

**FROM MARCOS TO AQUINO — U.S.
Role in the Democratic Revolution of the Philippines.**

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PREFACE

Since the 18th Century 'French Revolution', no other revolution had impressed the United States as did the democratic revolution of the Philippines. I have made an humble attempt to analyse the different steps of the course of the revolution and its aftermath in my modest dissertation.

My first chapter the introductory chapter, reflects how did the strategic location of the Philippines make it a victim of foreign colonisation which ultimately paved the way for a 'special relationship' with the United States by conceding it two important bases.

In second chapter, the political and economic crisis has been analysed in two sections.

The third chapter the 'election and its aftermath' deals with the historic presidential election of 1986 which reflected the determination of the Filipinos and crucial and pragmatic role of the Reagan administration in bringing Corazon Aquino as 'People's President'.

The fourth chapter has taken an attempt to discuss the peculiar age - old problems those the Aquino administration is trying to solve under the close - watch of the United States.

My last chapter - the conclusion concludes that Corazon Aquino 'came' and 'saw' the Philippines but 'conquered' the

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throne of the President when the United States had intervened to get President Ferdinand E. Marcos dethroned.

As no dissertation can be produced in isolation, I wish to express my earnest gratitude to my esteemed Supervisor, Dr. B.K. Shrivastava, Professor, Centre for American and West European Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi whose criticisms and suggestions proved invaluable not only for my work, but also in learning to live life.

To my friends, Anita, Sudhir and Dr, Chintamani Mahapatra, who encouraged me at every step, this is a poor way to express my thanks. Nevertheless, it is extended with a deep emotions.

I am also extending my thanks to my typist Ms. Sonia Malani for her extremely cooperative and charming behaviour.

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I am greatly indebted to the State Government of ORISSA for providing me with a Scholarship which enabled me to undertake this work.

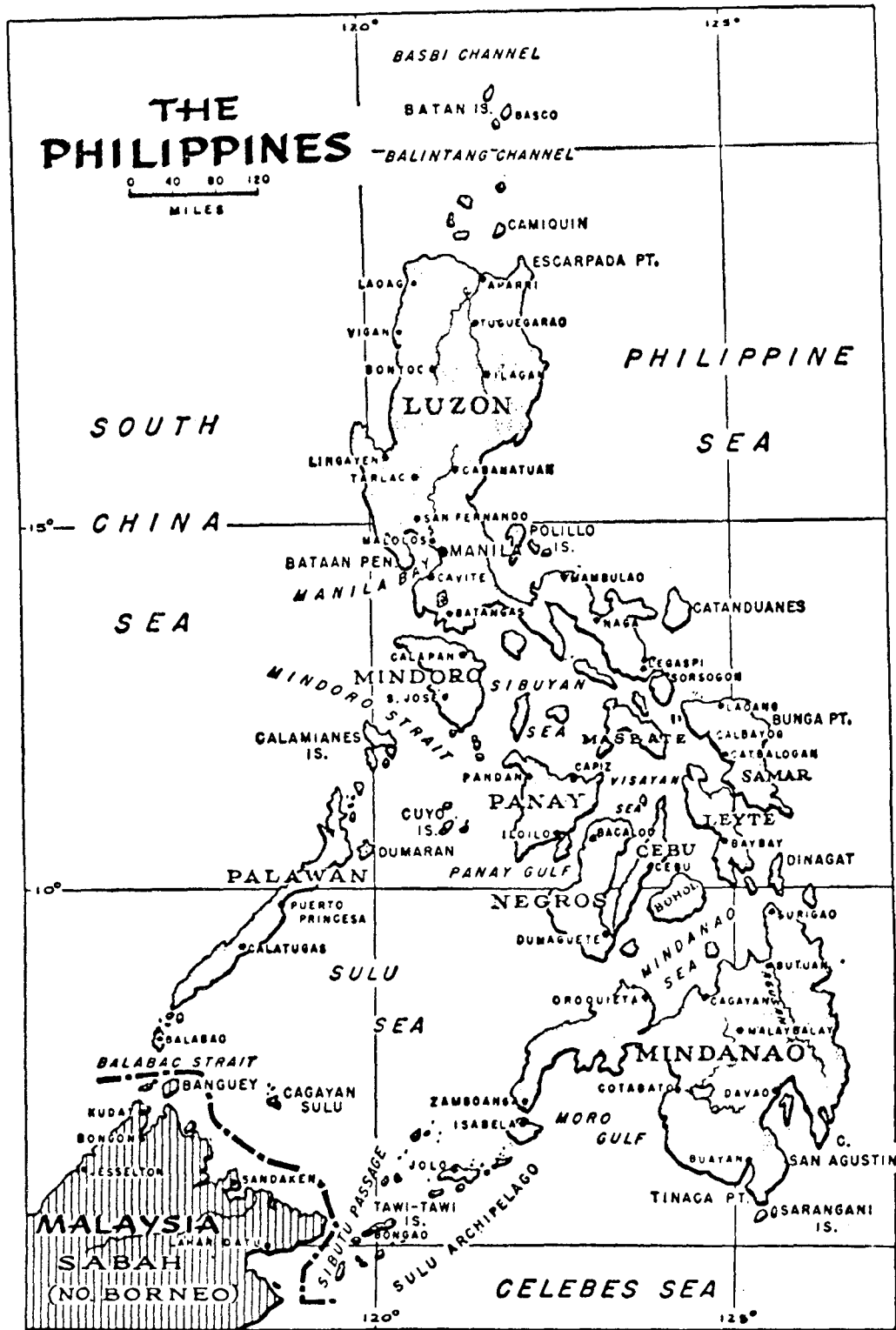
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Finally, I am trying to express my sincere gratitude to my beloved parents whose affection, inspiration and Co-operation have been a constant source of blessings for me.

Sanghamitra Patt Nayak
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CHAPTER - 1

PROLOGUE



PEARL OF THE ORIENT

"The Philippines is one of nature's glories, and the archipelago has a splendor that catches a new visitor by surprise. The fabled sunsets across Manila Bay are so dramatic that the garish color photos used for postcards pale against nature. The rich green of the tropical rain forest, the dance of sunlight on the South China Sea, the fragile promise of newly planted wet rice, and the majesty of cumulus clouds piled tens of thousands of feet into the sky are only a few of the many facets of natural beauty on display in the Philippine Islands".¹

The Philippines is the manifestation of divine beauty on the earth. But it is not only its natural beauty that has attracted the attention of the world but also its location on the World map. It is situated at the apex of the World's greatest archipelago in the Pacific Ocean that has been said to have possessed a large commerce in its bosom than the Atlantic, lying on vital trade routes in the Pacific, it experienced jarring interventions by Spain,

1. David J. Steinberg, The Philippines A Singular And A Plural Place, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1982), P.7.

America and Japan. Describing the interventions as the sorrow of the Philippines, a Filipino historian wrote: "The Filipino people have had the misfortune of being 'liberated' four times during their entire history. First came the Spaniards who 'liberated' them from the 'enslavement of the devil', next, came the Americans who 'liberated' them from Spanish oppression, then the Japanese who 'liberated' them from American 'Imperialism,' then the Americans again who 'liberated' them from the 'Japanese fascists', each leaving most profound effects on the people".²

SPAIN :

The Philippines had slipped into Spanish rule with the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan in 1521 for 377 years.

The Filipino became restive under the Spanish rule resulting in frequent uprisings. The most important of these began in 1896 under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo. As the Spaniards were not very optimistic of achieving significant success against the rebels, the Governor

2. Renato Constantino, A History of the Philippines: From Spanish Colonisation to the Second World War, (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1975), p.10.

General Primo de Rivera decided to arrive at a settlement with Aguinaldo by calling for Truce of Biyak-na-bato on 18 November 1897. The truce offer provided for a general amnesty for those who would lay down their arms. Aguinaldo and his men were to go into voluntary exile in Hongkong with the Spaniards promising to give him 800,000 pesos in instalments.

THE US TOOK THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

The interests of establishing itself as a Pacific power made the United States plunge into the war with Spain. When the war broke out between Spain and US in 1898, Commodore George Dewey had been instructed to attack Manila. To make the situation more favourable to the US, the exiled revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo was used as an instrument against Spain. The American Consul Spencer Prett met Aguinaldo and made him believe that the aim of the US was to liberate the Philippines. Aguinaldo took this to mean that after the Spanish were defeated the Philippines would be free, and the Americans would go back. Encouraged by the promise of the US, Aguinaldo rushed to the Philippines on 19 May 1898. He urged the Filipinos to rise against Spain.

Armed with exemplary spirit and superior arms supplied by the US the Filipinos fought the battle to defeat the Spanish troops successfully. On 12 June 1898, Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Philippines at Kawait. But the independence thus gained had to be surrendered to the United States.

The real objective of the US policy came to the fore after signing the Treaty of Paris on 10 December, 1898. Spain formally ceded the Philippines to the United States on 21 December 1898. The President William McKinley proclaimed that the US did not come as invaders or conquerors, but as a protector of the Philippines. He did not bother to ask whether Filipinos wanted to be protected. Nor did he explain against whom the protection was being provided. Who gave the mandate to the United States to serve as the "big brother" of the Philippines? The "imperialists" in the United States like Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge and A.T. Mahan passionately wanted their country to have an oversea empire like other European powers. They had their way and the United States acquired the Philippines.

Enraged by the US decision of not conceding independence to the Philippines, Emilio Aguinaldo declared

war against the US on 4 February 1899. But he was captured on 23 March 1901, by Colonel Frederick Funston. On 1st April 1901, he took the oath of allegiance to the US. On 19 April, he issued a manifesto to the people calling upon them to stop fighting and accept American rule.

In 1916, the American congress passed the Jones Law which permitted greater Filipino participation in running the government. But it did not satisfy the Filipino people who sent numerous missions to the US demanding independence for the Philippines. President Manuel Quezon led a mission to persuade the US congress to pass another independence law that came as Tyding - Mc Duffie Act on 24th March 1934. The Act provided for the retention of 'naval reservations' and 'fuelling stations'. The Act also provided for a commonwealth period of 10 years prior to the grant of full independence.

JAPANESE OCCUPATION - THE THIRD CONQUEST

The Philippines was expecting dangers from Japan as they were suspected of espionage activities. The dangers were described in these words: "The Philippines is groomed to fit into the Southward scheme of the Empire of the Rising

sun. The peaceful economic penetration and the propaganda and espionage activities of the Japanese; the virtual encirclement of the archipelago by the islands under the control of Japan the existence of a potential 'fifth column' within, and economic unpreparedness for military defence - all point to the grave menace of a Third conquest."³

The Filipino fear became a stark reality when the Japanese bombed the city of Davao in the Pearl Harbor incident in 1941. The Japanese succeeded in capturing Corregidor and Batan where the Americans had set up military bases,

In order to win over the Filipinos, the Japanese granted mock independence and a constitution. On 14 October 1943, they had the Republic of the Philippines inaugurated in Manila with Jose P. Laurel as President.

The United States could understand the Japanese tactics of granting independence which had been the most cherisable desire of the Philippines. Therefore, to neutralize the Japanese strategy of winning the Filipinos to their side and to retain its hold on the Philippines, the

3. S.F.Vak, Jr., "Third Conquest of the Philippines", Pacific Affairs, (Vancouver, B.C.) Vol.14, No.3, September 1941, P.299.

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a resolution passed by the US congress setting a date for independence. After the death of President Quezon in 1 August 1944, the Vice-President Osmena took over as President on 23 October 1944. But with the dropping of atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima the Japanese occupation came to an end. Elections were held on 23 April 1946 and Manuel A. Roxas was elected as the President. The US President Harry S. Truman recognized the independent Philippines.

POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD -1946 TO 1972.

BASES :

The US interests in the Philippines was realised in the aftermath of the Spanish-American war. The Philippines was then considered as 'pickets of the Pacific' to serve as a military outpost to preserve protect and promote American interests in the Pacific. The strategic location of the Philippines prompted the US to demand two bases namely, the Clark Air Field and Subic Naval Base. The Military Base Agreement (MBA) was signed on 14 March, 1947. In the agreement both of the parties agreed to deserve fullest and closest military cooperation and to

integrate the US and the Philippine military plans for mutual protection. The agreement was understood to remain valid up to 99 years.

The bases were to remain under full authority and control of the US military forces with free access for US ships, air craft and personnel. The MBA has undergone forty-two amendments since it came in to force. The most significant of them was the agreement reached on 16 September 1966 that set down that the military bases would continue for another twenty-five years.

The primary reason behind the Philippines's grant of bases to the US was to secure American economic assistance for the reconstruction of its war damaged economy. Regarding the US expenditure on the bases it was said as follows: "In 1969, the US spent as much as \$133 million on its bases in the Philippines."⁴

COMMUNISM WITH THE CHINESE SUPPORT

As the Republic of the Philippines has regarded as pro-American, the seed of communism in the new-born Philippines was not given a chance to sprout. The emergence of the Republic of China posed a serious threat to

4. Man Mohini Kaul, The Philippines And the Southeast Asia (New Delhi, Radiant Pub.1978), P.45.

the Philippines. The Huks - the communist guerrillas threatened the government. The guerrillas believed to be encouraged by China. President Quirino requested the US for more aid to ease the situation as the communists thrived on capturing the poverty of the people.

THE KOREAN WAR

The outbreak of the Korean war exposed the US-Philippines relations to sever strain. While North Korea was supported by the Soviet Union the United States led the free world in support of South Korea. The Filipino government extended its full cooperation to the United States. It demonstrated its utility in serving America's strategic objectives in Asia-Pacific. The US bases in the country proved to be extremely useful and the Philippines manpower contributed to the military operation. Therefore, when the US launched its anti - communist offensive in Asia, the Philippines had an important place in it.

With the inherent weaknesses in the economic system and President Quirino's incapability as an administrator, the Philippines had to increasingly depend on the United States for resolving any crisis. The vulnerable position of the Philippines dragged it into the politics of the

cold war by "identifying its interests totally with that of the US. In the beginning President Quirino was not in favour of sending troops to Korea. But under American pressure, he changed his stand by stating that: "there can be no half-way house between slavery and freedom it (The Philippines) has ranged itself on the side of the free world and in contributing its share of the sacrifice to keep it free. This is why our boys are fighting in Korea."⁵

The Korean war had a dramatic impact on US-Japan relations. The US realized that its interests would be served much better by treating Japan as a friend and ally than as a former enemy who can not be relied. The US had supported the demand for reparation from Japan for damage suffered during second world war. But after the Korean war the US changed its position.

