by a large margin at the start of the quick count. A slow pace count seemed therefore a delaying tactic which would be stopped once the lead margin of Aquino reached 10 percent. The end result could therefore not be predicted, but the idea was for the returns

to be fairly close and other returns would filter in as needed to offset the opposition lead.

The original target performance of Comelec was to tabulate 80 percent of the total votes cast 24 hours after elections, assuming that precinct results would be in within a maximum of two hours. Despite the proximity of all Metro Manila precincts to the PICC, however, it took some Comelec registrars more than two days to forward their results.¹²⁰ Unsurprisingly, Comelec was efficient in reporting returns of KBL bailiwicks such as Regions I and II. These were the same areas which exhibited "statistically questionable majorities."¹²¹

Manipulation committed by Comelec was so crude and blatant that on February 10, 30 of their own staff tabulators, who were actually contractual employees of the National Computer Center, walked out to protest Comelec's "massaging" of election results to favor Marcos. They were joined the next day by eight more of their colleagues.¹²² Earlier, Comelec through Commissioner Opinion had already announced that Marcos was winning despite the fact that the PICC tally board showed that Aquino was still leading by around 100,000 votes.¹²³ The bias of Comelec was so obvious that thousands went to the streets to protect this attempt to subvert what clearly was the people's will, that it was Cory Aquino they wanted as President. Manipulation was of such magnitude that the powerful Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a statement alluding to the fraudulent character of this election. Despite all of these, the Batasan proceeded to canvass the election results. The opposition was ambivalent whether to participate in the canvassing or not and even resorted to delaying tactics such as long-winded deliberations on procedures. They finally agreed to participate, albeit reluctantly, in the counting, but walked out when it became apparent that there was nothing they could do to change the pre-arranged outcome. The final result of the tally was inevitably a Marcos victory. This evidently contradicted the Namfrel tally which had Aquino in the lead. The basis of the KBL victory were 140 certificates of canvass, but 138 of these were included despite objections from the opposition. Objections raised by the opposition concerned the following: (1) absence of official Comelec seals in the certificates of canvass; (2) improper placement of seals; (3) use of 1984 seals; (4) absence of signatures and/or thumbmarks of Unido representatives in the board of canvassers; (5) incomplete number of returns from the precincts; (6) presence of erasures and alterations in majority of the certificates.¹²⁴ Despite all of these infirmities, the Batasan proceeded with the canvassing. The reason given was that the duty of the Batasan was merely to count votes and it was up to the Presidential Electoral Tribunal, which was dominated by the KBL, to decide on such questions.¹²⁵ Missing from the Batasan count were almost 6 million votes. Presumably these were part of the disenfranchised voters.¹²⁶

This systematic attempt at manipulation was amply demonstrated by Romeo Manlapaz of the UP Computer Center. In an article entitled, "The Mathematics of Deception,"¹²⁷ Manlapaz compared the daily regional tallies of the Batasan, the Comelec and Namfrel. Statistical analyses showed that the KBL "did alter the canvass of election results at the level of the provinces/cities to reflect not the true Laban victory but a spurious KBL victory." The analyses also showed that even the Namfrel tally reflected instances of KBL electoral fraud. For this election, the study noted that there should have been no instance where the total number of votes cast for the vice presidency should have been more than those cast for the presidency. The study cited Comelec rules that in the case of a vote cast for presidency with a blank space for the vice presidency, the latter should be considered as a vote for the same party as that cast for the presidency. The rules also noted that this was not true for the opposite situation, that is, a vote was cast for the vice presidency with none cast for the presidency. However, in this election, the "excess of total vice presidential votes over total presidential votes has been the exception rather than the rule." This study referred only to the mathematical fraud committed to make Marcos the winner in this election.

There were, however, other more violent forms of manipulation which were perpetrated during the canvassing. In Quirino province, the Unido representative in the provincial board of canvassers was kidnapped, tortured and murdered.¹²⁸ In Tarlac, the campaign coordinator for the opposition was ambushed and killed by armed men as he was about to step out of his house.¹¹⁹ In Masbate, an elder brother of an oppositionist assemblyman was gunned down by a Constabulary sergeant as the provincial tally was starting at the Comelec headquarters.¹³⁰ In Agusan, one Alexis Parao was killed on his way home after he challenged the board of inspectors for anomalous counting of votes and appreciation of ballots.¹³¹ However the most brutal of these was the cold-blooded murder of Evelio Javier in Antique, former provincial governor and provincial coordinator of the Cory Aquino for President Movement. He was gunned down while he was waiting for the ballot boxes coming in from various towns of Antique for canvassing at the provincial capitol.¹³² These incidents did not even include cases of harassment and intimidation such as ballot snatching by heavily armed men, mauling, slapping, etc. That Marcos and the KBL would go to such lengths to ensure victory mirrored to some extent the level and magnitude of manipulation committed for this election.

