

The Philippines and the United States Today: The Forging of New Relations

ALEJANDRO M. FERNANDEZ

China in Our Future

In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville said of America, as well as of Russia, that it was "marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe." A century thence, the words proved prophetic. Today, indeed, there are only two superpowers in the world — the United States and Russia.

The American march toward becoming an empire and its formal initiation as a Great Power began in 1898 with the annexation of the Philippines. The United States declared war against Spain ostensibly to liberate the Cubans from an oppressive regime, but ended with the acquisition of the Philippines. At that time the Filipinos had already won their independence from Spain through a successful revolution. Impelled by the necessity of setting up an empire, the United States "wrested" sovereignty over the Philippines from a colonial power whom the Filipinos had already defeated.

It is our thesis — our conceptual framework for comprehending contemporary Philippine history — that, since 1898, Philippine-American relations have been, and for some time in the future will continue to be, a function primarily of the policy of the United States toward China. For the past three-quarters of a century, Philippine-American relations may be viewed through the prism of Sino-American relations, "Americans," Stanley says, "did not deal with the Philippines in a vacuum but as part of their Asian policy."¹

Thus, the story of the annexation revealed to us that the real intention of the United States in acquiring the Philippines was to obtain a stepping stone to China. From the Philippines, with the aid of the U.S. Navy, the United States would challenge its European rivals in the China market. For the purpose of penetrating China and

The author is a professor at the Graduate School, University of the Philippines. This article forms part of Chapter X of a forthcoming book bearing the same title.

expanding Sino-American trade, the Philippines would be set up as the "American Hongkong." Dennett, in his *Americans in Eastern Asia* (New York, 1922), contends persuasively that the Open Door policy "establishes the connection between McKinley's Chinese and Philippine policies."

Later, the Americans took an interest in the rich natural resources and raw materials of the Philippines as such; in the words of President McKinley, "Incidental to our tenure in the Philippines is the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent." The main target was China, the Philippines was *incidental*. In the Philippines, American economic policy saw to it that, via free trade, the colony would be tied to the American market. Toward 1941, when World War II broke out, the Philippines had, economically, become more dependent upon the United States than was any single state of the Union, in the words of the American High Commissioner to the Philippines in a testimony to the U.S. Congress. Cultural imperialism complementing economic imperialism completed the pervasive process of Americanization of the Filipino people and their social and political institutions. A refined infrastructure of "special relations" thus bound the Islands almost inextricably to the United States. When political independence came, it was largely nominal, and Philippine sovereignty remained hollow as the country struggled mightily for many years to free itself from the quagmire of its economic dependence upon the United States. In the meantime, the foreign policy of the fledgling republic was unquestioningly pro-American. "Our safest course," President Roxas said in 1946, "is in the glistening wake of America whose sure advance with mighty prow breaks for smaller craft the waves of fear."

All this time China loomed large, though dormant, in the background. China was literally a sleeping giant. In world politics, American policy took the form of the Open Door, a commitment to the maintenance of the territorial integrity of China, and all else came as a secondary consideration.

When World War II began in 1941, the Philippines, as an American colony, was automatically dragged into it. In the final analysis, that war broke out mainly over the China issue. The Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931 and invasion of China proper in 1937 merely drew strong paper protests from the United States. But when Japan moved into French Indo-China in 1941 the situation grew critical, as two vital considerations entered the picture. First,

the war was getting too close to the Philippines, an American possession. Secondly, but just as important, the Japanese move was a threat to Great Britain. American strategic thinking centered on a "Europe First" policy, and called for the avoidance, if possible, of a second front. But with the fall of France in 1940, Great Britain became the primary bastion of Allied defense against German aggression. In this situation, the United States felt itself called upon to come to the defense of Britain's Asian possessions against the growing Japanese menace as these colonies were deemed essential to British strength.