The Philippines was not in favour of showing any flexibility towards Japan but it was compelled to accept the US arguments. The United States argued that "the fact is that a nation situated as in Japan can barely pay for

5. Republic of the Philippines, Official Gazette,
Vol.47, No.7, July 1951, P.3405.

its essential imports in food and raw materials. To require reparation payment means either that the US must pay the reparation bill or there will be default preceded by wide-spread starvation and unemployment. This would assure the conquest of Japan by communism and not be in the real interest of the Philippines."⁶

Since its independence, the Philippines was not only compelled to follow the US policy in its foreign affairs but also faced its interventions in its internal affairs.

The election of Ramon Magsaysay as the President in 1953 provided an apt illustration of the US intervention in the Philippines. During the administration of President Quirino, the communist guerrillas were very much engaged in the terrorist activities. This period was also marked by the widespread corruption in the government. It made the US to ponder over the matter which otherwise would endanger the US interests in the Philippines by giving communism a chance to strengthen its root.

6. Department of State Bulletin, (Washington DC), Vol. 24 No. 610, 12 March, 1951, P. 405.

Thus, to install a pro-American government that could encounter the problems of the Philippines effectively, the US administration carved out a plan. Colonel Landsdale was the brain behind the action. At one stage during the election campaign it was feared that the anti-Quirino vote might be divided between Magsaysay and Carlos P. Romulo. It was understood that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) conducted on-the-spot negotiations leading to the withdrawal of Romulo. Thus, the result was that Magsaysay got elected by a thumping majority as the President of the Philippines. President Eisenhower told a press conference: "This is the way we like to see an election carried out."⁷

MARTIAL LAW

The US administration was also exposed when it did not question the imposition of Martial law in 1972 by President Ferdinand Marcos. The undeterred oppressive and corrupt regime paved the way for a great crisis in the Philippines which was thus described by an analyst: "The

7. J. B. Smith, Portrait of a Cold Warrior (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976) P.113.

social unrest which had reached almost cataclysmic proportions in the middle of 1972, was a condition that had been generated both by the factious nature of partisan politics and the failure of the country's ruling elite, after more than two and a half decades of political independence to reallocate and redirect the wealth of the society to the benefit of the majority of the Filipino people."⁸

The Martial law was imposed in September 1972. It was viewed as an instrument to perpetuate the Marcos regime. In the pre-martial law period the economic and social lives of the Filipinos were dominated by the Marcos crony - a small group of family members and close friends whose political power was derived from the economic resources that they controlled. Commenting on the US toleration of the crony monopolisation of the economic and political spheres of the Philippines a scholar wrote that "the political and economic positions of these groups were further reinforced not only by their close economic links with the US but also by their identity with American interests in the Philippines"⁹.

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8. M.Rajaretnam ed. , Trends In the Philippines , (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1978) P.3.
9. David F.Roth, "The deterioration and Reconstruction of National Political Parameters: The Philippines During 1970s", Asian Survey, (California), Vol.11, No.9, September, 1973, PP.812-13.

Martial law proscribed the political dissent and freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly, and all kinds of strikes and picketing were curtailed. Congress and political parties were suspended. The judiciary was placed under the control of the President.

In the economic sphere the purchasing power of Peso had decreased by more than 3/5 of its original value in 1972. It was evident that the Marcos' government, interested in looting the country had neither any interest in preventing the Philippines slide into economic chaos nor the capacity to do so. It was able to maintain its hold over power with the support of armed forces. And so long the bulk of the armed forces remained loyal, there was no way by which Marcos reign could come to an end. In the mean while the economy of the Philippines continued to decline rapidly. The consumer price index for all items for the whole of the Philippines (1965 = 100) increased from 114.5 points in 1969 to 179.7 points in August 1972. Food prices increased much faster from 116.8 points in 1969 to 197.8 points in August 1972. Cost of clothing increased from 118.7 points in 1969 to 194.7 points in 1972.

At the same time the real wage rates of both skilled and unskilled labourers dropped from an average of 106.9 points in 1969 to about 86.6 points in 1972.

Apart from the shattered economy there was social unrest. The Marcos regime was challenged by the groups who were fundamentally opposed to the institution of Martial Law. The military opposition came mainly from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the communists. The second group was the non-military opposition that included priests and Old Society Members.

The economic, social and political crisis deepened with the assassination of Benigno Aquino the arch-rival of President Ferdinand Marcos at Manila Airport in 1983. Till the year of 1983, the US administration was the silent supporter of the Marcos regime. But when the people rose against Marcos and his cronies and it became evident that his government had lost all support and was in no position to stem the rot, then the US broke its silence and demanded that President Marcos seek a fresh mandate from the people.

It ultimately ushered a new era of People's power in February 1986, in the history of the Philippines by crowning Corazon Aquino as the President of the people.

CHAPTER - II

CRISIS

Since the French Revolution of 1789, it has been self-evident that "crisis is the mother of Revolution". The democratic revolution of the Phillipines is no exception. Since the declaration of "Martial Law" in September 1972 by the then President Ferdinand Marcos, the shadow of crisis had slowly but steadily engulfed the Filipino society in general and its economy and politics in particular.

President Ferdinand Marcos declared 'Martial Law' on the pretext of prevailing situation that can be characterised as remote and immediate causes. The remote causes include general deterioration of law and order and national disasters. Volcanic eruptions, a devastating earthquake and severe droughts had occurred during Marcos's term. The typhoons that hit the Philippines in 1971 caused widespread damage. Then followed the worst floods in Filipino history, resulting in widespread destruction. The sudden spurt in kidnappings, robberies and murders was perhaps due in large part to the desperation caused by these natural disasters and to other economic problems.

But, Marcos's reaction to these developments was of great concern. When the ineffective handling of these disasters gave rise to protests and demonstrations against his

government, he held communists responsible for it. The communists were branded as most dangerous enemy of the Marcos government. They were accused of throwing grenades during a Liberal Party rally at Plaza Miranda at which nine persons were killed and ninety injured, including eight Senatorial candidates. This incident came as a gift to Marcos. He suspended the writ of habeas corpus. When Senator Benigno S. Aquino Jr., and Jose Diokno protested, Marcos called them communists and said he would do everthing possible to prevent Aquino's becoming president.

As kidnappings and bomb exploision continued, both Senator Diokno and Aquino charged that Marcos was using if not creating these incidents as a justification for perpetuating his power. Finally, Senator Aquino charged in the Senate on 15 September that "sources in the Philippine Armed Forces had revealed to him plans for 'Oplan Sagittarius', which would impose "Martial Law"¹ Marcos denied the allegation and assured the Senate that he would consult it before taking any such drastic action.

1. Lela Garner Noble, "Politics in the Marcos Era", in John Bresnan (ed), Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era And Beyond, (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1986), P.84.

But on the fateful night of 22 September 1972, Defense Secretary Enrile's car was ambushed but there was no injuries. Recently, Joan Ponce Enrile admitted that the incident was preplanned by the government to serve as the justification for Marcos's declaration of martial law.

The proclamation of martial law made President Ferdinand E. Marcos an authoritarian ruler without any limitation on his power. No doubt, attempts were made to show that Marcos' rule was not totalitarian, but it was a distinction without a difference. It was described that "Ferdinand E. Marcos did not preside over a totalitarian government in the Philippines. He was just an authoritarian and that means using guns, goons and gold to maintain power".² The authoritarianism resulted in the degradation of the determinants of democracy by the non-participation of people in the political process, suppression of freedom and rampant corruption. The Congress and political parties were suspended and the judiciary was placed under the control of the President who assumed all powers of government. Political dissent was proscribed and freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly and all kind of mass action, like labour strikes and picketing were curtailed.

2. The Hartford Courant, Editorials on File (New York) 26 (January, 1986), p.97.

Chibu Lagman a reporter of Manila Television recalled how mass media was controlled by the Marcos government. His final story before he was disallowed to report was on account of an aborted ambush of Philippine Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile. He said his report portrayed the ambush attempt as a staged event intended by the government to make people think there were subversive plots to assassinate government leaders and overthrow the regime of President Marcos. Lagman claimed that his report on the ambush "was among those used by the authorities as examples of anti-government reporting."³

By immobilising the country's mass media, the government created a communications vacuum which it could fill for itself. The first publication allowed to resume operations was the pro-Marcos family news paper. "The Philippine Daily Express, The Times Journal and its sister publications People's - journal and People's Tonight were owned and operated by President's brother-in-law and the Philippine Ambassador to US Benjamin Romualdez. Major broadcast facilities also reopened under the control of friends and relatives of the regime.

3. Joel Dresang, "Authoritarian controls And News Media. In the Philippines", Contemporary South-east Asia (Singapore), Vol.7, No.1 (1985-86), P.34.

Marcos's style of authoritarianism was also reflected on his various policies pertaining to industry and agriculture. During the period of 1973 to 1975, Marcos "New Society" was mainly based on the development of the countryside. But during the period from 1976 to 1980, focus shifted away from countryside toward the formulation of national representative structures and modern capital - intensive economic projects, with a corresponding increase in power of the 'cronies' that included Marcos family members friends and relatives.

The agrarian reform programme excluded landless farmers tenants on farms which were less than seven hectares in size and workers whose lands used to produce anything other than rice or corn,

Policy in regard to sugar was also defective. Planners decided to expand the sugar industry and to withhold large portions of the crop from the market in 1974 presuming that prices would continue to rise. Instead, increased price reduced demand leaving the Philippine government with stock-piles exceeding its storage capacities.

To gain control of the situation, the government raised the domestic price on sugar, refused loans to marginal producers. It exempted land transferred from sugar in to rice or corn production from the application of land reform decrees.

These measures badly affected wage laborers, small farmers and consumers. Workers on sugar lands were already among the worst paid and were denied the right to protest their situation by the land lords and government officials.

In a broader sense, it was reported that the "Philippine (agrarian reform programs were) tied neither to any integrated view of the national economy and its principal trends (e.g. industrialization, urbanization, rising population), nor to any explicit vision of the national political future."⁴

Planning of major infrastructure and industrial projects seemed to have a negative impact on both the natural and human environment. Manila modernization programme resulted in the demolition of squatters' housing and the deportation of the squatters themselves to places outside Manila where neither jobs nor adequate relief aid were available. From the mid 1970s to 1983, the composition of government spending shifted from infrastructure projects to the area of corporate equity investment and other capital outlays. It was reported: "The government's share of construction has risen to 40 percent

4. Overholt William, "Land Reform In the Philippines" Asian Survey (California), Vol.16 (May 1976), P.428.



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much of it for questionable projects such as the now abandoned \$ 1 billion Manila Bay reclamation and building complex, official residences overspecialized showcase medical centers and a variety of buildings for government agencies and corporations. The list also included more exotic projects, including a lavish arts and culture center, the brain child of Imelda Marcos, wife of the President, and an uncompleted \$ 8 - million Mount Rushmore - style bust of Marcos erected in Northern Luzon."⁵

5. Robert A. Manning, "Philippines In Crisis", Foreign Affairs (New York), Vol.63 (1984/85), P.395.

SECTION - 1
(ECONOMIC CRISIS)

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY - IN A CRYING STATE

The future of Philippine economy was darkened by the upward rising inflation. It reached 40 per cent in 1974 that caused real wages to decline by about 20 per cent. It was reported: "In the year of 1984 the latest non-official reports are that consumer prices rising by over 50 per cent a year in June. The first four months of the year had seen a steady acceleration in the rate, a process boosted in June by the further sharp devaluation of the currency. As a direct consequence of this, increases averaging 14 per cent were decreed for ten staples including rice, pork, chicken, eggs soap and school supplies. In addition petroleum product prices were raised by an average 25 per cent, in the second increases in two months (in May the average increase was 8%). With these increases and the full impact of the Peso's slide (which is likely to continue) yet to work through, there is no likelihood of any easing in inflation during the Second half of 1984, and the expectation is that consumer prices will have risen an average 50 per cent in the full year.⁶

6. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Vol. 4, 27 (September 1984), P.9.

TABLE - 1
TRENDS IN CONSUMER PRICES
 (% Increase on Previous Year)

January	February	March	April
33.3	37.0	39.3	40.7

Source: Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines,
 (London), Vol.4, 27 September, 1984, P.9.

MASSIVE RISE IN MONEY SUPPLY

The upward trend in money supply was mainly due to government's reckless expenditure in election campaign of 1984. National Assembly Election and its unplanned borrowing from the Central Bank. The rise in money supply was very much against the "Stabilization package". The package was announced by President Ferdinand Marcos to satisfy the condition of International Monetary Fund. One of the conditions of the 'Stabilization Package' was that "stringent controls on money supply and the expansion of credit will be imposed."⁷

7. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London),
 Vol.No.3, (June 26, 1989), P.9.

TABLE - II
TRENDS IN MONEY SUPPLY, CURRENCY AND CREDIT

	Money Supply (M1)		Currency in Circulation		Domestic Credits	
	Pbn	% annual increase	Pbn	% annual increase	Pbn	% annual increase
October						
1982	21.11	-1.1	10.64	8.0	142.83	27.1
1983	26.43	25.2	14.05	32.0	184.92	29.5
November						
1982	21.26	1.3	10.77	6.7	143.07 ^a	25.9
1983	28.31	33.2	15.57	44.6	184.39 ^a	28.9
December						
1982	23.52	4.3	12.71	9.3	151.00	23.6
1983	32.52	38.2	19.61	54.3	183.34 ^a	21.5
January						
1983	22.25	3.9	11.10	8.4	151.90	23.3
1984	30.71	38.0	17.55	58.1	182.17	19.9
February						
1983	22.01	1.3	11.21	8.2	154.25	23.1
1984	29.01	31.8	16.74	49.3	185.57	20.3

a provisional

Source : Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Vol.No.3, (June 26 1984), P.9.