Intimidation and Harassment: The Case of Cadiz

When Negros del Norte was created as a separate province just before (or maybe more appropriately, in time for) the February elections, Cadiz City assumed its new role as capital city of the province. In much the same way, the provincial chapter of Namfrel was also organized to guard against

manipulation of electoral results. However, at the last minute, local Comelec officials revoked Namfrel's accreditation on the guise that some of its leaders were found upon investigation to be partisan.¹³³ Namfrel personalities alluded to by Comelec were Dr. Patricio Tan, Bishop Antonio Fortich and Atty. Johnny Hagad. At the outset, what seemed to be quite obvious was Comelec's partisanship, as Atty. Hagad was not even a member of Namfrel.

In almost all the barangays of Cadiz, systematic harassment and intimidation were present. In Barangay Luna, 20 military men had surrounded the voting center to enforce an order that the canvassing be done at the City Hall because of the unstable peace and order conditions. Those who resisted the order were threatened with a repeat of the Escalante massacre, where more than 20 demonstrators were shot and killed. Thus, ninety percent of the votes cast from the outlying barangays were counted not in the precincts but in the city.¹³⁴ One who resisted was gunned down while embracing the ballot box.¹³⁵ In Barangay Bonifacio, voting centers were closed at 12:30 p.m. and the ballot boxes removed. In Barangay Banquerohan, Namfrel volunteers were able to follow the ballot boxes being brought to City Hall, but they were prevented by armed men from entering the building. Some of the ballot boxes were not brought to City Hall but to the Philippine Normal College (PNC). In Barangay Caduha-an, Namfrel volunteers were able to follow the ballots being brought to PNC, but they were not able to enter the school. Some of the ballots were transferred from the main building to an unfinished building in the same compound. Counting of votes was done behind closed doors. Namfrel and Unido men were excluded from the counting. Men in fatigue uniforms, carrying hand grenades and long arms, patrolled the corridors of PNC stopping the public from observing the counting of ballots.¹³⁶ The Namfrel vice-chairman found the barrel of a gun pointed at her face just outside the PNC compound. Ten armed men surrounded two parked Namfrel vehicles. Guns were poked at the passengers, and one laborer was kicked and manhandled. A radio transceiver was even confiscated on the pretext that his parked vehicle was doing "suspicious movements."

The People's Uprising

Despite the massive fraud and violence that the Marcos government unleashed to ensure the victory of the KBL, it cannot be denied that the opposition team of Aquino and Laurel had the overwhelming support of majority of the Filipino people. Indicative of this was that even the manipulation of results, the most "credible" margin of difference that the KBL machine could give over Aquino was less than 10 percent. The popularity of the opposition candidates was uncontested. All the political rallies organized by the opposition, even in supposedly KBL bailiwicks, were attended by thousands of people, while KBL rallies had to content themselves with "hakot" crowds which they had paid for. When it became clear that

Marcos and Tolentino were going to be proclaimed by the Batasan as the winners in the most fraudulent elections in Philippine history, the people interpreted this to mean that Marcos would never step down and allow for a transfer of political power through the mechanism of elections. Thus, when Cory Aquino called for a *Tagumpay ng Bayan* (People's Victory) rally at the Luneta, millions attended, many of whom were unorganized masses, to show that she indeed has the support of the people. In the same rally, the opposition called for a program of civil disobedience, starting with a boycott of seven crony banks, three crony news dailies, the government television channel (MBS-4) and several establishments owned by relatives and cronies of Marcos.¹³⁷ The boycott call apparently caused dislocations in the business community as brisk selling was recorded in both the Manila and Makati stock exchanges. Stocks of San Miguel Corporation, one of the blue chip companies which was in the boycott list, registered the biggest day drop in its trading history.¹³⁸

Recognizing the highly volatile political situation, Reagan sent his special envoy, Philip Habib, to report to him first hand what the real situation was, of course, from the point of view of US security interests. The most logical solution, as far as the experience of the US in handling similar situations was concerned, would be some kind of a US-backed coup d'etat or military takeover. In the case of the Philippines, the US made its presence felt through its gunboat diplomacy. Immediately after Habib left, the *U.S.S. Blue Ridge* with its flotilla of destroyers positioned itself at the Manila Bay, in case there would be violence.