Nevertheless, in the end, it was the vague American moral commitment to the Open Door—*i.e.*, the policy of maintaining China's territorial integrity—which dragged it into the war in the Pacific. The protracted but abortive Japanese-American diplomatic negotiations in 1940-41 bogged down, not on the Indo-China question, for the Japanese seemed amenable to a withdrawal from the area, but on the American refusal to accede to Japan's insistence, as *quid pro quo*, on its retention of a military presence in North China.

In the mid-1930's, with growing evidence of Japanese designs on Southeast Asia, the U.S. Joint Board of the Army and the Navy was among the advocates of Philippine independence on the strategic ground that the Philippines was indefensible against Japan and, in any case, was only remotely related to the military security of the United States. In this period, President Quezon experienced the bitter frustration of hopelessly calling to the attention of Washington the neglect of Philippine defenses. The Philippines had to make defense preparations practically on its own initiative and with its own resources. Japanese diplomats hinted that Japan was willing to guarantee Philippine independence, then already scheduled for 1946, provided the United States did not discriminate against Japan in the Philippines in matters of immigration and commerce. The United States responded negatively or with studied silence to these overtures.

It was in 1938, and rather belatedly, that the United States finally decided to rearm to meet the menace from the Axis Powers. The American decision involved as well a shift from continental to hemispheric defense, and the strategy involved a restudy of the feasibility of defending the Philippines. By 1941, the American arms build-up was reaching a peak, and its fleet of 100 B-17 strategic bombers was regarded as an awesome striking force. The shoring up of Philippine defenses was scheduled for completion in March or

April 1942. The Japanese struck Pearl Harbor and Manila on December 7 and 8, 1941, and occupied Manila on January 2, 1942.

In 1947, when the Philippines and the United States signed bilateral military bases and military assistance agreements, the decision to station American forces in the Philippines was probably made without any forethought of the important role they would play in the defense of Southeast Asia against Chinese aggression. Thus President Truman ordered on December 4, 1946 the withdrawal of all American troops from the Philippines on the ground that they would be of "little value" and that the "military importance of the Philippines is of lesser weight in our (American) national interest than the future good relations" between the United States and the Philippines. However, the civil war in China was already beginning to give American leaders something to worry about. In 1944-45, the Roosevelt and Truman administrations rebuffed Mao Tse-tung's efforts to establish friendly Sino-American relations in the postwar period. In 1946, U.S. envoy George C. Marshall's efforts to mediate differences between the Communists and the Nationalists failed, and a civil war ensued in which the Nationalists were routed and fled to Taiwan. In Europe the Cold War was in its early stages in 1946-47. By 1949, however, when Chairman Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China in Peking, the Cold War was blowing full blast. In Europe, by this time, the American strategy of defense against communism was based on George Kennan's concept of "Containment." John Foster Dulles, in response to the turn of events in China, extended — some say overextended or misapplied — the policy of containment from Europe to Asia. In operational terms, this meant the need to construct a string of military bases from the Aleutians in a semi-circle clockwise around China to Baghdad. Thus, in 1956 the SEATO, a chain in the link, came into being. The Philippine-American bilateral defense arrangements at last found its true rationale — in the service of the American defense system in relation to China.

Still part of the American reaction to the Communist victory on the mainland was the policy of preventing trade between Japan and China. Before and during World War II, Manchuria and Northeast China supplied Japan with roughly two-thirds of its raw material needs and made up its food deficits. Stripped of its empire and reduced to its four main islands, Japan in the postwar world was under pressure from its businessmen to resume trade with China. To prevent this from happening, the United States in effect subsidized the Japanese economy. Later, to relieve the burden on American

taxpayers and to make up for the loss of Manchuria, the United States helped Japan get access anew to the raw materials of South-east Asia. War reparations became the Trojan horse for Japanese reentry into the Philippines. The United States exerted tremendous influence to scale down the Philippine claim against Japan. Thus, in one more instance, the United States used the Philippines in the interest of its policy toward China.

