Martial Law in the Philippines: The Methods of Regime Survival

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The Philippines was the latest of the colonially inspired experiments in constitutional democracy within Southeast Asia to succumb to a palace coup. Because the Filipino citizenry had a longer experience in the uses of competitive elections, a free press and an independent judiciary than did the other peoples of the region, the demise of such institutions holds a special fascination for the scholar and is regarded as a special tragedy by all those who love freedom.

Martial law was declared by President Marcos on September 21, 1972, more than halfway through his second, and constitutionally final, four-year term. He has clung to power beyond that term by utilizing for purposes of gaining legitimacy the transitory provisions of the 1973 Constitution. That document was drafted in the Presidential palace, adopted by the Constitutional Convention under duress, and "ratified" by voice vote in village assemblies where armed soldiers and policemen were in prominent attendance. Though a majority of the Supreme Court regarded this ratification as invalid, there was *not* a majority to declare the new "Constitution not in force."[1]

Some writers, including Marcos and his apologists, have described what happened in the early 1970's as the "failure of Philippine democracy." But that is a distortion of the realities of that period. Filipino democratic institutions did not break down, either in the sense of an inability to maintain order or a failure to respond to changes within the society. The rising political violence after 1969 was to a considerable degree the creation of Marcos himself, first in trying to get himself re-elected and then in preparing a justification for martial law.

[1] See the "Plebiscite Cases," Javellana vs. the Executive Secretary, et al, Supreme Court, GR No. 136142, and other cases. Decision by Chief Justice Concepcion, March 31, 1973. For a good analysis see Rolando del Carmen, "Constitutionalism and the Supreme Court in a Changing Philippine Polity," *Asian Survey* (November 1973), pp. 1050-1061. For political aspects of constitutional "ratification" see Justus M. van der Kroef, "Communism and Reform in the Philippines," *Pacific Affairs*, Winter 1973-74, pp. 54-55.

And the legislation as well as the Constitutional Convention elections during the same period gave new opportunities to the under-privileged and under-represented to put their mark on political processes and government programmes.[2] If allowed to complete its task, the ConCon would probably have produced a document that opened up government to new social forces on a permanent basis. It was a classic case of intra-elite conflict benefiting mass participation.

At first it appeared that Marcos would be satisfied to prolong his power by means of a new Constitution. Nearly half of the delegates to the Convention were elected with his support and he was able to buy enough more to secure initial approval of a parliamentary form in which he could become prime minister without any restrictions on his term of office.[3] But the ConCon's leisurely pace threatened to push deliberations beyond the end of his presidency in December 1973. So he created the incident, the "ambush" of the Secretary of Defense, that would permit a more forceful intervention while he still possessed the precious advantage of incumbency.[4] Now he rules by decree until such time as *he* shall, in his own discretion, decide to activate the parliamentary provisions of the new basic document.

Marcos's Accomplishments

The legal justification asserted for the declaration of martial law was the existence of an armed rebellion led by the Maoist New People's Army, having—according to Marcos himself—1,028 armed "regulars" under its command.[5] To combat this rebellion many thousands of civilians were detained for suspicion of complicity or sympathy; about 5,000 of them remained under detention in 1976. Hundreds were tortured.[6] At the same time the military launched campaigns in several provinces against the rebels—including the use of Vietnam-style "relocation" of villages—claiming considerable success. Non-political crimes of violence, e.g., cattle-rustling in the countryside or murder in the cities, were also reduced, partly as a result of the massive round-up of private firearms. Only in Mindanao, where Christian-Muslim conflict had by 1972 already produced bloody incidents, but the NPA forces were very weak, has violence escalated

[2] An early expression of such a view was found in Francisco Araneta and John Carroll, "Politics and Government," in J. Carroll, et al, *Philippine Institutions* (Manila, 1970), p. 153.

[3] See *Manila Times*, June 5 and 13, 1972; and *Philippines Free Press* July 8, 1972, p. 46.

[4] For evidence that the incident was created see Primitivo Mijares, *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos* (San Francisco, 1976).

[5] Proclamation 1081, September 21, 1972, p. 15.

[6] *Report of an Amnesty International Mission to the Republic of the Philippines, 22 November-5 December 1975* (London: AI Publications, 1976), p. 20.

since martial law (and as a direct result of its policies) in both Christian and non-Christian areas.