CURRENCY

The currency had been floating since February 1970. It took a very modest downward move against the US dollar in the subsequent nine years. Since late 1983, a very steep depreciation occurred with the payment deterioration linked to political upheaval caused by the Aquino assassination in August. It was reported that "The rate then initially moved to near the black market rate (near Pzo = \$ 1,00) and, despite some unexpected strengthening in the first months of 1985, the peso is likely to continue to weaken during 1985."⁸

TABLE - IIIEXCHANGE RATE OF PHILIPPINE PESO AGAINST US DOLLAR

(annual average)

1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
7.248	7.440	7.403	7.366	7.378	7.511	7.900	8.540	11.113	16.699

Source : IMF International Financial Statistics as cited in Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Annual Supplement (July 1985), P. 7.

8. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Annual Supplement (July 1985), P. 6.

EXPORT DECLINED

Major exports of the Philippines continued to decline. Coconut products continued to fall during the "second and third quarters of 1983, to reach 1.29mn tons at the end of September compared to 1.39mn in the same period of 1982."⁹

As the 'table four' shows the decline was mainly in copra, shipments of which had been suspended since February, but copra meal also showed a significant decline in the first seven months.

9. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Vol. No.1 (January 1984), p.17.

TABLE - IV
EXPORT OF COCONUT PRODUCTS

	January-July 1982	1983	% change 1983/ 82
Coconut Oil of			
Which	585.5	576.0	-1.6
Europe	221.8	240.9	8.6
USA	248.2	236.9	-4.6
USSR	56.0	36.3	-35.2
Japan	19.6	23.5	19.9
China	14.2	10.6	-27.5
 Copra of which			
Europe	113.0	2.0	-98.2
USSR	10.2	10.2	1.0
Copra meal	348.5	300.8	-13.7

Source : Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London),
Vol.No.1, (3 January, 1984), P.17.

The price of copper, another major export of the Philippines also reached at low point. The price of high grade cash copper on the London Metal exchange fell from around £1,060 a ton in early September to around £ 950 in early October.

In the case of Sugar, the prices remained depressed . After dipping to their second quarter low of £105/ton, the lowest level for 13 years in nominal terms, prices had only edged up to \$107/ton by mid September. In the first quarter of 1984, it was stated that "the volume of Philippine exports of sugar was down 4.5 per cent. This is far below both the rate of decline recorded for the whole of 1983 (23.2 percent)." ¹⁰

Increased imports and declining investments produced a deficit in the balance of payments. Real wages continued to slide down but the Government refused to raise the daily minimum wage "for fear of raising the cost of exports and scaring away foreign investors." ¹¹

10. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines, n.6, P.9.

11. Asia 1976 Year Book (Hongkong), (1976), P.264.

Borrowing from foreign countries continued despite concerned leaders' stringent terms. The continuation of heavy reliance on foreign trade and borrowing had obviously left the country highly dependent on international economic conditions and decisions.

POVERTY

The lack of any direct, consistent mechanisms resulting in income redistribution made rich more richer while the share of the poor shrank. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Philippines estimated that 70 per cent of the population were malnourished. As New York Times reported: "At traffic lights cars are surrounded by legions of beggars, emaciated women holding babies and rapping on the car windows. Frequently this unfortunates get only a share of their meager collection; most street corners are controlled by crime syndicates. Today, the Philippines is a nation of a few enclaves of fabulous affluence separated from shanty town poverty by concrete walls barbed wire and armed guards."¹²

12. The New York Times, 6 January 1985.

In January 1981 the Asian Wall Street Journal published a summary of a World Bank study of poverty in the Philippines. Economic figures of 1981 and 1982 did not alleviate the Bank's concerns while growth rates were estimated at 3.5 per cent for 1981 by the Philippine Government, the International Monetary Fund estimated it as only 2.5 per cent. The current account deficit grew from \$ 2.29 billion in 1981 to \$ 3.3 billion in 1982. As exports declined in value imports increased, and debt servicing costs escalated. It was estimated that "the total debt of the Philippines in 1984 was amounted to \$ 11, 612 mn."¹³

Unemployment rates for urban workers reached 25 per cent or more in Manila and other cities, even with an estimated 500,000 Filipinos working overseas. The World Bank felt that the situation was 'precarious'. In June 1983 an aide to Secretary of State Shultz told a New York Times reporter that "The Marcos regime is entering its twilight zone."¹⁴

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13. Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines (London), Vol. 4, 2 (September 1987).
14. Sheilah Ocampokalfors, "No more Irans" Far Eastern Economic Review (Hongkong), Vol. 29, 21 (July 1983), P. 16.

ECONOMIC CONDITION AFTER AQUINO ASSASSINATION

While the Philippines was in the grip of fast deteriorating situation, the arch-opposition leader Senator Benigno Aquino returned from a three year self-imposed exile in the United States. Within seconds of stepping off the plane, he was shot. It was aptly described: "The bullet that killed opposition leader Benigno Aquino on 21st August 1983 marked the beginning of the end of the Marcos era and onset of a difficult and uncertain transition period. The aftermath of the Aquino affair has been a protracted crisis of Latin American proportions, a deteriorating economy and growth of nationwide communist insurgency."¹⁵

The Aquino assassination unleashed instability and spread confusion. The media in Manila expressed its apprehension about a possible freeze on new international loans to the Philippines and also country's ability to meet its commitments.

Paul D. Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs reported that "The uncertainties created by the Aquino assassination led to capital

15. Manning, N.5, P.392.

flight and disinvestment. Trade financing by foreign banks began to dry-up. Fiscal and balance of payments problems deepened."¹⁶

The aftermath of assassination exposed the fragile shape of the Philippine economy. During the 1970s GNP in the Philippines grew at an average rate of slightly less than 6.6% per annum. In the 1980s, however, the economy turned down, with real GNP increasing by 4.7% in 1980, 3.6% in 1981, 2.8% in 1982. The increase fell even further in 1983 to an estimated 1.4%, a rate less than that of population growth.

To save the country from sliding down, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed in February 1983 to provide a \$ 543 million emergency loan to the government. This was followed by a \$ 300 million loan from the World Bank and another loan of the same amount from major New York banks with significant interests in the Philippines. But the State of grace showered on the Philippines required to comply with rather stringent conditions imposed by the IMF. The

16. Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Recent Development In the Philippines", Department of State Bulletin (Washington D.C). Vol.84 (November 1984) P.55.

conditions were "to reduce the balance of payments deficit, limit the growth of money supply, reduce government - spending and not resort to tariff increases or import controls".¹⁷

A major condition of the IMF was that the Philippines should limit its balance of payments deficit to \$ 598 million for 1983. But by midyear, the deficit had already reached \$ 562 million. Thus, in an effort to stem the tide the Government devalued the Peso by 7.3% to P11 to the US dollar, this on top of a 10.3% fall that had already occurred during 1983. The IMF team of economists recommended a further reduction in the Government budget. But it was reported that "the Finance Minister Manuel Alba, initially turned down the proposal, but two weeks later Prime Minister Virata, who was attending an IMF/World Bank consultative meeting cabled Alba and ordered the projected government budget of P 9.4 billion be trimmed by P 1 billion."¹⁸

But the measures taken by the Government could not stop the financial hemorrhaging. It was announced that

17. Richard Nations, "The Lengthening Shadow of Short-term Debt" Far Eastern Economic Review (Hongkong), Vol. 23, 9 (June 1983), P.66.

18. Charles W. Lindsey, "Economic Crisis In the Philippines" Asian Survey (California), Vol.No.12 (December 1984), P.1189.

the balance of payments deficit during the third quarter alone (July - September) was \$ 780 million, bringing the total for the year to \$ 1.342 billion. Net inflows of medium - and - long - term capital at the end of September, 1983 were down to \$ 913 million a 22.8% drop over the same period a year earlier. The most distressing was that for the first time in 10 years short term capital registered a net out flow of (\$607 million) which compelled the government to draw on its stock of foreign exchange to cover the deficit. The gross International reserves of the Philippines were down to \$ 1.431 billion at the end of September a fall of \$ 851 million in three months.

To have a grip over the situation the Government devalued the Peso "by 21.4" from (P₁₁ to P₁₄ per \$ 1) on October 5, bringing the total change for the year to almost 35% and it increased the advalorem traiff on certain imports from 3% to 10%. But the discent continued. By the middle of October, the balance of payments deficit had swelled to cover \$ 2 billion, and the international reserves of the country had fallen by another \$ 1 billion \$ 430 million, less than the value of one month's imports. Later it was reported that during October reseves hit a low of \$ 290 million."¹⁹

19. Ibid., P.1192.

When the fiscal situation reached a point beyond the control of the Government, Prime Minister Virata and Central Bank Governor rushed to New York on October 12 to consult with the 10 of country's leading bank creditors. Five days later it was announced that "the Philippines could no longer meet its debt obligations and was asking for a 90 day moratorium on principal payments. Interest payments however, were to continue".²⁰ What was accelerating the drift of the Philippines towards financial chaos was reaction to Aquino assassination. The immediate reaction to the assassination was that "the normal 90 day, short-term credits were either being reduced to two-week, one-week or 24 hours loans, or creditors were not rolling over the loans that they had extended. In addition capital flight estimated as high as \$ 5 million per day was occurring."²¹

Some additional factors cropped up to add fuel to already inflamed problems. One of the major problems was a combination of an increased current account deficit and a tightening of international credit. The government

20. Guy Sacerdoit, "Buying Some Time", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hongkong), Vol.No.43, 27 (October 1983) P.38.

21. Ibid.

wanted to cover external payments shortfalls with overnight borrowings. "At the same time the country's international reserves, particularly its gold holdings were being used."²²

TABLE - V
TRENDS OF INTERNATIONAL RESERVES

(\$Mn)	Decem- ber	Janua- uary	Febru- ary	Mar- ch	Apr- il	May	June
Foreign Exchange	785	649	809	737	581	622	471
SDR & IMF Reserve Position	1	14	1	2	2	2	2
Gold(National valuation)	117	108	140	153	161	160	201

Source : Quarterly Economic Review, Philippines
(London), No.4, 27 (September 1984), P.15.

In January, a new irregularities came to the fore. According to an IMF agreement the Central Bank was to limit money supply growth to 3% within the time span of September 1983 to January 1984. But in October and November alone it

22. Jose Galang, "The Financial Wizards", Far Eastern Economic Review (Hongkong), Vol.13, 29 (March 1984), PP.56-57.

grew at the rate of 20% which invited a bitter reaction:
"The discovery of such blatant disregard of IMF dictates,
whether a politically inspired resort to the currency
printing process or simply financial mismanagement by the
government, destroyed much if not all the thrust built up
over the years with the Marcos Government - as much as
did the controversy over the inflated reserve figures."²³

23. Guy Sacerdoti And Jose Galang, "Manila Money Games",
Far Eastern Economic Review (Hongkong), Vol.4, 26
(January 1984) PP.42-43.

SECTION III
POLITICAL CRISIS

The economic crisis that triggered off the typhoon took little time to generate a massive backlash in the politics of the Philippines.

THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

The Hukbalahaps - the communist guerrillas had been found in the Philippines since pre-independent period. They were known in 1942 as "People's Army" who fought the Japanese to gain independence. But after independence they did not surrender their arms as other guerrilla movements did in 1946 and 1947 because they were not in favour of a non-communist pro-American government in the Philippines. It was stated that the programme of the Huk movement in the late forties was for a "democratic peace, agrarian reform, the abrogation of unequal treaties with the US and democratic guarantees."²⁴

The communists who were always looking for political and economic instability in the country had gained its strength in the wake of the second oil shock in 1979, which led to an increase in the urban unemployment. As a result,

24. George Maravilla, "The Post-war Huk in the Philippines" in William J. Pomeroy, ed., Guerrilla Warfare And Muslim (New York, International Publishers, 1968), P.239.

large number of city folks had to go to the countryside which in turn gave rise to rural underemployment. With the collapsing price of coconut, the backbone of an estimated 40% family's economy also collapsed. Where the dependence on coconuts is highest like Bicol, Mindanao and Sumar, the communism grew rapidly to exploit the situation. The province of Negros Occidental provided another example of successful exploitation by communists of the poverty and hunger caused by declined sugar market. As Munro described: "Because farm output has not kept pace, rural underemployment has jumped. And in to that breach since 1979, has come an employer that has lured many youngmen with promises of jobs that offer travel adventure, and a vision of the future: the communist New People's Army".²⁵

Ironically, the vulnerability of Marcos Government that characterized by wholesale corruption and "Crony Socialism" strengthened the communist with all out support of the church, business class, youth in particular and common people

25. Ross H. Munro, "Date Line Manila: Moscow's Next Win?" Foreign Policy (Washington D.C.) Vol. 56 (Fall 1984), P.180.

in general. As Paul D. Wolfowitz commented: "The success achieved in recent years by the NPA are related to nation's broader political and economic problems. Depressed economic condition aggravated by a rapidly growing working - age population, weak and ineffective local government administration compounded by budgetary shortfalls a perception that the central government does not respond to the people's basic social and economic needs lax and inequitable dispensation of justice and instances of abuse of citizens by military and paramilitary forces all have contributed support for the NPA, which has projected itself with some success as a group of idealistic political and social reformers."²⁶

The heavy involvement of members of educated middle and upper classes in the communist movement gave them a golden link with the Philippine elite. It was reported that, "Many upper-class families still have younger members fighting in the hills. Others have seen their children imprisoned tortured or killed by the armed forces. In such families political loyalties, if not leaning toward the NPA, at least are divided. From such families and their friends have come material aid protection as well as the increasingly widespread

26. Wolfowitz, N.16, P.57.

view among the upper classes that the NPA are not subvereives but patriots who deserve the nation's gratitude for having been the only effective opponents of the Marcos government".²⁷

The movement also had the advantage of exploiting its middle-class leadership. It helped them in organizing peasants, trade-unionists, and the urban poor, and coopting self-made leaders of such groups who achieved prominence before joining the movement. In the highlands and in the frontier regions, the NPA used to offer arms, training and leadership to tribal peoples or settlers who had lost their land to business developers or to the government's hydro-electric projects. In the urban areas it appealed successfully to many squatters who lost their homes to make way for the government's urban development projects. Among labor the movement's organizational efforts benefited from the no-strike, low-wage policies adopted by the Marcos government.