The best illustration, however, of how the United States used the Philippines to buttress her policy toward China is the long story of China's struggle for representation in the United Nations. For two decades, the United States had opposed the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. In this policy, the Philippines had firmly supported the U.S. position. In 1950, following the U.S. lead, the Philippines voted against an Indian resolution to seat the People's Republic of China and against a Soviet resolution to oust the Republic of China (Taiwan). The following year the Philippines voted for a U.S. resolution calling for a moratorium on the China issue (*i.e.*, that there be no change in Chinese representation). The moratorium held until 1960, with the Philippines voting for it every year. In 1961, the Philippines voted for an American resolution which would make any motion to change the representation of China an "important question," rather than a "procedural question," thereby requiring a two-thirds vote for passage. The same resolution was adopted every year from 1965 to 1970 with the Philippines as co-sponsor with the United States and others.

In 1970, an Albanian resolution calling for the seating of the People's Republic of China in the General Assembly and in the Security Council, as well as the expulsion of Taiwan from all United Nations bodies, won by a simple majority, 51 to 49, and was only blocked by the decision to consider the motion an important question requiring a two-thirds majority. On August 2, 1971, Secretary of State William Rogers announced that the United States would support action which would seat the People's Republic of China but would oppose any move to expel Taiwan. On August 17, the United States submitted a resolution supporting a "two-China" policy. Then, prior to the opening of the 26th General Assembly on September 21, the United States announced its intention to vote for the seating of the People's Republic of China in the Security Council. On October 25, after one week of intense and bitter debate, the General Assembly voted to approve, 76 to 35, with 17 abstentions, the Albanian resolution simultaneously to admit the People's Re-

public of China and to expel Taiwan. The Philippines voted against, as did the United States. This was preceded by the resolution, as in previous years, to consider any motion for the People's Republic of China's entry an important question. The Philippines voted for, along with the United States; but lost, 55 to 59, with 15 abstentions. The People's Republic of China had made it clear that it would not take the U.N. seat if Taiwan were not expelled from all U.N. bodies.

In the middle of the China debate, from October 20 to October 27, Henry Kissinger, then presidential assistant and national security adviser, was in Peking for the second time to make arrangements for President Nixon's historic visit to China which was to take place in February 1972. The chances of blocking the entry of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations and to retain Taiwan's seat, already challenged by the 1971 vote, were badly prejudiced by the timing of the Kissinger mission to China. Kissinger, in fact, stayed on until October 27, a day after the United Nations vote.

The Philippines might well have read the clear handwriting on the wall, and taken care of its own interest by at least abstaining in the 1971 China roll-call vote, since the thrust of developments was already foreshadowed by the Nixon Doctrine of 1969. But instead the Philippines continued to follow blindly the American lead.

It was not until after the actual withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam which precipitated the Indochina debacle of 1975 that the Philippines finally made a call for a review of Philippine-American relations. The present negotiations to radically rearrange Philippine-American relations may once more be viewed as a function of the new China policy of the United States, represented by the Nixon Doctrine.

The Shanghai communique of February 27, 1972, signed by President Nixon and Premier Chou, expressing the desire of the two countries to normalize their diplomatic relations as defined by the Nixon Doctrine, stated that neither party "should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and each is opposed to the efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony." Since historically China had not sought such hegemony, according to one historian, "the obvious inference was that the United States would retrench its power in the Asia-Pacific region. A further inference was that the two governments are now determined to define a new order in the area on the basis not of the preponderance of one power but of an equilibrium among nations."²

American withdrawal from mainland Asia led directly to the necessity of reviewing bilateral arrangements for mutual defense between the Philippines and the United States. The question now was: Defense of what and against whom, when the United States has made its peace with Peking?

The process has gone full cycle.

Our archaeologists and proto-historians tell us of China's shadowy control over the Philippines at the dawn of our history. It is said that Filipino tribal chieftains sent tributary missions to China—the Great Power of the region, the Middle Kingdom. Internally, there has always been a significant China "presence." The Chinese community of Manila was massacred several times during the Spanish period. They were confined to the Parian outside the gates of Old Manila. They were subjected to all sorts of restrictive policies, but they kept coming and stayed, and, as in other parts and in major cities of Southeast Asia, played a dominant economic role. Today, as the metaphor goes, the sleeping Giant that is China has fully awakened and has grown to the stature of a Great Power. Short of saying it with the brutal frankness of Prince Sihanouk who, many years before the actual debacle, had conceded that Cambodia's future is Chinese, Filipinos may as well prepare for a future in which China, by the sheer logic of geography, will be a powerful influence in Philippine affairs.