Though by September 1976 the government claimed widespread success in the restoration of peace and order, culminating in the dramatic capture of two top NPA leaders,[7] there were no substantial signs that martial law would truly be ended. The justification for its continuance was entirely separate from the original basis of Proclamation No. 1081: it was now claimed that only through the abandonment of electoral politics and the use of presidential decrees could rapid economic development and greater social justice be achieved. This purpose was spelled out in the Marcos book, *Today's Revolution: Democracy* (1971) and reiterated by his chief henchmen after the declaration of martial law. For instance, the head of the National Economic Development Authority, Gerardo Sicat,[8] spelled out the New Society's first three priorities as peace and order, land reform, and economic development. Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor insisted that "the ultimate concern of the New Society . . . is the promotion of social justice and equality for all Filipinos."

Thanks to aggressive policies designed to attract foreign loans and investment, as well as some very good luck in the rise of international commodity prices, a remarkable real growth-rate of 10 per cent was achieved in 1973.[9] But by 1975 the world-market price for almost all major exports had dropped dramatically, OPEC had boosted the cost of Philippine oil imports, and the Philippines registered a record trade deficit of $1.04 billion.[10] (In 1976 sugar exports were valued at only about half those of 1975.) GNP real growth-rates slid back to pre-martial law levels and the rate of new foreign investment tapered off as well. If the inflow of new foreign loans should ever diminish (the Philippine foreign debt rose from ₱1.7 billion in 1972 to ₱6.3 billion in 1975[11]), the Philippines would face not only a debt crisis but a general economic slump. So far, however, the major international creditors have been generous.

The accomplishments in the realm of social justice have been less noticeable than in general economic development. In fact, the rich continue to get richer, and the poor, poorer. The sales of the top 50

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[7] *Manila Journal,* September 5-11, 1976, p. 1.

[8] *New Economic Directions in the Philippines,* (NEDA, 1974), p. 12.

[9] Gerardo Sicat, "The Economic Breakthrough," in *The First Three Years of the New Society* (Manila: National Media Production Center, 1975), p. 111.

[10] Russell Cheetham and Edward K. Hawkins, *The Philippines: Priorities and Prospects for Development* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1976), p. 462.

[11] Cesar Virata, "Development Fiscal Policy, in *The First Three Years . . . , op. cit.,* p. 35.

corporations grew, between 1972 and 1974, at nearly twice the rate of the GNP.[12] At the same time the real income of wage labor declined by 30 per cent,[13] and the ban on strikes prevented even that small portion of labor which is organized from catching up, after inflation slowed down again in 1975. (Government subsidies did help keep the price increase down on certain consumer items.) Furthermore, income taxes, the least regressive of government revenues, dropped from 28 per cent of tax receipts in 1972 to 26 per cent in 1975, despite a brief upsurge in 1973,[14] indicating that the poor were paying a larger share of the taxes than at any time in several years. Moreover, evidence from many sources suggested that the most rapid accumulation of wealth was in the coffers of the First Family.

The policy for social justice which received the greatest publicity was land reform. The pace of land transfer in the first three years was indeed impressive when compared with a comparable period before the declaration of martial law. But the claims were far greater than the reality. As of July 1976 only 100,000 tenants had received "certificates of land transfer"—a tentative promise of future benefit—about 25 per cent of the original program goal; only 26,000 had actually stopped paying rent to landlords and started paying amortization installments to the Land Bank—the crucial transformation that may accurately be called "land reform."[15] At the same time government policy to increase rice production promoted "corporate farming." Thousands of tenants and owners were reduced to wage-laborers under corporate management. Untitled cultivators on public land were often physically removed to make way for the corporate bulldozer.[16]

If these are the accomplishments of the regime, what are its prospects? Political stability is recognized by economists and political scientists alike as being a crucial prerequisite of economic growth. But for the ruling political elite stability is not just the prerequisite to something else; it implies the retention of power—what is for most the primary goal of action. The various critiques of electoral democracy in the Philippines and in other late developing polities have often concentrated on the wasteful costs of the frequent contests for power. And

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[12] See *NEDA Statistical Yearbook, 1975;* and *Business Day's Top 1000 Corporations,* 1972 and 1974.

[13] Central Bank of the Philippines, *Statistical Bulletin,* XXVI, December 1974, p. 398.

[14] R. Cheetham and E. K. Hawkins, *op. cit.,* p. 392.

[15] Land Bank of the Philippines, "Land Transfer Payments and Area of Distribution as of June 30, 1976" (typescript).