Vying the poor state of law and order the NPA - the armed - wing of communist party established itself as the dispenser of justice. It executed the unpunished thieves

27. Carl H. Lande, "The Political Crisis" in John Bresnan (ed.), Crisis In the Philippines: The Marcos Era And Beyond (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1986), P.133.

in front of a village population. It was reported that "suspected communist rebels publicly executed the sister of a provincial governor on Mindanao Island after their 'People's court' found the woman and her husband guilty of corruption and graft."²⁸

Sometimes, the NPA adopted extreme course of action to attract public attention. They destroyed a multi million - dollar experimental coconut and cacao plantation in the South owned by Eduardo Coguango - a favoured person of President Marcos who monopolized the coconut plantation and in Northern Luzon attacked facilities operated by the Cagayan Valley Development Authority, a pet project of Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile a native of that area.

The number of NPA guerrillas increased rapidly. The official estimate in 1984 of the strength of the communists was as high as 6,810. The number varied from the non-official figures.

28. Facts on File (New York), Vol.45, 2 (August 1985), P.581.

TABLE - VISTRENGTH OF COMMUNIST PARTIES OF THE PHILIPPINES^a

Year	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
PKP		200	200	400	400
CPP-NPA	3000-4000	3000	5000	7500	30000 ^b

'a' most of the figures are estimates.

'b' as claimed by CPP-NPA.

Source : Problems of communism, March-April issues of years 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.

The communist band could be found in most of the 73 provinces. On the large Southern island of Mindanao, they frequently moved in groups of 100 to 200 swooping down on towns, police outposts and military convoys. They used to capture pistols, rifles and ammuniations. As the NPA grew in Strength, their ability to raise money also increased. When guaranteed anonymity it was revealed that "the executives of mining and lugging companies readily admit that they pay a "revolutionary tax" of as much as \$5000 a month to the NPA".²⁹

29. Munro, N.25, P.181.

The U.S administration expressed its concern at the steep increase of communist insurgency in the Philippines. Wolfowitz, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far East Asian Affairs attributing the growing success of communist insurgency to the current crisis expressed that "The combined effect of these political problems has in turn contributed to the growth of an armed communist - led insurgency which increasingly threatens the nation's future".³⁰

MILITARY - "ATROCIUS AND MERIT-PROOF"

The role of the military underwent a vital change under President Marcos. Since the declaration of 'Martial Law', the military became an active, privileged and essential bul-work of the Marcos Government. They increased from a force of 54,000 to almost three times that number.

Gradually, the Government created a split in the army by 'Ilocanizing' one section of it, as most of the soldiers were recruited from Ilocos-the constituency of

30. Paul D. Wolfowitz, "The Pacific: Region of Promise And Challenge", Department of State Bulletin, (Washington D.C.), Vol.85, (April 1985), P.38.

President Ferdinand E. Marcos. It was reported : "The post-1972 years led to continuing "Ilocanization" of the officer crop, especially at its high levels, as well as to a special reliance on Ilocano enlisted men. Most heavily infused with Ilocanos were the security and intelligence forces in or near Manila. These were composed of the Presidential Security Command (PSC) of some 15,000 men, including the Presidential Guard Battalion, of the National Intelligence and Security Authority (NISA), the Metropolitan command of the Philippine Constabulary (METROCOM), the Manila unit of the Integrated National Police and the Second Army Division".³¹

With the structure and size of the military, its values and behaviour had undergone a change according to the government's direction. The Army was thus made merit-proof by the introduction of favouritism and personal loyalty. Ilocanisation of army was a burning example of favouritism. Personal loyalty in turn was rewarded by a growing tolerance of corruption and arbitrary use of power, the tactics which got its manifestation in the case of the appointment of General Fabian Ver, a former army captain had once loyally served

31. Londe, N.27, P.136.

the newly elected President Marcos as a driver and body-guard. Under Marcos patronage he rose rapidly to become the chief of staff of the Armed forces by 1981. Then he took the responsibility to reorganise the Philippine Armed Forces to consolidate the control of the Marcos loyalists which resulted in the drastic curtailment of the power of independent professional officers such as Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos the Deputy Chief of Staff. As the Chief of Staff General Fabian Ver played a crucial role in the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino that was unveiled by the members of Agrava Commission.³²

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32. A panel investigating the August 1983 slaying of opposition leader Benigno S. Aquino Jr. October 23 said it had concluded that the military planned the assassination. However, the panel's chairwoman disagreed with the four remaining members over the extent of the conspiracy. The Chairwoman, Corazon Agrava October 23, released a report accusing an air force general and six soldiers of involvement in the assassination. On October 24 the remaining four members released their own report charging that the Chief of the Armed Forces General Fabian Ver, Brigadier General Luther Custodio and Major General Prospero Olivas, the commander of the Police in Metropolitan Manila are among the 26 people involved in the plot to kill Aquino. The report charged that Ver and Olivas had conspired to "cover up the crime..... or the effects of the crime". It cited inconsistencies in Ver's testimony as the basis for the charge against him, particularly in his statements on his knowledge of Aquino's movements abroad before his return to the Philippines.

Facts on File (New York), Vol.44, No.2293, 26 (October 1984), P.794.

It is said that "The Philippine military under Marcos suffered from a schizospheremia induced by two very different missions: to support and defend the Marcos regime, and to protect the nation against external and domestic armed threats".³³ To support the regime was the task of various elite units concentrated in the environs of Manila, who were provided with most attractive career opportunities. The task of "National Defense" on the other hand was entrusted to officers remained outside Manila. They had to confront with communist guerrillas muslim rebels. Their life was miserable, which compelled an in-service rift in the army. During 1981-82 the Junior Officers formed 'Ram' - (Reform the Armed Forces Movement) which also called "We Belong" to restore professionalism within the Armed Forces.

A meagre salary made the junior officers to adopt illegal means. Some officers accepted the patronage of a senior officer to participate in rackets ranging from questionable business deals to smuggling, extortion and protection. Others officers simply stole the money allocated to gasoline for their units' jeeps. It led to degradation of morality and discipline: "Soldiers in the field, for example, see

33. Lande, N. 27, P.138.

wounded friends die because of ~~lacked~~ air transport to decent hospitals and later read about the fleet of government planes that flew guests to the wedding of President's daughter".³⁴ Thus, no longer willing to die for the regime, they carefully avoided communist guerrillas which made counter-insurgency programme of ~~Government~~ a force, showing the reason why Military was losing to the communists, the interviews with farmer and Priests revealed that "The NPA over the last 5 years have probably killed many more civilians than has the military. But the military is losing to the communists in part because the soldiers are never the less much more feared".³⁵

The degradation in reputation and extreme brutality made a negative impact on people. A report in Facts and File provided an example of it: "Among the recent indidents, eight defence force members in October 3, were charged with the April 11 slaying of Father Tullio Favali, an Italian missionary who was murdered in La Esperanza on the Southern Island of Mindanao."³⁶

34. Munro, N.25, P.184.

35. Ibid.

36. Facts on File (New York), 1 (November 1985) P.826.

A 1983 nation-wide survey by the Bishops Businessmen's conference, a Roman Catholic Organization of business people, found that "most filipinos blame first, the military, then government officials for breakdown of law and order in their country. A key reason for the rapid growth of the communists insurgency is the perception that the rebels offer justice, which the military does not."³⁷

MUSKIM - SEPARATIST MOVEMENT

Apart from communist insurgency and military atrocity, the Philippines also suffered from Muslim separatist movement known as Moro insurgency in the South.³⁸ The Moro resistance was originated in May 1968 with the formation of Muslim Independence Movement. (MIM). The founder of MIM was Datu Udtoog Matalam. Its origins, were in the age-old hostility between catholic and muslim; economic backwardness and massive resettlement by the Christians in South Which made reduced them to a minority class. The aim of the MNLF was full independence from Manila with increased autonomy. During

37. Steve Lohr, "Twilight of the Marcos Era", The New York Times, 6 (June 1985), P.36.

38. For detail discussion, see, David Josef Steinberg, The Philippines A Singular And A Plural Place (Colorado, Westview Press, 1982) PP.107-110; and M. Rajaretnam ed., Trends In the Philippines 11 (Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1978), PP 5-18.

its initial years, the organization was basically peaceful though the threat of renewed Muslim rebellion was kept as an important trump card in the deliberations with Manila. But at the constitutional convention of 1972, a statement was issued by MNLF calling on the convention to grant autonomy to certain Muslim dominated areas. The areas included the continuous South Western portions of Mindanao.

With the declaration of Martial Law President Ferdinand Marcos moved to suppress the Liberation-Front by compelling Muslims in the South to surrender their fire arms. Although there were negotiations between MNLF and Government in Jidda in 1974 and in the Tripoli in 1979, neither side observed the terms of the agreement reached which resulted in continued military confrontation.

THE CHURCH

The imposition of Martial Law evoked vehement opposition from priests. The Church Military Committee provided means to bring complaints of military abuses directly to the attention of the armed forces. A small number of priests and nuns joined the NPA as active combatants or supported it through the Christians for National Liberation. The Catholic

Church voiced its protests through the pronouncements of the Catholic Bishops conference of the Philippines (CBCP). The most outspoken person was Manila's Jaime Cardinal Sin.

During the initial period of "Martial Law" the Cardinal's protest was confined to specific violations of the rights of the Church and Clergy. Then he voiced his protest against actions and policies of the regime, its negligence of the poor and misuse of economic and military power. After the Aquino assassination, the Cardinal in coordination with Political and business leaders urged President Marcos to give up power: "As the crisis deepened the cardinal offered himself to President Marcos as a moderator for a peaceful transition."³⁹

REACTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States could foresee the popular uprising against Marcos regime due to its utter negligence of people's will and rampant corruption. Considering President Ferdinand E. Marcos responsible for the torrid situation in the Philippines the US congress stated: "Unfortunately our investigations indicates that the Marcos government is unlikely to pursue

39. Lande, N.27, PF.121-22.

the changes necessary to stop economic hemorrhaging, to slow or halt the insurgency or to heal the major lesions that are infecting the political process."⁴⁰

The US administration also expressed its bitterness towards Marcos Government while reacting to Aquino assassination in 1983. The US State Department on 21 August called the killing a "cowardly and despicable act" and urged the the "perpetrators of this political assassination be quickly brought to justice."⁴¹

Representative Stephen J. Solarz, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific affairs said that Reagan should postpone his trip if involvement of the Philippines government in Aquino's slaying was discovered. He also warned that if the government was found to be guilty, the Congress might reject military aid to the Philippines.

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40. US Senate Select Committee On Intelligence: The Philippines a Situation Report, (99th Congress, 1st session), Vol.72, No.1, 1985, P.8.
41. Facts on File (New York), Vol.43, No.2232, 26 (August 1983), P.638.

Thus, when the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., was the tip of the iceberg, the tempest caused by the whole crisis made the United States to compel President Marcos to go for a free and fair Presidential election.

CHAPTER - III

ELECTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Two decades of authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand Marcos demonstrated the veracity of Lord Acton's statement that "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". In 1965, Marcos was elected as President of the Philippines. Since then he did not have to see back.

This period was one of the best for the country's economy. The value of its exports was four times that of South Korea. It is well established that the state of a country's economy has a profound impact on the outcome of election. Consequently, President Ferdinand Marcos bounced back in the Presidential election of 1969. He was elected "with 4, 534, 352 votes to 2, 662, 251 votes for his opponent Senator Sergio Osmena Jr."¹.

But by the late 1970s surveys by the regime's own technocrats demonstrated that the gap between the rich and the poor had been widening under Marcos. Most pre-school children suffered from malnutrition. An astute politician, President Marcos could sense the dangerous effects of people's dissatisfaction with his reelection as President. To bring the situation under control, he declared Martial Law in 1972 on the pretext of tackling the growing communist insurgency and to shape the weakened economy. The declaration

1. The New York Times, 13 November 1969.

of martial law became the stepping-stone for Marcos to gain absolute power. However, it should be noted that Marcos used the most popular democratic method to gain absolute power under "Martial Law" and after.

ELECTIONS - MARCOS'S PASSPORT TO POWER

During the martial law period, the first "Interim National Assembly" election was held in 1978. But time did not favour the opposition. They were prohibited from campaigning. The worst part of it all was that the "Commission on Elections" was wholly controlled and used by the Marcos administration in its own favour. The opposition could gain only thirteen seats in the assembly, not very impressive show by any count.

On January 17 1981, President Marcos drew the curtain on martial law while still retaining President's right to issue decrees. Besides, the decrees which were issued during the martial law period remained valid. Twelve days later, to get rid of popular resentment against 'parliamentary system' adopted in 1973 constitution Marcos asked the Assembly

to consider constitutional amendment. The new amendment was intended to introduce a French-style Presidential - Parliamentary system. Ironically, the amendments provided for a President to be of 50 years old, a provision which was clearly intended to deprive Senator Benigno Aquino of his candidacy for the President. The other provisions of the amendments were that the President should be elected for a six-year term, renewable and empowered to appoint and remove a Primeminister and a "Fourteen-member cabinet Committee". The amendments got through the National Assembly which was dominated by the President Marcos's own party.

Keeping the amendments in background, President Marcos sought a Presidential election on 16 June 1981. It was reported that Marcos issued land titles in Tondo, a slum area in Manila, released funds in areas where opposition was dominant. The result of the Presidential election obviously went in favour of Marcos. The Vice-President of the United States, George Bush congratulated Marcos and praised his adherence to democratic principles.

Luck favoured Marcos again. He secured internal safety and external guarantee for his regime which made him the victim of successive success. He did not hesitate to

exploit the situation as his guaranteed power could be utilised to make fortune. In every sphere of politics, economy and defence, Marcos and his well-knit crony group dominated. He wanted to see his own people at the apex who would be loyal to him.

The assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino at Manila Airport on 21 August 1983, clearly indicated that Marcos would not tolerate any opposition to his regime. The 1984 'National Assembly Election' was held against this complex background. The pendulum began to swing visibly against Marcos regime as the corruption, fraud and violence came to the fore. The United States perturbed by the economic and political effects of the Aquino assassination warned Marcos to make 1984 election free, fair and honest.

Within the country, the opposition parties were divided over the question of taking part in the elections. The United National Democratic Organization (UNIDO), PDP-Laban - the conservative reformist coalition decided to run their candidates. In this election "an estimated 80% of eligible voters cast their ballots".²

2. Carl H. Lande, "The Political Crisis", in John Bresnan, ed., Crisis In the Phillippines: The Marcos Era And Beyond (Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press, 1986). p.140.