A distinguished American scholar speculates that "if the United States elects to opt out of the region (of Southeast Asia), a certain contest between the Soviet Union and China for influence will ensue, with the odds strongly favoring China in the long run."³ The United States did withdraw, completely out of Indochina and now considerably from Thailand. Apparently, in the American view, U.S. withdrawal from mainland Southeast Asia, in effect a concession of a sphere of influence to China, does not violate the essence of the new balance of power in the region. But the repercussions do not end at the water's edge on the Asian mainland. Thus, it has become a felt necessity to work out a *modus vivendi* whereby, deprived of the certainty of the American protective umbrella, the Philippines comports itself in the realization that it would not be in its own interest to adopt a policy of deliberate hostility toward China. A new factor has, of course, entered into the current situation, namely, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the Soviet Union. In the considered view of a perceptive Filipino diplomat-scholar: "An opening to Moscow *and* Peking would help

establish an equipoise in Philippine foreign relations, while enlarging our options in international affairs."⁴

A scenario of the future, which may well be the basis for Philippine policy, has been written by Harold C. Hinton, a keen student of the confrontations and shifting alliances of the great powers in Asia and their consequences for lesser nations. He sees the shape of the immediate future in this light:

The United States will . . . remain a 'superpower,' and . . . a Pacific power in the sense that it will maintain significant air and naval forces on islands to the east of the Philippines. Its political and economic interests in the Far East, including continental Asia, will probably also continue to be significant, although not necessarily at a level as high as in the past. The American military presence on the continent of Asia and the offshore islands, including Japan and Okinawa, will probably continue to decline and eventually approach zero. American ground forces are not likely to fight in Asia again in the 'foreseeable' future, and even air and naval action in support of friendly government is likely to be conducted, if at all, much more reluctantly and circumspectly than . . . in the past.⁵

The Future of Philippine-American Relations

We are impelled on this course of action by one of two overwhelming realities of our time, namely, the dramatic retrenchment of American power not only in Southeast Asia but in the world. At the end of World War II, the United States was not only the richest nation on earth; it was also the most powerful militarily, possessing a monopoly of nuclear weapons. Since then the "Nuclear Club" has proliferated, and the Soviet Union has attained nuclear parity with the United States. With the rise to primacy of petrodollars, the United States is no longer banker to the world. No longer the policeman of the world, the United States is no longer the enforcer of world morality either. In the wake of this turn of events, it would be unwise for Filipinos to continue committing their nation fully to the international program of the United States, or to feel, as President Roxas did in 1946, that "our safest course is to follow in the glistening wake of America."

Philippine-American relations during the past three quarters of a century have been characterized by that specious phrase, "special relations." By force of circumstance these ties are slowly giving way to less emotional and more realistic ones. And so, for sometime now, the United States and the Philippines have been according to

each other something like a "third country" treatment and have suffered no deleterious effects as a consequence.

The United States will, of course, continue to influence Philippine affairs but only because no developing nation anywhere can afford to ignore this superpower. For one thing, Philippine trade depends heavily upon the American GSP as a life line, and she needs capital development funds, of which the United States, directly or through multilateral channels, is the most important provider. If it is "special relations" with everyone, then it is really special relations with no one.