[16] See David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Policy Today," paper delivered at International Orientalist Congress, Mexico City, August 1976, p. 3.

it is quite true that the costs of Philippine elections as a means of achieving power have sometimes been quite excessive in relation to the total resources of the society—including leadership time.[17] Yet after power has been achieved legitimately, and especially when it is achieved for a fixed and final term, relatively little attention needs to be paid to the maintenance of power, provided the leadership is willing to play by the constitutional rules. On the other hand, for a leader who has achieved or maintained power by means of doubtful legitimacy and who claims indefinite tenure, the retention of power is a multi-faceted task that he faces every day. It involes attention to forces that threaten to upset the existing political order, whether they originate from the masses, from within the economic or political elite—civilian or military, or from abroad.

Bolstering Legitimacy

The efforts of President Marcos to maintain the stability of his regime may be divided into two general categories: first, his attempts to bolster regime legitimacy in the eyes of the whole populace (the strategy); and second, his moves to reduce the threat from particular sources (the tactics). Efforts at legitimation included a vigorous economic development policy, the success of which depended on the vagaries of international commodity prices and on attracting foreign loans and investment, and the institution of referenda through *barangays* (a pre-Spanish term now appropriated for the village and for urban neighborhood organizations). These referenda, first by voice vote and then by "secret ballot," have been used to "ratify" the 1973 Constitution—as well as its "amendment" in 1976—and to provide the "right" answer for such questions as "Do you want President Marcos to continue in office and finish the reforms he has initiated under Martial Law?" The regularity of favorable responses in the 90 to 95 per cent range was, as is now known, the result of figures being "pre-cooked."[18] By the third referendum in July 1975 a loosely organized campaign was waged by certain church leaders against participation in such a farcical process. As a result government pressures became more overt and more clumsy, bringing an even wider disillusionment among the citizenry.[19] A balanced assessment by leading Filipino academics has concluded that any meaningful participation

[17] See David Wurfel, "The Philippines," in Special Issue on Comparative Political Finance, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 25 (1963), p. 761 ff.

[18] See Primitivo Mijares, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 451 ff.

[19] See Association of Major Religious Superiors, *Various Reports*, March 28, 1975, April 4, 11, and 18, 1975.

of citizens in decision-making is impossible through the *barangay* referendum, a "managed affair to provide legitimacy to the martial law regime."[20]

The focus on the *barangay* seems to imply a conscious decision not to organize a new political party to support the regime, since Marcos is well aware of this option, chosen by other authoritarian rulers. However, he *is* using another classic tool for building legitimacy—nationalism. This is most obvious in a foreign policy that has wisely tried to counter-balance the once lopsided reliance on the American connection. Certain cultural programmes (the plan to introduce Pilipino as the language of instruction in all schools, even the use of the term *barangay* itself) are further manifestations. Economic nationalism, on the other hand, has had to be abandoned, given the decision to rely heavily on foreign capital. The regime's pursuit of nationalism when it is convenient, and its avoidance when not, is much easier under conditions of media control.

Control of the communications media must also be accounted one of the key elements in the fostering of legitimacy in the public mind. In fact, a measure of the priority is the amount of time the President gives personally to directing media tactics. Media control is essential for maintaining two important myths about the "New Society"—first that crime has practically been eliminated, and second that corruption is rare or, in any case, always punished. Just as in many cities of North America, crime stories were formerly the mainstay of the Philippine press. Now crime is almost never reported; and when theft or murder does receive notice in the newspapers, the metropolitan police are always described as "getting their man." Similarly, official corruption is seldom mentioned, and only when someone has been formally charged or dismissed from office. Such media control has been remarkably successful in removing from the public consciousness phenomena which are no less common than before and of which many people have personal experience. In fact, a confidential report to the Supreme Court in 1975 revealed that crimes against property had in fact increased since 1972—a not surprising fact, given the steady pauperization of the urban working class. Yet the public awareness of crime has certainly declined.

Though corrupt practices did indeed diminish sharply in the first several months after the declaration of martial law, when fear of the consequences of misdeeds was still high, old ways quickly returned. In

[20] Raul de Guzman, et al, "Citizen Participation and Decision-Making under Martial Law . . . ," (Manila, December 1974), p. 33.

one of the few attempts by scholars to measure low-level corruption, researchers found that in one government bureau during late 1973 the extra-legal receipts of employees for processing papers, based on the most conservative assumptions, substantially exceeded their legal income. At the highest levels, foreign investors and major Filipino entrepreneurs were finding that, despite the disappearance of the Congressional politician-fixer, high officials and their relatives were expecting an ever larger "take" from new ventures. The fact that a large part of the Lopez economic empire ended up in the hands of the Marcos family is now widely recognized and partly documented.[21] That numerous other family corporations have been pressed into transferring millions of dollars worth of stocks and other evidences of ownership to the President and his representatives with only symbolic compensation has been less widely publicized abroad. Any publicity of such an incident within the Philippines is effectively prevented by threat of dire sanctions. Yet such matters are of sufficiently general knowledge within the bureaucracy to undermine the moral basis for disciplining lesser officials. Anyone actually punished for corruption is usually understood simply to have fallen from favor, or to be the victim of factional infighting. The majority of the citizens are aware of the pervasive petty corruption, even though they do not have a sophisticated understanding of what goes on behind the scenes at higher levels.