The most notable part of the 1984 elections was that it was comparatively clear than the preceding elections. The National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), a citizens' voluntary poll - watchers group had played an important role to conduct a fair election. It was noted that "on and after election day, NAMFREL mobilized some 200,000 volunteer poll-watchers to monitor the casting and counting of the votes as well as reporting of the final results".³ The very presence of NAMFREL made a difference in the final showing of the election results. The President had predicted not more than 20 seats for the opposition. But the final results showed the opposition capturing 59 elected seats to 122 seats for the President's supporters.

Thus, the 1984 Assembly election offered a premise that the opposition, not the Marcos administration was the real choice of the electorates.

MARCOS AT THE CROSSROADS

Noticing the result of 1984 National Assembly Election the US came forward to urge President Marcos to introduce

3. Ibid., P.141.

reforms in every sphere of Filipino society. Paul D. Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, stated in January 1985 that "American aid programs for the country would be aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and encouraging economic reforms."⁴ Reiterating Washington's concern about the growing communist insurgency in the Philippines he stressed the need for economic and social reforms to deal with the root causes of the insurgency including widespread poverty.

The warning - bell awakened President Ferdinand Marcos. On 12 October when US President Ronald Reagan had dispatched his close friend Senator Paul D. Laxalt to Manila urging him to initiate political and economic reforms.

The growing communist insurgency and Marcos's ineffectiveness in tackling it, was a subject of major concern for the United States. It was learnt that "Laxalt carried what one administration official described an extremely blunt warning from US President to Marcos that he faced an imminent danger of being overthrown."⁵ The Central Intelligence Agency was also utilized by US to mount pressure on

4. The New York Times, 27 January, 1985.

5. Facts on File (New York), vol. 45, No. 2344, 25 (October, 1985), P.806.

President Marcos. Quoting the Newsweek magazine of 27 May, the New York Times reported that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director, William Casey told Marcos in a recent visit to Manila that "the White House wanted Manila to hold an election before Marcos's term expires in 1987."⁶ The Magazine quoted an unidentified source as saying that "the message was delivered by Casey last week during a secret meeting in Manila. The American intelligence chief suggested that such an election would help ease the country's political economic and security crisis".⁷ He raised some points designed to encourage Marcos to rethink its objections.

President Marcos reacted strongly to the US agency report of situation in the Philippines. Appearing on the ABC News Programme 'Nightline' he announced on 19 October 1985 that "these reports of the deteriorating situation in the Philippines were exaggerated".⁸ Challenging the US assessments of communist insurgency, he maintained that "his government was winning the battle against the communist rebels

6. The New York Times, 20 May, 1985.

7. Ibid.

8. Facts on File (New York), Vol.45, No.2344, 25 (October 1985), P.806.

at 10,000 atmost, well below the estimate of 15,000 or more claimed by US."⁹ Despite Marcos's brave talk, the opinion in the US remained unimpressed. The US Congress adopted a stern measure to warn President Marcos. On 9 July the House of Representatives voted against the proposed \$ 60 million in military aid to the Philippines. The Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs for the second straight year had voted on 27 March, to cut the Reagan administration's request for military aid to the Philippines. It was reported: "The panel voted to delete all but \$25 million of the \$100 million military aid request and add an extra \$60 million - the difference between the request and the \$40 million approved for fiscal year of 1985 - to \$95 million economic aid request for a total of \$155 million. The reallocation was subsequently approved by the House Foreign Affairs Committee on 9 July 1985. The House voted 279 to 125 against a Republican - backed amendment to restore the \$60 million. Instead, the House approved an amendment to the foreign aid bill that would permit congress to defer future military aid to the Philippines if significant political economic and military reforms were not made there. The amendment was approved by a vote of 254 to 169."¹⁰

9. Ibid.

10. Facts on File (New York) Vol.45, No.2332, 2: (August, 1985), P.581.

The situation in the Philippines began to develop rapidly. To the surprise of every one on 3 November President Ferdinand Marcos announced that he would ask the National Assembly to approve the moving up of the early Presidential election, scheduled for 1987. On 4 November he confirmed that he would ask for an election on 17 January 1986.

The election would require the National Assembly, which was controlled by Marcos's 'New Society Movement', to pass amendment to the pending electoral roll.

Oppositions expressed surprise at Marcos's decision to call snap elections. The United National Democratic Organization (UNIDO) said that the election would be unconstitutional because Marcos first refused to resign. It also resisted the move as it would have been deprived of sufficient time to campaign. On 4 November 1985, the United States called on President Marcos to ensure that proposed elections were 'credible and fair'. The US officials reportedly said "the Reagan Administration expressed its concern that if elections were not conducted fairly, further unrest would occur in the Philippines."¹

11. Facts on File (New York) Vol.45, No.2346, 8 (November, 1985), P.845.

The Election Bill which was to be passed by the National Assembly was approved by a 77 to 41 vote on 26 November setting 7 February 1986 as the most awaited eventful day of the Presidential election.

No sooner the date of Presidential election was announced, the name of the opposition candidate for president spread like a wildfire in and outside the country. The candidate was no other than Corason Aquino, the widow of President Marcos's arch-rival Senator Benigno Aquino.

A strategy was undertaken by the oppositions to push President Marcos out of 'Malacanang Palace'. While Corason Aquino was chosen as the Presidential candidate, the former Senator and leader of the United National Democratic Party (UNIDO) Salvador H. Laurel gave his consent to run as candidate for the post of Vice-President. Though there was some differences of opinion between the two candidates, it was resolved by the intervention of Roman Catholic Arch Bishop, Jaime Cardinal Sin - the third force. They reached an agreement that Corason Aquino would represent Laurel's UNIDO party and not the 'People's Struggle Party' which had drafted her as its candidate. It should be noted that "the

Aquino - Laurel ticket was widely regarded an important force. While Aquino was considered able to generate a huge sympathy vote, Salvador Laurel, a political veteran and a son of former President Jose Laurel, could build a nation wide political network.

ELECTION - A TURNING POINT

The campaign - typhoon of the opposition presidential candidate Corazon Aquino lashed all 73 provinces of the Philippines. As Harry Anderson a Newsweek columnist reported that "if crowds alone wone elections, Carazon Aquino would be the next president of the Philippines."¹²

In the muddy streets and squares of the villages, the people braving the glaring sunshine and occasional tropical rain waited to have a glimpse of Carazon Aquino - a house wife-turned politician. It was reported that "finally", when the long - awaited political caravan struggled in to view the thronge invariably exploded in the ecstasy. As small children ran alongside the open jeep that bore opposition candidate Corazon Aquino, 53, supporters threw yellow and white confetti and shouted a welcome: "Cory ! Cory ! Cory !"¹³

¹². Harry Anderson & Richard Vokey, "Marcos Plays Rough" Newsweek, (New York), Vol.4, 27 (January 1986), P.6.
¹³. George Russell, "A Test For Democracy", Time (Chicago), 3(February 1986), P.4.

At another campaign rallies in Cebu city, tens of thousands of Filipinos greeted Aquino with yellow banners that symbolised their opposition to the autocratic regime of President Marcos. She evoked sympathy of the people by describing her husband's cruel end, who was assassinated at Manila International Airport in 1983. People wept openly. Elderly women displayed images of Christ as Aquino's motorcade passed through the city of Cebu.

The Aquino campaign reached its climax, at a final rally in Rizal Park of Manila. For eight hours a mammoth crowd cheered and prayed for her. Many yellow - clad Filipinos carried home - made posters with slogans like "who killed our Ninoy (Benigno Aquino)?"¹⁴ Surveying the adoring huge crowd she said "I am sure we have won the election. This is our chance to write history."¹⁴

After a couple of hours, Marcos came to address the people at the same venue. But the nature was supposed to be against the President. The ten-minute raining pushed the small crowd back to their homes.

14. Susan Tifft, "Counting Down to Trouble", Time (Chicago), Vol. 127, 17 (February 1986), P.61.

The opposition candidate Corazon Aquino invented a new strategy to attract the communists supporters. She indicated that she would legalise the communist party of the Philippines if it renounced violence.

The statement of Corazon Aquino provided an opportunity to President Marcos to link her with the communists. He accused Aquino of forming "a tactical alliance with the country's communists underground, a move that would turn the Philippines into Southeast Asia's Nicaragua if she won".¹⁵ He warned through millions of letters to individual Filipinos that "a communist victory would bring the annihilation of entire populations, institutions of slave camps and forced labor, dispossession of communities, abolition of religion and the cancellation of private property."¹⁶

In contrast to Corazon Aquino, President Ferdinand Marcos had the advantage of using his political muscle in the campaign as well as in the elections. His loyalists were estimated to control 90% of all government posts from senior civil service jobs down to the lowest village chief.

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15. Spencer Reiss and Richard Vokey, "Aquino in a Crossfire", Newsweek (New York), Vol.2, 13 (January 1986), P.10.
16. Harry Anderson and Richard Vokey, "Marcos Plays Rough" Newsweek, (New York), Vol.4, 27 (January 1986), PP. 6-7.

He offered the Filipinos basketful of promises like to construct new roads and municipal buildings. People were lured to wage increases and price cuts in subsidized goods. The President had assigned top level - aides especially to ensure ample financial assistance from party war-chest.

The very expensive campaigning by the Marcos camp evoked a strong reaction from the Archbishop cardinal Jaime Sin of Manila. He even went to the extent of issuing a pastoral letter which assured Filipinos that, "it was all right to take money from a politician - but wrong to sell their votes."¹⁷

The military directed by General Fabian C. Ver was the major threatening force against the oppositions, as unknown gunman shot and killed Jeremiah de Jesus an Aquino organizer after he complained in the US Embassy in Manila that armed men were threatening the oppositions. At times military threat became almost apocalyptic, as General Fabian Ver declared that "the military was gathering evidence against Aquino's supporters and would continue to monitor and document intensively their activities."¹⁸

17. Ibid, P.8.

18. Ibid, P.7.

Thus, while Marcos's campaigning was being geared up with the support of government machinery the arch-bishop Cardinal Sin issued another pastoral letter citing bribery, cheating, intimidation, violence and black propaganda as the Marcos type of politics. He stated that "we strongly condemn such evil tactics and see them as a prelude to worse things to come."¹⁹

The pastoral letter also carried an instruction that it should be read at all church services in Manila. As the churches all over the Philippines were attended by the masses, it was the best strategy adopted by Cardinal Sin to make people understand the position of Aquino who was deprived of all access to mass media.

MAHARLIKA PAPERS - "THE COCK AND BULL STORY"

While President Ferdinand Marcos was physically weak suffering from a "systematic lopus erythematosus - a cyclical degenerative disease" the disclosure of the "Maharlika papers" upset his image on the eve of the election. Maharlika - a guerrilla forces which Marcos claimed, had conducted sabotage and arm warfare against the Japanese

19. Ibid., P.8.

during the pre-independent period under his leadership. But the New York Times in its series of reports disclosed that the US Army investigators had concluded the report as fraudulent and absurd. The New York times account was substantiated by the documents discovered in the US National Archives by Alfred McCoy, an American scholar at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Ray C. Hunt Jr., who had directed the guerrilla activities in Pangasinan province during the war said "it is a cock - and - bull - story".²⁰

So in desperation and frustration President Marcos committed a grave blunder when he stated that women should confine their preachings inside the bedroom, that enraged people in general and a section of society in particular. He called Ms Aquino an inexperienced politician to which she replied, "I have no experience in lying, cheating, stealing or assassinating my political opponents".²¹

NAMFREL- WATCH-DOG OF RIGGING

The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections a voluntary groups took the responsibility to police the

20. H.Anderson, "The Maharlika Papers", Newsweek (New York) Vol.5, 3(February 1986), P.8.
 21. Ibid., P.10.

poll. The chairman of 'NAMFREL' Jose Concepcion had revealed the means of poll rigging in the Philippines. He said that the voters's registration lists were expanded with as many as a million voters; that could help President Marcos to gain an edge over Aquino. Providing an example he said, "in one case, we have twenty-seven voters living at the same address and all born on 8th August 1962".²²

Namfrel's most important objective was to guard against the moves of the Government Commission on Elections' (COMELAC) which was staffed by "Marcos Stooges". The Namfrel group planned to station observers in each of the country's 90,000 polling booths who would be entitled to receive a certified copy of the tally sheet from each ballot box which could enable them to count votes independently. Then from the polling centers, election officials were to transport returns to major cities and province capitals, where the final count would be assembled.

One major challenge to Namfrel was how to guard the ballot box if light went out. To prevent the hijacking

22. William Burger and R. Vokey, "Trying to Police the Polls", Newsweek, (New York), Vol.4, 27 (January 1986), P.9.

and switching of ballot boxes in the dark, they would be ready with candles, flash lights and even automobile headlights. One opposition campaigner advised "when the lights go out, sit on the ballot boxes."²³

The last but not the least to check the phony voting, Namfrel monitored the printing of ballots. During a 1981 plebescite an opposition mayor on the Southern Island of Mindanao had discovered thousands of forged return sheets from five provinces.

MARCOS INVITED US OBSERVERS

To get rid of anykind of criticisms of the Presidential election, Marcos invited the US observers to watch the elections. In response the Reagan administration agreed to send a 19-member delegation led by Senator Richard G. Lugar (R.Ind.) chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Representative John P. Murtha (Democrat Pennsylvania). But the observers were disturbed by the ruling of the "Philippine Commission on Elections" that would keep foreign observers 150-feet away from voting booths.

23. Ibid.

A LITMUS - TEST FOR DEMOCRACY

Seventh February 1986, came as a 'litmustest for democracy' in the Philippines. While Manila went on a state of red alert the opposition leaders reported to have received death threats. The most unfortunate thing was, President's prediction of civil war. When immorality was let loose by the government there came a fervent prayer and warning from Catholic priests: "These elections can become one great offense to God and a national scandal or they can be an event of conversion and national renewal."²⁴

The polling started from 7 a.m. and continued up to 3 p.m.. Voters were being urged by the 'Namfrel' to turn up at 7 a.m. to make certain that the "ballot boxes are empty."