In any case, the era of the Filipino as a "little brown American" is over. It is not to be expected, of course, that the habits of thought, the intellectual commitment, cultural taste (dress, music and dancing, movies, the American language, even prejudices), and political institutions, all born of the long Western—specifically, American—association, can be discarded overnight. But the dream is over; there only remain lingering but receding fond memories of the past, and even these will tend to be forgotten in the rush of today's dramatic and overwhelming developments. Attitudes are changing and continue to change. The new Filipino has torn off his Western swaddling-clothes and put on another garb which better befits his newly discovered Asian identity. He is an assertive nationalist, even though at the moment he seems to lean somewhat too heavily on his "Asian-ness" as a crutch. On the one hand, questions are beginning to be raised which were incapable of being raised before; for example, whether there still exists any mutuality of interest binding Filipinos and Americans; on the other hand, there seems to be a growing sense, fancied or real, of common Asian interests. It is a development as amazing as it is significant, considering the closeness of Filipino-American friendship and blind alliance lasting for three quarters of a century. But perhaps such a development was to be expected. It was only a matter of time. The time has come.

It bears repeating that from the American standpoint, the new relations with the Philippines are a function of its reassessment of the place of Southeast Asia in the light of its detente with China. The Sino-American detente, in turn, is a function of Russia's attainment of nuclear parity with the United States as well as the retrenchment of American power around the world. In fact, as early as 1961, President Kennedy was saying: "We must face the fact that the United States is neither omnipotent nor omniscient—that we are only six

per cent of the world's population — that we cannot impose our will upon the other 94 per cent — that we cannot right every wrong or reverse each adversity — and that therefore there cannot be an American solution to every world problem." Today some thinking Americans can be heard saying soberly: "What's wrong about the United States being the *second* most powerful nation in the world?" The Filipino might answer: "Nothing, especially if the most powerful nation in the world is also one's friend!"

Even as Uncle Sam, overextended abroad, is looking homeward, Juan de la Cruz is casting his glance outward. In the words of President Marcos, uttered in Peking's Great Hall of the People in June 1975, "We are now going into the world."

In the future, therefore, Philippine-American relations will, of necessity, have to reflect these prevailing moods in the two countries. In so doing, the Philippines may appear at times to be working at cross purposes with the United States as she develops her new policy orientations. This would be more apparent than real, and it would largely be because the Philippines needs to respond to issues and developments according to the dictates of its national interests, as the United States itself has always done. The oil crisis and the Muslim secessionist rebellion, for instance, have compelled the Philippines to adopt a pro-Arab, anti-Israeli policy in the Middle East, which clearly goes against the grain of American policy. In the process, Philippine-American relations have come to be one between two countries relating to each other more in a spirit of friendly coexistence rather than of close alliance which was what bound them together for so long in the past.

The Current Negotiations

In these circumstances and in this mood, the two countries have agreed to sit down together to make realistic readjustments in their relations through the renegotiation of their network of trade and security agreements.

The outcome is bound to be influenced by the great disparity in leverage available to each party. The United States is capable of dangling over the Philippines such things as trade preferences and development assistance. Thus, on the one hand, it has been made known, through the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, that for the U.S. President to be able to issue a waiver to make Philippine export articles eligible for duty-free or preferential treatment under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (US-GSP), it is necessary as a

prior condition for the Philippines to conclude with the United States a Treaty of Economic Cooperation and Development which will replace the lapsed Laurel-Langley agreement, and that "that treaty would have to be in force before such waiver could be granted." The stakes are high. In the words of the Committee: "Should no such waiver be granted for Philippine products it is estimated that 75-80 per cent of the Philippine exports would not be eligible for such preferences." A full third of our exports go to the United States. Not only are we under pressure to push the stalled negotiations; we are also under pressure to agree to the American terms for such an economic treaty. The American terms are likely to include provisions for favorable treatment of U.S. investments and export products under the guise of "non-discrimination."

On the other hand, foreign aid has always been an instrument of foreign policy for the achievement of strategic purposes. We have earlier cited instances of the American use of foreign aid as both carrot and stick. Secretary Kissinger admits openly: "It stands to reason that when a country has a resource, it keeps in mind the degree of friendship that other countries show for it before it distributes this resource."⁶

The United States is also in a position to interdict vital supplies of oil, arms, and equipment. At the worst, she may even employ the dreaded CIA, which is widely known to have subverted or tried to subvert some of America's own allies. By such means, the United States can weaken the Philippine government leadership and try to replace it with a new leadership more hospitable to American suggestions. The United States is adept in the art of exploiting the weaknesses and disabilities of other countries for political ends, as Filipinos have learned from their experience with the politics of American aid and trade in the 1940's. Ironically, it was the anti-imperialist Woodrow Wilson who provided the rule-of-thumb for the protection of American interests abroad which every American president has since followed. He wrote in 1907: "Since trade ignores national boundaries, and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed against him must be battered down. Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be outraged in the process."