The US seemed to favor a military coup as the lesser evil to an Aquino victory. What seemed not to be a part of the scenario was the spontaneous outpouring of the masses in support of Cory Aquino. When the military coup led by the Minister of National Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and AFP Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos failed,¹³⁹ the formation of a military junta (or in the words of Enrile himself, a revolutionary council) was out of the question. The people's committee as the second option wherein Aquino would only be a part was also discarded. The only alternative left was for Enrile and Ramos, together with the reformist group within the military, to ally themselves with the popular clamor, that is, with Cory Aquino. Millions responded to Cardinal Sin's call to protect the rebel soldiers from an attack by forces loyal to Marcos. Barricades were set up in front of Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame to avert a bloody confrontation between the two groups. Three days after the popular uprising and the military rebellion, the regime of Marcos collapsed. By the evening of February 25, the day of Cory Aquino's inauguration, Marcos, together with his family, relatives and close friends, were flown to Clark Air Base where US Air Force planes were ready to take them to Hawaii, protected by the US from facing trial for their crimes committed against the Filipino people.

Concluding Statements

The February elections were not essentially different from elections held under the Marcos regime. The same pattern of manipulation, both overt and covert, was also observed for this election. As far as the form of electoral manipulation was concerned, what was new, aside from its magnitude, was (1) the massive disenfranchisement of voters, and (2) the slow count tally. More importantly, however, the February 1986 elections, and the subsequent ouster of Marcos, must be seen in the light of political developments from the 70s onwards. Internal factors e.g., the economic crisis, the military atrocities committed under the martial law regime which triggered strong people's resistance, the growing communist movement, the increasing disaffection of the middle class, and "radicalization" of certain powerful elements of the Church, all served to hasten the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship. From hindsight, it unfortunately appears, that the US had obtained the most favorable position in the aftermath of both the February elections and the "revolution." The appointment of personalities such as Central Bank Governor Jose Fernandez and Finance Minister Jaime Ongpin to the Aquino Cabinet seems to indicate acquiescence to US-WB pressure. Obviously, the primary concern of the US is the maintenance of its military bases. The World Bank, on the other hand, has to make sure that loans acquired under the Marcos regime would be paid for by the present government.

Under the present Aquino government, the Left, in comparison with the social democrats, has been initially excluded from the mainstream of governmental decision-making. Nevertheless, the Left's presence in the political arena must be treated as a given, because it will always assert its presence vis-a-vis the direction that Philippine political development should take. This position of influence is not without basis, as this has been nurtured by more than four decades of involvement in legal and extralegal political struggles.

The middle class, more than any other group in Philippine society, was instrumental in the success of the February uprising to oust the Marcos dictatorship. This points to the fact that any movement for change must necessarily elicit the participation of this small but articulate sector of Philippine society. This will definitely be a crucial factor in the Filipino struggle for genuine national independence.

Endnotes

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³*Ibon, ibid.*

⁴"Signals of Distress," *Ibon*, February 28, 1986, p. 5.

⁵"No Relief in '84," *Ibon*, January 31, 1985, p. 1.

⁶*Bulletin Today*, December 30, 1985; see also *Ibon*, February 28, 1986.

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⁹"A Season of Hunger," *Ibon*, July 31, 1985, p. 2.

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²⁰Bello, "Edging Toward the Quagmire: The United States and the Philippine Crisis," *World Policy Journal*, as cited by Maritess Danguilan Vitug, "Americans Misreading Situation by Ignoring Nationalists, Says Analyst," *Business Day*, February 10, 1986, p. 5.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷"Fraud Seen to Trigger Military Takeover," *Business Day*, February 4, 1986, p. 26.

²⁸R. Gregory Nokes, "US Views Military as Key to Solution of RP Crisis," *Business Day*, February 24, 1986, p. 5.

²⁹*Ibon*, January 31, 1986.

³⁰The Act took effect only on November 28, 1985.

³¹Section 16, Omnibus Election Code.

³²"Batasan Approves Succession Bill," *Business Day*, November 29, 1985, p. 15.

³³Jose V. Abueva, "Ideology and Practice in the 'New Society,'" in David A. Rosenberg, ed., *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 16-20.

³⁴Ramon Isberto, "The 'Numbers Game' and More," Special Report, *Business Day*, February 6, 1986, p. 28.

³⁵*Business Day*, February 4, 1986, p. 28.

³⁶"The Commission on Elections," n.d., p. 1.

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³⁸Section 126, Omnibus Election Code.

³⁹"No New Registration of Voters," *Veritas*, January 26, 1986.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² Efren Danao, "Cleanup Drive," *Veritas*, January 26, 1986, p. 10.
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- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ "30 M. Ballots Readied," *Business Day*, November 29, 1985, p. 16.
- ⁴⁶ *Ang Pahayagang Malaya*, December 31, 1985, p. 8.
- ⁴⁷ *Business Day*, February 7, 1986, p. 19.
- ⁴⁸ Danao, "Readying Goons, Guns and Gold," *Veritas*, January 26, 1986.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*
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- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
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- 81 Selirio, "Will Comelec . . .," *op. cit.*
- 82 "Some Ambush It Was," *Veritas*, January 26, 1986.
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- 120 *Ibid.*
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123. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, February 10, 1986, p. 1.
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- 127 *UP Newsletter*, April 15, 1986.
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