It is interesting to note the reactions of the two Presidential candidates when they went to cast their ballots. In the early hour of the morning, the opposition candidate Corazon Aquino cast her vote at Hacienda Luijeita in her home province Tarlac north of Manila. She declared

24. H. Anderson et al., "The Marcos Mudslide", Newsweek (New York) Vol. 6, 10 (February 1986), P. 26.

with confidence to reporters : "this is my day. I hope to see you all at my inaugural".²⁵ While casting his vote at Bataac-his home town, President Ferdinand Marcos said, "If my margin of victory is less than 3 million votes, I will be disappointed".²⁶ Keeping the boastful pronouncements of the two candidates in mind, the Philippines waited for the most powerful declarations of the 'People'.

Ben J. Wattenberg, a senior fellow of the American Enterprise Institute and a keen student of American elections, who was a member of the US observer team reported about the election from Batangas Province. According to his report it was learnt that, there were two school teachers at each voting table and two party representatives one from Marcos's New Society Movement (KBL), and one from Aquino's UNIDO. The Namfrel also represented by volunteer poll watchers.

In order to cast vote, the voter was required to affix his thumb print in five places. Then he was to sign

25. Tifft, N.14, P.4.

26. Ibid.

in four places. To prevent fraud while casting vote, the voter's index finger was marked with indelible ink that was trademarked by the 'Commission on Elections' (Comelac). The ballot boxes were locked with three separate comelac locks. The poll booths were directed to be closed at 3 P.M. So that the boxes could not be switched in the dark.

INTIMIDATION, FRAUD AND VIOLENCE

The Presidential election of the Philippines was termed as a seesaw battle between the voters and fraud. Tarlac, the home province of Corazon Aquino offered a burning example of election fraud. Though the poll was scheduled to be closed at 3 P.M., the goons did not bother to wait till the closure. It was reported that with half-an-hour of voting time left, three jeeps carrying thirty armed men stopped near the polling station. One of the jeeps was decked out in a Marcos sticker which proved that the group belonged to Marcos camp. Armed with M-16 rifles, they approached the polling station. Then the head of the village informed the voters that the voting time was over. But the people refused to leave the booth. To protect the ballot boxes, a crowd of hundred people

rushed into the school accompanied by a group of US journalists and three jeeploads of opposition politicians. Sighting them, the goons fled. The crowd cheered "Laban!" "(Fight)!" Then the two hundred residents carried the ballot boxes to the canvassing center in Conception. But there, all votes were disqualified as the private citizens were not authorized to deliver them. In another incident it was noticed that in one Manila slum, armed men raided a precinct, dumped the ballots into a storm sewer and stuffed the boxes with forged ballots. In 'MantingLupa', thugs fired into the air to drive away poll watchers. In another center, a goon threatened Christina Cuyugan a pollwatcher with a knife and directed her to surrender the ballot boxes to him. In Negros Island a so-called Citizens' Athletic Association, a pro-Marcos group, took over the charge of supervising the poll and forced the voters to fill out his ballot and hand it over to them.

"While intimidation drove the machine, money greased it".²⁷ The government officials adopted a very clever tactics to buy the votes. While entering the polling centers, the voters were offered a "Merry Christmas"-marked envelop which carried \$1.50 and a sample ballot filled out for

27. Robert B. Cullen, et al., "How To Rig An Election", Newsweek, (New York), Vol.7, 17(February 1986),P.10.

Marcos and his running mate, Arturo Tolentino. In some pro-Aquino district of Manila, the voters were paid a dollar for abstaining from voting. There was a mischief with the 'Comelec' trademarked indelible ink. One volunteer observer marked that the particular ink could be "washed off with a bit of spit".

There was also a tragic case of disenfranchisement. In pro-Aquino areas, many voters were surprised when they found that their names had vanished from the registration lists. In Cotabato of Mindanao Aquino supporters complained that about half of the 50,000 voters had been disenfranchised. Manila was also not an exception. Richard C. Lugar Co-chairman of the US observation team said, "the Manila vote has been held down by systematic harassment. My own political judgement is that the government concluded results from Manila would not be good."²⁸

AFTERMATH: RESULTS OF THE ELECTION - A GREAT CONFUSION

With all frauds, violence and manipulations the polling was over at 3 p.m. in the Philippines to unfold

28. Ibid, P.11.

a lesson on how people exercised power. The results were in a great state of confusion. According to the Commission on Elections which was dominated by Marcos stooges declared that "Marcos secured 3,056,236 votes to 2,903,348 votes for Aquino with about 28 percent of the vote tabulated."²⁹ Contradicting the Comelec report, the National Movement For Free Election (Namfrel) reported that Aquino led Marcos "by 5,286,485 votes to 4,521,070 with 46 percent of precincts reporting".³⁰

A blatant case of manipulation of results was in the Marcos's traditionally strong areas North of Manila. Many areas were showing him ahead by votes of '2,000' to '0' votes. Despite confusing claims and counter claims both the Presidential candidates claimed victory. A few hours after the polls Aquino declared "the trend is clear and irreversible. The people and I have won, and we know it. We are home again in a country we can call "our own".³⁰ Marcos proclaimed on govt. Television "the results indicate that I probably have won".³¹

29. Tifft, N.14, P.4.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

The electoral fraud reached a climax when the Philippine National Assembly waved a magic wand over more than twenty million votes converting them into a certificate that offered President Marcos six more years as President of the Philippines. It declared that the President was reelected with 54 percent of the tabulated votes. The National Assembly's confirmation of Marcos' reelection unfolded a more volatile phase in the post-election scenario.

WAVE OF REACTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The upward trend of intimidation, fraud and violence preceding the declaration of the election results and manipulations in the declaration of the result itself, unleashed a wave of reactions in and outside the Philippines.

The first resistance came from the National Assembly itself. It prompted opposition walkout. In Manila thirty one technicians at the official commission on Elections Computer vote tallying center walked off their job protesting against a manipulated count. According to the leader of the group it was reported: "Computer recorded returns which showed Aquino leading were reversed by a backroom coterie Marcos officials before the results

were officially posted on the center's huge tally boards".³³

In an interview granted a week before the polling to Katharine Graham Chairman of the Board of the Washington Post and Newsweek editors, Aquino was asked what she would do if she felt the election had been stolen? She replied "I will lead daily demonstrations in Manila and probably in the provinces too".³⁴

The post-election developments challenged Aquino to turn her claim into actions. She accepted the challenge and initiated a novel demonstration on the streets of Manila. Aquino followed Mahatma Gandhi by adopting non-violence as her strategy to challenge government. She called people to deny moral and legal recognition to Marcos administration. According to Bren Guiao, the campaign organizer of Aquino, the idea behind the adoption of peaceful resistance was "to paralyze the government. This is the only way Marcos can feel the people's power."³⁵

33. H. Anderson, et.al., "Every body Lost", Newsweek (New York), Vol.8, 24 (February 1986), P.12.

34. "An Interview granted to Katharine Graham", Newsweek, (New York), Vol.6, 10 (February 1986), P.28.

35. Melinda Lice, et.al., "The People's Power", Newsweek (New York), Vol.8, 24 (February 1986), P.10.

The Filipinos were enchanted with Aquino's "do-or-die" strategy. There were a series of "People's victory" rallies marches and prayer meetings and nationwide strikes. The oppositions also organized the civil disobedience movement a new strategy ever seen in the Philippines. They adopted the plan of "no payment of taxes, no workers at banks or businesses". They boycotted all businesses those were dominated by Marcos - cronny groups.

Defying Machiavelli's separation of religion from politics, the Roman Catholic Church became a potential force behind the 'people's power'. Special masses were held for Cory Aquino. At a mass Cardinal Jaime Sin wore yellow and green vestments, the colour of opposition. He praised Namfrel by calling them "People of Peace".

Recognising the Church's force, Aquino told the Newsweek "If I did not have the Catholic Church, I might as well call it quits. They are the only ones with an organization to compete with Marcos and his party".³⁶ She utilised all opportunities to make herself available for masses, prayer rallies and funeral services.

36. Ibid.

The hundred-twenty members conference of the Philippine 'Bishops' released a statement condemning the polls. They declared that "The government that assumes or retains power through fraudulent means has no moral basis. The way indicated to us now is the way of non-violent struggle for justice. This means active resistance of evil by peaceful means - in the manner of christ."³⁷

Apart from the people and church, the most effective blow for democracy came from the Filipino Army. It was noted that in the power struggle the Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile had been pushed aside by the General Fabian C. Ver - a favourite of Marcos that made Enrile to work secretly to protect himself and lay the general work for the inevitable period. While political developments were undergoing a Keledoscopic changes, Enrile was busy in building a reform movement in the army - a band of hundred trained soldiers aiming to pressure Marcos to reorganize the military. Throughout the campaigning, Enrile publicly supported Marcos but he directed his soldiers to make a 'Crusade' for honest voting that angered the President and General Ver. The reformers did not lend their support for the purpose of deploying army to make sure of a pro-Marcos

37. Ibid.

result. They had established links with Corazon Aquino and helped in ensuring her security.

In the aftermath of the election, the rebels suspected that they would be trapped by General Ver's faction in the Army. When President Marcos arrested a group of soldiers the reformers informed Defence Minister Enrile immediately who was then in Makati. On Saturday 22nd February, 1986, Enrile resigned from his post and announced that he was going to join with the opposition forces. After taking this decision, he asked for the help of Lieutenant General Fidel Ramos. He told Ramos, "My boys are in this predicament and I will have to be with them. I would like to find out whether you will join us or not".³⁸ Immediately General Ramos replied, "I am with you all the way".³⁹

In early Monday morning, a crowd of Marcos supporters armed with batons and teargas moved toward 'Camp Crame' - where the reformers were gathered to 'wipe them out'. At this moment of showdown, the arch-bishop Cardinal Jaime Sin played a crucial role. He publicly praised Enrile and Ramos and called on people to lend peaceful

38. William E. Smith, "Anatomy of a Revolution", Time (Chicago), Vol. 127, 10 (March 1986), P. 20

39. Ibid.

support to them. Considering the Bishop's appeal thousands of people formed human barricades on the streets to prevent army tanks from reaching rebel's camp. On 23rd February, the civilians with scores of flower - carrying nuns in the forefront blocked the advance of Marcos forces. "This is something new", said one military officer, "soldiers are supposed to protect the civilians. In this particular case you have civilians protecting the soldiers".⁴⁰ The tanks arrived to attack the rebels' camp. The helicopters from the Fifteen Strike Wing of the airforce began circling overhead. The whole world was then in 'nailbiting condition'. But an unexpected event happened. The airmen waved white flags and showed 'L' sign - the symbol of opposition. The crowd realised that the airforce was defecting. So they rejoiced their victory.

THE UNITED STATES : THE LAST BASTION CRUMBLLED

As President Ferdinand Marcos had been a great friend of the United States for two decades, President Ronald Reagan was not in favour of declaring his reelection invalid immediately. It was evident from a New York Times

40. Buffalo Evening News, 25 February 1986 (New York), Editorials on File (New York), Vol.17, 16-28 (February 1986), P.179.

report on President Reagan's news conference on foreign aid and Domestic issues. While replying to a question on credibility of the Philippine election the President said, "Well, I think that we are concerned about the violence that was evident there and the possibility of fraud, although it would have been that all of that was occurring on both sides".⁴¹

On 12th February, President announced that he was sending Philip C. Habib a veteran diplomat 'to assess the desires and needs of the Filipino people'. He did not declare Marcos or Aquino as a 'definitive' victor. The statement was issued hours after President Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz and key administration officials held thirty-five minute meeting with Senator Richard G. Lugar and Representative John P. Murtha (Democrat). It reflected to a large extent the conclusions derived by Senator Lugar and Representative Murtha.

The two legislators who had headed the Nineteen member delegations to the Philippines urged President

41. The New York Times, 12 February, 1986, P.12.

Reagan to refrain from declaring Marcos as winner. Instead, according to the Congressional Sources they urged him to use the US influence for a credible outcome. They also cautioned the President not to label the election as fraudulent, otherwise it would offer a clue to Marcos to discard the results and assume dictatorial control.

THE US CONGRESS

The New York Times reported on 14 February 1986, that the key senators in both parties took the position that US should cut off aid to the Philippines if President Marcos was reelected through fraud.

The most outspoken critic of President Marcos was the ranking Democrat of the Armed Services Committee Mr. San Nunn. As a most influential Democratic Senator on military issues he made some recommendations to Reagan administration.

"Mr. Reagan and other officials must issue clear statements that the fraud has been massive and that it was perpetuated overwhelmingly by President Marcos and his

allies. They must state clearly in Washington that we will not regard a false election result as valid and that we could not continue to support President Marcos under those circumstances. They should issue a notification that US aid to the Philippines will be terminated if the will of the Philippines voters as expressed at the ballot box, is not followed."⁴²

Senator Richard C. Lugar Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee said, "The observer team told President Reagan that it had seen no fraud or violence from the Aquino side".⁴³ He also favoured a sharp cut in aid if the election would turn out to be "fatally flawed".

Senator Gery Hart (Democrat, Colorado), said that he would introduce legislation to put all aid to the Philippines into a trustfund "pending the establishment of a legitimate democratic government".⁴⁴

42. The New York Times, 14 February 1986.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

The mounting pressure from congressional sources and volatile situations in the Philippines which was assumed would make the country vulnerable to civil war, compelled President Reagan to reconsider his policy towards the Philippines. He realized at this point that Marcos' game was up and that American interests would be damaged irreparably if he would support his friend Marcos. So, in the statement issued on 15 February, President Reagan made a marked shift of emphasis on election. He said, "Although our observation delegation has not yet completed its work it has already become evident, sadly, that the elections were marred by widespread fraud and violence perpetuated largely by the ruling party. It was so extreme that the election's credibility had been called into question both within the Philippines and in the United States."⁴⁵

On 24 February when Marcos backed soldiers were on the threshold of attacking the rebels group of the army, President Reagan issued a statement compelling Marcos

45. President's statement, 15 February, 1986 (Text from White House Press Release), Department of State Bulletin, Vol.86, April 1986, P.68.

not to go for any kind of violence against them. He declared, "attempts to prolong the life of present regime by violence are futile. A solution to this crisis can only be achieved by a peaceful transition to a new government."⁴⁶

SENATOR PAUL D. LAXALT - "THE GO-BETWEEN"

President Ferdinand Marcos who had been amassing power for two decades, could not believe that the US President had infact called him to resign. So he clutched the last straw. As Senator Paul D. Laxalt was a close associate of President Reagan, Marcos valued his decisions.