In the negotiations with the United States, the Philippines has few counterweights to balance the lop-sided scales. Although it can

make the most of its strategic value to the United States in the new quadrilateral balance of power in Asia, the Philippines admittedly represents "a mere drop in the bucket" of American interests. Even so, according to the Wilsonian formula, "no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused." And thus, it will be the classic case of a little mouse sharing the same cage with an elephant, fearing for its very life even when the elephant only makes an innocuous movement to sit down.

Ominously, State Department spokesmen leaked to the press on January 11, 1976, the determination of the United States to pursue a "hard line" policy towards nations voting against her on vital issues in the United Nations when their votes clearly do not involve their own national interests. It was broadly hinted that denial or a cut in foreign aid would be the likely means of expressing American displeasure. The use of this weapon, of course, will not be limited to issues at the United Nations. As noted earlier, a story appeared in the press to the effect that the 1976 military aid requests to Congress contained no allocation for the Philippines and that any aid was contingent on the outcome of the negotiations on the American bases. Though the story was quickly denied the next day, the point was already made and it was intended that the Filipinos should not miss it.

But the Philippines today is not likely to panic — nor should she. So long as she does not, she may come off relatively better in the current negotiations than in the past. The reason for this is that this time it has prepared the ground carefully and well. Through the dynamism of "development diplomacy" the Philippines has succeeded in satisfying its most pressing requirements in a world-wide network of old and new relations, including diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union. It will, therefore, negotiate from a position of relative strength. Having more space to maneuver in, the Filipino negotiator can meet his American counterpart with a greater feeling of self-confidence and self-reliance. More options are available to him, and he has more counters to use.

All previous negotiations between Filipinos and Americans, whether concerning the terms of trade (free trade vs. nonreciprocal trade, inclusion or noninclusion in the US-GSP); rehabilitation funds, U.S. war damage payments, or Japanese war reparations; vested rights and parity rights; developmental foreign aid and its *quid pro quo*; or defense arrangements (military bases and military

assistance), were usually — often unilaterally — weighted in favor of the Americans. Whenever the Americans gave concessions, it was calculated to preserve the American advantage. Almost always the explanation for this has been the absence of a Filipino clout or the insufficiency of the leverage available at hand. Friendship, close political alliance, and “special relations,” all rooted in history, seemed to count for naught. Thus, in the postwar years the Filipinos were disillusioned when they saw that the highest American favors seem to have been reserved for former enemies or neutrals.

At great cost, the Filipinos have learned the hard lesson that they cannot look to anyone else but themselves for the protection and promotion of their national interests. O. D. Corpuz, doyen of Filipino political scientists, has aptly observed: “In a society where obligations of friendship are regarded as inviolate matters of honor, it was disappointing to see the U.S. demand a price for each concession made.”

But more important than the emotional reactions are the “lessons that were not lost upon many Filipinos.” Again, in Corpuz’s words:

Filipino negotiators could not fail to be impressed by the efficient and business like manner in which their American counterparts effectively promoted and protected the interests of American business groups of the U.S. government itself, in each case against the interests of Filipino nationals and of the Philippine government. More and more, therefore, it became evident that the national interests of a country are best promoted and protected by itself, not through a sentimental reliance on the benevolence of its friends. Every issue of negotiation between the former sovereign and dependency showed in unmistakable terms that the defense of Filipino interests must and can be entrusted only to Filipinos. Thus, although a sentimental trust in America will linger for a while among many Filipinos, it will count for less in their approach to Filipino-American relations.”⁷

In terms of legal power, President Marcos enjoys an advantage over President Ford. Under the 1973 Philippine Constitution, as stated by President Marcos himself, the President has the power “to enter into treaties and other international agreements,” as well as “to review and, if necessary, to negotiate for the modification” of such treaties and agreements.

By way of contrast, as expressed by Professor Edward Corwin, “The U.S. Constitution is an invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing foreign policy.” As seen by President Marcos, “commitments by American Presidents would appear to have little value

except as forms of psychological reassurance, since it is clear that they cannot, by Presidential fiat, diminish or expand the contents of the treaty without Congressional consent." The American president shares the power to make international agreements with the U.S. Congress, which, in recent times, particularly on account of executive blunders in Vietnam and elsewhere and in the wake of the Watergate scandal, has been reasserting its role in the making of foreign policy. Thus, abroad, the United States does not seem to speak authoritatively with one voice. Compounding the situation with respect to the current Philippine-American negotiations is the forthcoming presidential elections. For the duration of the political campaign, when politics do not stop at the water's edge, and until the American people shall have decided the fate of the unelected incumbent President, the conduct of American foreign affairs will be suffering from a paralysis of the policy-making function.

"The situation in the Philippines is quite different on the matter of powers." President Marcos holds. "There is no problem and no question about the power of the President, whether under the old Constitution or under the new one, to enter into treaties and to change and amend them. . . . Under the new Constitution, 'the Prime Minister may enter into international agreements as the national welfare and interest may require.' Furthermore, 'all acts done by the incumbent President shall be part of the law of the land, shall remain valid, legal, binding and effective even after the lifting of martial law.'"

President Marcos therefore enters into negotiations with the United States with a firm hand. The vacillation is on the other side of the table. The American panel will understandably procrastinate until the American people's electoral mandate is known. This will have to be borne in mind by our own negotiators.

President Marcos's main weapons in the current negotiations will be his great pragmatism and his candor, qualities he has time and again amply demonstrated. He is a skilled negotiator who can be expected to make the most of every little advantage. He is a master in the art of choosing wisely among a number of available options. The innovations under President Marcos's leadership and the adjustment of Philippine foreign policy to the new realities and power relationships in this region of the world, have broadened the options open to the country and strengthened the hand of the Filipinos in the current negotiations with the Americans. China and the Soviet Union have become relevant to the negotiations, and as one Filipino intellectual puts it, "the re-examination of the postwar military

treaties with Washington begins the Philippine effort to position somewhat more equidistantly its relationship with the United States, the Soviet Union and China."⁸ President Marcos can marshal solidly behind him on relevant issues the moral force of the ASEAN and a newfound ally, the Third World, as well as a Filipino nation now fully awakened to its true national interests. Above all, he has cautioned his people to rely on their own strength and on their own resources. Let us, he has told them, be "prepared to account for ourselves." In Peking, where he found an anchor for his convictions, President Marcos said: "If we are to engage our emotions it should be based on our authentic identity as Asians. It is on this basis that we re-examine the world, our region, and ourselves."

NOTES

¹Peter W. Stanley, "The Forgotten Philippines, 1790-1946," in Ernest R. May and James C. Thomson, Jr. (eds.), *American-East Asian Relations: A Survey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 316.

²Akira Iriye, *The Cold War in Asia* (Englewood/Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 8.

³Robert A. Scalapino, *Asia and the Road Ahead: Issues for the Major Powers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 298.

⁴Salvador P. Lopez, "New Directions in Philippine Foreign Policy" (Quezon City: U.P. Law Center, June 10, 1975), p. 19. He pointed out that "for an analogous reason, the People's Republic of Mongolia, North Korea, and new Vietnam and Cambodia as well — are careful to maintain very close links with the Soviet Union," *Ibid.*

⁵*Three and a Half Powers: The New Balance in Asia* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975), p. 294.

⁶Henry A. Kissinger, "Current Direction of U.S. Foreign Policy," *Dialogue*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1975), pp. 6-7.

⁷O. D. Corpuz, *The Philippines* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 19-20.

⁸Juan Gatbonton, "Crucial First Phase Completed," *Times Journal*, June 13, 1976, p. 4.