It was reported that while Laxalt was attending a briefing on the Philippines in a "Super-secret windowless room in the Capitol Hill President Marcos telephoned him from Manila. Laxalt told reporters later on that Marcos wanted to know whether the US statement calling for transition to a 'new government' in the Philippines was true. He answered that it was a fact. Then President Marcos asked whether the US wanted him to share power with the oppositions, to which Laxalt said it would be "impractical".

46. Ibid.

Claiming wide support, Marcos asked Laxalt to have a discussion with President Ronald Reagan. Accordingly Laxalt met the President in the White House along with George P. Shultz, Chief of Staff, Donald T. Reagan and National Security Affairs Advisor John Poindexter.

President Reagan affirmed Laxalt's views on powersharing as impractical and 'undignified'. He also told him to assure President Marcos that the US administration would give guarantee of his safe departure from the Philippines and allow him to come to U.S.

From Poindexter's office, Laxalt called Marcos back. Marcos immediately asked whether President Reagan wanted him to step down. Laxalt said that the President was not in the position to make that kind of demand. But he hoped there would be peaceful change.

It was reported that Marcos asked the 'gut question': "Senator, what do you think? Should I step down?, to which Laxalt responded "Mr. President I am not bound by diplomatic restraints. I am talking only for myself, but I think you should cut and cut cleanly."⁴⁷

47. Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report (Washington D.C.) Vol.44, No.9, 1(March 1986), P.485.

That was followed by a long pause so long that Laxalt thought Marcos had hung up and asked whether he was still there to which Marcos responded: "Yes, Senator, I am so very very disappointed".⁴⁸

In the two different ceremonies, both Marcos and Aquino declared themselves as the President of the Philippines. But after receiving the hard and final decisions of the US administration, the disappointed President phoned Enrile asking him to call Ambassador Bosworth of US to find out if the US could provide the Marcoses security to get out of the Malacanang Palace. Then at 9 P.M. four American helicopters picked up the President and his contingents to Hawaii.

On 25th February itself, US Secretary of State George P. Shultz announced US recognition of government of Corazon Aquino.

Thus, it should be noted that the United States once again became the 'King-maker' of the Philippines.

48. Ibid.

President Ferdinand Marcos could ignore all types of odds like, result of the elections, appeal of the church, People's peaceful resistance and polarization of Philippine armed forces but President Reagan's direction to make way for "a peaceful transition of power" was something that could not be ignored. President shifted his stance on Marcos as Stephen Solarz said at the '23 hour, 59 minutes'. But, fortunately the Reagan administration could read the most important writing on the wall written by the Presidential election that the Filipinos were going to discard Marcos and support a democratic-oriented opposition. It is important to note that the US believed in a democratic-oriented opposition which could protect the country from falling prey to the communist insurgency by promising stability.

The time came as a double blessings for the United States to safeguard its interests under the guise of saving democracy by supporting the cause of the Filipino people . Thus, with the US power behind the scene, the Filipinos were able to win the election without shedding a drop of blood, and Corazon Aquino could realize the dream of her husband Senator Benigno Aquino by assuming the charge of the Philippines as "People's President".

CHAPTER - IV

AQUINO'S TAKE OVER

"A thought became a decision became a deed as democracy triumphed with Corazon Aquino in the Philippines".¹

The People's power brought democracy in the Philippines in the shape of Corazon Aquino. A dream became reality, when Cory Aquino recited the Presidential oath: "I am taking power in the name of the Filipino people, I pledge a government dedicated to upholding truth and justice morality and decency, freedom and democracy".²

The new President started to pick up the threads by reuniting a devided Filipino people, rebuilding shattered institutions and reviving a devastated economy of the Philippines.

FORMATION OF CABINET - A FUSION OF INTERESTS

The selection of the cabinet was the handiwork of the President Aquino. As she contested the election with the support of various opposition parties, her government

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1. Roger Rosenblatt, "People's Power", Time, (Chicago) Vol.127, 10 (March 1986), P.9.
 2. Susan Tifft, "Now the hard Part", Time (Chicago), Vol.127, 10 (March 1986), P.10.

could be said to be a coalition government. In order to avoid any clash of interests among the members, she was expected to satisfy each member while allocating the portfolios.

Apart from Defense Minister Jan Ponce Enrile, and the Central Bank Governor Jose Fernandez, she selected sixteen men and one woman for her ministry. The two most prominent members of the cabinet were Salvador ('Doy') Laurel and defense minister Enrile. Laurel was rewarded with the triple titles and double portfolios. He became the Vice-President of the Philippines and was named "Prime Minister" and "Foreign Minister". Braving all suspicions and criticisms President Aquino retained some of the former supporter and friend like Salvador Laurel and Enrile in her cabinet. Luis Villafuerte and Ernesto Macedo, the two other Marcos allies were made the head of the Presidential commission and Minister of Natural Resources respectively.

To bring a balance between left and right ideology, Aquino chose two center - left Assembly men from the Philipino Democratic Party - Laban. They were Aquilino Pimentel, the minister of local government and Ramon Mitra Minister of Agriculture.

She did not appoint any of the independents who had strongly supported her during the election. Thus, Jaime Ongpin, the Chairman of the Benguet Mining Corporation and one of her main campaign strategists and Jose Concepcion a businessman and head of the Namfrel were named Finance Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry respectively.

AQUINO IN U.S.

After attending to the first item on her domestic agenda, President Aquino decided to visit US. to revitalize her country's special relationship. So, she made an official visit to Washington D.C. from September 15 to 19.

She was greeted with a red-carpet welcome by President Ronald Reagan and US. Congress. Florida Democrat Dante Fascell, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee commented, "I have never seen a more supportive and enthusiastic reception."³ While accepting Aquino's request for economic assistance. President Ronald Reagan announced: "I will continue to ask congress for appropriate levels of economic and military assistance above and beyond existing

3. Susan Tifft, "Aquino's Triumph", Time (Chicago), Vol. 128, No.13, 29 (September 1986), P.7.

U.S. base related commitments. The latest installment of our current aid effort - a \$ 100 million grant of economic support funds, which I am pleased to announce will be signed by our respective cabinet members in a few months, a \$ 50 million grant of military assistance, along with a \$ 20 million package of medical supplies and services has been approved."⁴

President Aquino was very much appreciated by the Reagan Administration for her handling of the fiscal policies of the Philippines. She reformed the tax system, liberalized trade, reduced the role of public sector enterprises and government financial institutions and dismantled government ownership of the agricultural sector.

THE PHILIPPINES - HOUSE ON FIRE

When President Aquino returned from US after securing a few concessions the nation was confronting some very difficult problems that had not been attended to by the Marcos government. With the passage of times these problems had become much more intolerable.

4. "Visit of Philippines President Aquino", Department of State Bulletin, (Washington D.C.), Vol.86, No. 2117 December 1986, P.56.

LAND REFORM

Recognising the poverty of the people as the root cause of all the problems that was largely responsible for the success of the communist insurgency, President Aquino sought to strike at the root by introducing a land reform programme. On 3 March 1987, she issued a decree to give effect to the this programme. It was a four-staged programme and supposed to be completed in five years and redistribute some 13.1 million acres to landless peasants and farmers. It did not concede the communist call for total and free land redistribution but its target was many times the total acres redistributed under all administration preceding Aquino. The government was ready to compensate the land owners. It planned to redistribute the land and aid and advice the new farmers to earn out of their lands.

In the first stage of the programme, 1.3 million acres were to be redistributed comprising only of land that produced maize and rice. The second phase aimed at distribution of 2.3 million acres lands among the landless peasants which were owned privately, or had been abandoned or seized by the government. The next stage included 9.5

million acres of sugar and coconut lands. The last stage included the use of public lands.⁵

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5. "President Corzon Aquino on 10 June signed in to law a bill providing for the redistribution of large tracts of government owned and private farm land. The legislation had been passed on June 7 by the Philippine Senate and on June 8 by the House of Representatives. The measure, known as the comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP) would be implemented in phases over a 10 year period. During that time as much as 2.8 million hectares (6.9 million acres) of agricultural land would be parceled out to approximately two to three million landless peasants, government officials estimated. The first phase of the programme lasting from 1988 through 1992, would cover the redistribution of government held lands and all private estates larger than 50 hectares (125 acres). The second phase, from 1992-1995 would cover private holdings ranging from 24-59 hectares (60-125 acres). The last phase, from 1995-1998, would involve smaller holdings."

To finance the land reform the government would require to sell companies that were under the ownership of cronies of former President Ferdinand Marcos. Frederick Brown, a former Republican staffer on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, commented that the land reform had to consist of more than distribution of farm plots to the peasantry though many Americans thought Aquino should begin that process by breaking up her own family's 15,000 acre sugar growing estates, Hacienda Lucisita. He stressed on full-scale rural reform, which would include diversions of land from unprofitable sugar growing to farming of fish and vegetables for export training of new farmowners in agricultural techniques and creation of non-farm job opportunities for rural residents.

ARMED REBELLION

The armed forces had played an important role in bringing down the autocratic rule of Ferdinand Marcos and supporting Corazon Aquino. So, the army was presumed as the sole organization which could break or make the government of a particular country.

The Philippine army that was disintegrated during the period of President Marcos hoped for a better deal

from President Corazon Aquino, in terms of handsome salary and power. When President Aquino started her administration with peace as her basic principle in dealing with the communists, a section of the defense forces supported by Defense Minister Enrile went against the President. They could not stand the toleration of communist guerillas by the administration which instructed soldiers to remain defensive while dealing with the New People's Army of the communists. The discontent of the section of army gradually took the shape of many coup attempts by the particular section of the army. They had been declared as the rebel army by the Aquino administration.

The most dangerous coup occurred on 28 August 1987. The uprising was most serious against the government in the eighteen months since it had risen to power following a revolt against former President Ferdinand Marcos.

According to government figures fifty three people- 12 government troops, 19 rebels and 22 civilians died in the fighting. Hundreds of persons, including President's son, were wounded.

The mutiny began in Manila around 1,30 a.m. when several hundred troops attacked the "Malacanang Palace".

The attack was repulsed by the palace guard about 300 yards from the residence of the President. Some witnesses reported that "civilians were hit when the rebels drove up to the palace and began fighting wildly. Other civilians were reportedly shot by the mutineers when they shouted slogans in supporting President Aquino".⁶

The mutineers were successful in taking over several private T.V. stations. Many were apparently injured in the battle that occurred at Government's channel 4 T.V. stations in Quezon city. By 8 a.m. the rebels had taken control of the camp Aguinaldo military base - the army headquarters where the revolt against Marcos had began.

Forces loyal to the Government began counter-attacking at camp Aguinaldo around noon, but it was nearly 12 more hours before General Ramos announced that the base was brought under complete control of his army and all mutineers there were captured.

The uprising, fifth in number was led by soldiers linked with Reform the Armed Forces Movement which had

6. Facts on File, (New York), Vol.47, No.2441, September 4 1987, P.638.

helped Aquino to come to power. Co. Gregario Honasan was at the helm of affairs. However, he put a different interpretation of the mutiny. On 28 August he said that the revolt was not a military coup and explaining the reason behind the uprising he said that the action was being taken because the Aquino government had lost its "political will". He denied that his soldiers had any loyalty to Marcos.

REACTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Though the mutiny had not won wide civilian support, a number of Philippine politicians expressed sympathy for the frustrations that they saw as underlying the military revolt. Salvador H. Laurel the Vice-President said "we are not enemies, we are all Filipinos. We must find out what it is these rebels are willing to die for."⁷

But plans were also made by Aquino to assert herself and deal with the mutineers firmly to discourage other

7. Facts on File, (New York), Vol.47, No.2441, 4 (September 1987), P.639.

possible plotters. Former Defense Minister Enrile who was a leading opposition voice in the Senate denied any involvement with the coup, despite his previous close ties to Honasan. Enrile blamed failure of Aquino's leadership for prompting "young and idealistic officers" to try to overthrow her.

Some coup makers were very confident that they would be recognised by the foreign governments like the US because of their anti-communist stance. Characterising this as a grave mistake the Washington Post wrote: "The crucial distinction is that President Corzon Aquino's Government is a genuine democracy while the coup makers have something quite different in mind."⁸

U.S. BACKED AQUINO

US administration repeatedly expressed its support for the Aquino government. On 28 August President Reagan expressed "America's unqualified support for President Aquino". The State department appreciated Aquino's effort to bring stability in the Philippines.

8. The Washington Post, August 29, 1987, The Editorials on File, (New York), Vol.18, No.6, March 16-31, 1987, P.967.

Washington dismissed the rebel's insistence on their goals that aimed at dramatizing grievances against Aquino's government for "trampling upon the rights and privileges of soldiers and policemen" as baseless. A State Department spokeswoman commented: "If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and shoots like a coup then I think we are safe in calling in that".⁹

The US repeatedly threatened the leaders of the mutiny that all the US military aid would be cut off if the coup succeeded.

COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

As Cory Aquino believed in resolving violence through peace, she took a novel step of calling for a cease-fire first in the 17-year history of the insurgency. The truce was for 60 days.

The agreement with the communist dominated National Democratic Front, political umbrella organization for the 20,000 member NFA allowed as many as 50-rebel negotiators to set up a head quarters in Manila.

9. William L. Cheze with Vic Vanzi, "For Aquino another thriller in Manila", US News And World Report (Washington D.C.) Vol.103, September 7 1987. P.10.

But Aquino's patience all but ran out when the guerrilla units attacked Philippine military units that were instructed to take only defensive actions.

Addressing 400 military officers at Camp Aguinaldo President declared: "The truce is over. God may yet snatch us from the brink of war and set us down gently in peace. In the meantime we are pledged to secure the persons and property of our citizens. To that end, the New Armed Forces will resume operations against the insurgents."¹⁰ Though, she left open the possibility of renegotiation. It would get no response as a rebel spokesman said: This is the most important phase of our struggle, and we shall do everything to kill Cony's soldiers".¹¹

The US State Department officials said that the Philippine army was short of supplies. Secretary of State George Shultz appealed Congress to add \$50 million in military aid to \$ 50 million already sanctioned. He said: "There is a vicious communist insurgency in the Philippines, and the armed forces need resources."¹²

10. President Aquino's address as quoted in Edward W. Desmond, "Unleashing the Army", Time (Chicago), Vol.129, No.8 February 23, 1987, P.14.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., P.15.

The Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Gaston J. Sigur Jr. reported positively to the congress on the Aquino Government's efforts. But Assistant Secretary of Defence Richard C. Armitage testified that the Aquino Government had failed to develop a comprehensive counter insurgency plan.

BASES

Considering the strategic position of the Philippines in the Pacific, the US had demanded a foothold in lieu of the Philippines independence. Thus, the Military Base Agreement (MBA) was signed on 14 March 1947. According to the agreement both of the parties agreed to observe fullest and closest military cooperation and to integrate the US and Philippine military plans for mutual protection. The agreement was reached for 99 years.

The agreement had undergone a significant change in 1966. It set down that the military bases would continue for another twenty-five years. The basic objective behind the Philippine grant of bases to the US was to get American economic assistance for the reconstruction of its devastated economy. Thus, to satisfy its demands the Philippines demanded more and more payments as compensations.

The US agreed to pay \$ 500 million in compensation for the previous 5 year period that commenced in October 1979. Under that scheme the US agreed to provide \$ 475 million for economic support fund used for the improvement of the area around the bases, \$300 million for sales credit and \$125 million for military assistance.

But the "Base issue" that cropped up during the Aquino Administration involved in itself some unique phenomena.

During her Presidential campaign in 1986, the base issue was integrated with nationalism. Filipinos, particularly those were leftists viewed the presence of US bases in the Philippines as the encroachment of its sovereignty. Apart from the nationalists, and communists, the Philippine media was also critical of US bases in the country. The Star Reporter, a Philippine newspaper commented: "After all, there is no conceivable threat of immediate invasion of the Philippines. With Japs out of the way. So let's sleep over it (negotiations for the setting up of the military bases). It would be to everybody's advantage, if we did".¹³

13. Star Reporter, 5 (September 1946) as quoted in Chintamani Mahapatra, "Future of the US Military Bases in the Philippines" Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), Vo.XII No.9, (December 1988), p.1014.

But for most of the Filipinos, a respectable compensation was the basic issue. As James Putzel described: "what is at stake is whether or not the Aquino administration and congressional leaders will be seen as protectors of Filipino nationalism and sovereignty capable of exalting a respectable compensation package for use of the bases",¹⁴

Reacting to the demand of more compensation the US secretary of State George P. Shultz said: "If the Philippines demanded a higher compensation we will have to find some other place to have our ships and planes because we only want to be at a place where we have an ally that wants as there".¹⁵

But as Subic and Clark, particularly the naval base form an important part of the global military reach of the US. It was in the process of reconsidering its plan of abandonment of the bases.

14. James Putzel, "The Philippines: President Aquino's four challenges", *World Today* (London), Vol. 44, No. 8-9, August/September 1988, P. 157.

15. The New York Times, 25 June 1988.

The Philippine installations has been considered as fulcrum of America's Pacific deployment. They used to guard vital sea lanes, counter a growing Soviet naval presence in the region and serve as a spring board for operations in Vietnam and Middle East.

The economic factor also prompts the US to retain the bases. It makes available cheapest but highly skilled Filipino labor for repairing ships incomparision to workers in the US and Guam.

Thus, keeping this in mind, on 17 October 1988, an interim agreement was signed by the US Secretary of State George F. Shultz and Foreign Secretary Raul S. Manglapus in Washington DC. Under the terms of the newly signed agreement, the US agreed to provide the Philippines with US \$ 481 million a year in military and economic assistance in fiscal year 1990 and 1991. The new figure is far less than the US \$ 1.2 billion a year that was requested by the Philippines. But the amount is much higher than what the Philippines was receiving previously. It is assumed that "Washington agreed to pay such a large sum, in the absense of any statutory obligation to do so, indicating its continuing interests in

maintaining the bases perhaps because of a quiet assurance by the other party that the bases agreement would be extended beyond 1991."¹⁶ The Philippine Senator Ernesto Maceda Chairman of the Senate Defense Committee commented on the base agreement as follows:

"The pact confirmed that we can not really stand up to Washington."¹⁷

But in the case of the Philippines the acceptance of the agreement was very much guided by economic factor. As the Philippine economy, unlike South Korea and Singapore, is largely dependent on US aid it has been predicted that "The promise of a multi-million dollar "Marshall Plan" for the Philippine economic development will therefore be the major bargaining chip when negotiations for extension of the Military Bases Agreement come up in near future."¹⁸

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16. Chintamani Mahapatra, "Reflections on America's South east Asia Policy" Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), Vol. XIII, No.1, (April 1989), P.70.
17. Facts on File (New York), Vol.48, No.2500, 21 (October 1988), P.783.
18. Mohapatra, N.16, Ibid.

ROLE OF U.S.:

The United States has an important stake in the success of Aquino administration in political economic and social sphere of the Philippines. The US commitment of democracy, its friendship for the Filipino people, to cap it all, its strategic interests demand a special support for the Philippines.

To achieve this, the United States is pursuing a number of immediate policy goals which can be described as follows:

"To forge stronger links with the new generation of the Philippines leaders; To maintain a continuing and close defence relationship with the Philippines; To support Philippines initiatives designed to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of the Philippine Armed forces; and To assist Philippine public and private sector efforts to restore economic prosperity to the country."¹⁹

The Philippines has been suffering from peculiar third world problems like, inflation, foreign debt, foreign exchange

19. Reform In the Philippines And American Interests: The US Role In consolidatory Democracy", Department of State Bulletin, (Washington D.C), Vol. 86 (August 1986) P.28.

crisis, poverty, malnourishment ethnic crisis and communist insurgency.

No administration can be expected to solve these complicated problems in the immediate future. The problem require gradual reform in a long run basis. To pacify its problems, the Philippines has to rely on the support of the United States which in turn would not allow it to fall prey to commanism by keeping an eye on its stability. This is the reason that prompted the US to back Corazon Aquino which got a reflection on President Reagan's statement: our hearts and hands are,with President Aquino and her new government as they set out to meet the challenges ahead."²⁰

20. Ibid. P.29.

CHAPTER - V

EPILOGUE

"A revolution may be conducted against a national government, if such a government has abused the power placed at its disposal by the people with the purpose of having justice administered, by using this power to drown out the public voice and at the sametime to administer to its own convenience or caprice."¹

- Apolinario Mabini

While justifying the revolution against a constitutional government Apolinario Mabini, the pre-independent political thinker of the Philippines echoed Locke's theory of 'Right to Resistance' that found its manifestation in the great historic democratic revolution of the Philippines against the autocratic regime of President Ferdinand Marcos.

The Filipinos rightly followed Mabini's justification of the revolution to justify their discontent with the two-decades of Marcos's autocratic rule that resulted in a great crisis. The crony - a new elite class that comprised of close associates and family members of President Ferdinand Marcos was responsible for the crisis in

1. Cesar Adib Majul, The Political And Constitutional Ideas of the Philippine Revolution (Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 1967), P.75.

every sphere of the Filipino society.

In the economic sphere, the government dramatically increased its role that could be branded as "Marcos Socialism". Substantiating government's control of the economy the University of the Philippines School of Economics had issued a report on the crisis which recorded that : "688 presidential decrees and 283 letters of instructions were issued by Marcos since 1972 that represented various forms of government intervention in the economy".²

All the key-areas of private sectors were dominated by the Crony groups. For example, Coconut and Sugar, the two most important agricultural products were under the monopoly of Eduardo Cojuangco and Roberto Benedicto, the two close associates of the President. It resulted in grave discontent among the ordinary farmers.

Decline in exports and investments caused deficit in the balance of payments. Continued borrowing from the foreign countries and heavy reliance on foreign trade had left the country highly dependent on international economic conditions and decisions of the developed countries.

2. "An Analysis of the Philippine Economic Crisis", Manila: University of the Philippines, School of Economics, June 1984, as cited in Robert Manning, "The Philippines in Crisis", Foreign Affairs (New York), Vol.63, 1984/85, P.394.

The inflation rate reached 50 percent. The real wages continued to slide down. Though in 1970s, the GNP had grown at an average rate of 6.6 percent per annum, the graph turned downwards to an estimated rate of 1.4 percent, a rate less than that of population growth in 1983. The unemployment rates for urban workers reached 25 percent. Lack of any direct and consistent mechanisms for income redistribution widened the gap between rich and poor.

The deepening economic crisis generated a massive backlash in the Philippine politics. As the Marcos government did not try to penetrate the countrysides, the communists got a chance to build their strongholds in the interior of the country. The New People's Army - the armed wing of the communist party organised peasants, trade-unionists, and the poor people against the government. Frustrated by the government's crony politics the people had no way out but to join the movement led by the communists. The wholesome corruption of the ruling class, strengthened the communists who also got support from church and business class.

Apart from politics and economy the Philippine military - the most organised sector in the country also suffered from corruption and favouritism. Since the declaration of martial law, the military became the handmaid of Marcos regime. Favouritism and personal loyalty were given preference to merit. The appointment of General Fabian Ver symbolized an unprecedented politicization of the military as 17 generals and 13 colonels were made to retire to clear the way for him.

A section of the defence forces who belonged to Ilocano - the constituency of President Marcos was favoured by the government in terms of salary and job distributions. The discrimination generated a split in the defence forces. The junior officers who were made to deal with the guerrilla forces in the remote areas remained low-paid. The in-service rift in the army found its manifestation in "Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) which was organised to restore professionalism within the armed forces.

The most unique part of the 1986 democratic revolution was the co-operation of the Church with the masses.

Machiavelli's separation of religion from politics was discarded by the Roman Catholic arch-bishop Cardinal Jaime Sin who became more vocal in demanding fresh presidential mandate.

The surging tide of movement towards democracy woke up Reagan administration from its great slumber. Reacting to the situation, the President of the United States distanced away from his friendly autocrat in demanding election and finally shifting his stand by supporting Corazon Aquino the rival candidate of President Marcos as people's President.

The critical role played by the United States by shifting its stance was governed by a major objective, to strike a balance in the Pacific region.

The balance of Power was somewhat tilted towards Soviet Union with the emergence of Vietnam as a regional military power as manifested in its intervention in Kampuchea and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. To add fuel to the fire, the trouble in the ANZUS alliance started when Newzealand's labour party headed by David Lange had been swept to victory. It carried out a pledge that nuclear powered or nuclear weapons carrying ships would not be permitted to visit the country's ports.

In the international affairs, it has been generally believed that intervention is one of the various ways which is adopted by the superpowers to maintain balance of power in their favour. For example, Britain intervened in Greece at the end of the second world war in order to see that Greece did not fall to the communists. Likewise, the Soviet Union intervened in the affairs of its East European Satellites to establish communist government there. The United States is known for its intervention in Latin America. It intervened in Vietnam and Dominican Republic to get a foothold. Thus, the most tested intervention was followed again by the United States in the case of the Philippines.

A stable Philippines with a moderate pro-American government got a preponderance over support to an autocratic government that was about to collapse because of popular uprising. It shifted its support from Marcos to the candidature of Corazon Aquino who thrived on people's power.

Though there was discontent and disaffection among the Filipinos, it did not surface before or during the period of martial law. President Marcos used all types of methods to control public opinion and the government was presumed to be in full command of the situation. The United States instead of protesting against the imposition of the

martial law supported the Marcos regime. The support of the US reached its Zenith, when Vice-President George Bush during his visit to Manila in 1981 praised Marcos: "We love your adherence to democratic principles."³

With unconditional support of the United States the Marcos regime had no difficulty in maintaining its supremacy over other contenders to power. But the assassination of Benigno Aquino former Senator and Marcos rival had exposed the shattered conditions of the Philippines. Considering the US responsible for Marcos's authoritarianism the Filipinos backed by the Church protested against the US bases in the Philippines. People's power grew out of proportions when Filipino Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Army Chief Fidel Ramos walked out of Marcos Government to join with the people.

Thus, when President Marcos was left with no virtual control over the revolutionaries and declared himself President disregarding the opinion of the people the US took a pragmatic step by supporting people's backed candidate Corazon Aquino. The United States chose to play a King maker's role at a crucial time with the assumption that it could have a government in the Philippines which

3. Robert Manning, "The Philippines In Crisis", Foreign Affairs (New York), Vol.63, 1984/85, P.405.

would be persuaded to generally follow the US foreign policy goals in the region. So, when Marcos was about to crush the revolutionaries with his loyal soldiers, the warning of the US not to use force against the revolutionaries played a vital role in the success of the People's power.

By supporting a moderate government of the President Aquino the US gained a point in its favour when Aquino avoiding the demand of the abolition of US bases kept the option open for further discussion between the two countries.

Here one should note that, though gradual in nature, the shift in emphasis was forced with realities. While supporting Ferdinand Marcos, President Ronald Reagan was guided by the lines offered by Jeane Kirkpatrick, the US Representative to the UN in the Reagan Administration. She drew a line between autocratic rulers and totalitarian communist government. While the US could support autocratic rulers if the situation demanded, totalitarian rulers had to be opposed at all costs.

She was very much against the downplaying of the abuses of the communist rulers that had been followed by the US President Jimmy Carter. She did not appreciate

for example Carter's policy of being too-hard on right-wing rulers which according to her paved the way for the collapse of Shah of Iran and Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza, throwing the door open for even worst despotic regime. Following Kirkpatrick's advice, President Reagan strongly attacked left-wing regimes in Poland and Nicaragua and took comparatively softer line for repressive government in Chile South Africa, the Philippines and South Korea.



But his shift in emphasis after the Philippine Presidential election of 1986, was guided by a more practical approach offered by the Secretary of the State George Shultz. According to Shultz the dictators should be given time to clean up their acts and must be pushed aside when they would not fulfill it.

Here, it is to be noted that the US plea for restoration of democracy has always been subjugated to its interests in the concerned countries which is well expressed by Wayne Smith, a Professor of Latin American Studies at John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington. He stated that "we put emphasis on democracy when it suits our purpose".⁴

4. Jill Smolowe, "Is Panama Worth The Agony?" Time (Chicago), Vol. No.21, 22 (May 1989), P.13.

Thus, it can be stated that a unique drama of democratic revolution was enacted in the Philippines in which the United States acted well to crown people's power as the best actor as the zero hour approached.

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