In any case, by magnifying the virtues and ignoring the failings, media control has facilitated a majority acquiescence in martial law. High school students, who were not part of the newspaper-reading public before September 1972, and thus not accustomed to a press critical of government, are particularly prone to accept the rose-colored glasses prescribed by "Dr." Marcos.

Categories of Acquiescence and Legitimacy

It would be unwise, however, to equate all acquiescence with the granting of legitimacy to the regime. One measure of the extent of acquiescence and the boldness of opposition can be gleaned from the July 1973 referendum in which citizens were asked to submit written comments on political, economic and social conditions. Less than a third of those voting, in an atmosphere exuding pressure to support the regime, produced the desired response—favorable remarks about martial law; a quarter dared to write criticism of the authoritarian

[21] See Mijares, *op, cit.*, pp. 198-202; *Philippines News*, January 2, 23, 1975.

rulers, e.g., complaints about the loss of civil liberties, suspension of elections, and others.[22] Without any measure of the degree of coercion felt by those who submitted these comments, it is difficult to interpret this result, but it is possible to distinguish at least four categories of response.

These categories will be delineated by two concepts, acquiescence and legitimacy: the first referring to acceptance of or submission (both behaviorally and verbally) to authority because it has a monopoly of force; and the second defined as the acceptance of authority as legal or morally rightful. Anyone who neither acquiesces in, nor regards as legitimate, the powers that be is, by definition, resisting authority, either by simply going underground, or by engaging in rebellion or more sporadic resistance. Such people did not, of course, participate in the referendum and probably do not exceed one per cent of the population.

Of those who did cast a ballot, mentioned in the order of their support for the regime, the first group might be called "regime participants"—those who are so involved in the present political and economic order, and reaping so much benefit from it, that they are willing supporters of constituted authority and its claims to legitimacy. Most members of the military and their families, a segment of the bureaucracy and of the business community, as well as friends, relatives and province-mates of the First Family constitute this group, not more than three to four per cent of the citizenry.

The second category, the largest, make Marcos's rule possible. These are the "unsophisticated subjects," almost half of the populace, who have a fatalistic, *bahala na,* outlook on politics. For them, poorly educated peasants, fishermen and workers, "what is must be," and the effective exercise of authority begets both acquiescence and a mantle of legitimacy. They are unaware of the proper methods of drafting or ratifying constitutions, and are quite oblivious to Supreme Court decisions. For them corruption is a universal attribute of government. (But should the regime fail to administer the countryside firmly and without challenge, then the grounds for legitimacy from this sector would quickly erode.) This group presumably provided most of the favorable comments in the referendum, on instruction. The compulsory character of the 1973 referendum meant that many "voted" for the first time.

[22] See University of the Philippines, College of Public Administration Research Staff, "The Concerns of the Filipino People: An Analysis of the Results of the National referendum of July 28, 1973" (typescript). Acquiescence has certainly declined and opposition grown since then, as is documented by sample surveys and referenda in 1975 and 1976, but they cannot be cited.

The third group, "sophisticated subjects," have something—but not much—in common with the second. They are better educated, more urban, and probably constitute less than thirty per cent of all Filipinos. Most of them probably cast a ballot but not a comment sheet in the referendum; many abstained. Though they find sufficient economic benefit under the present regime to acquiesce (refraining from public or semi-public verbal opposition as well as acts of resistance), they are somewhat familiar with constitutional processes and the magnitude of high-level corruption and thus do not believe that the regime rules by legal or moral right. (They may be loquacious in their verbal dissent among close friends.) Members of this group include many businessmen, big and small, many of the more prosperous farmers (e.g., sugar-planters), salary-men and professionals, and some within the military and laboring classes. (Land reform beneficiaries are scattered in the first, second and third groups.) Even in this group, acquiescence will dwindle if economic prospects do not improve.

The final category may be called "opposition participants"—those who refuse to grant legitimacy to the regime and do not even acquiesce verbally, though they stop short of any act of resistance. It was their number, perhaps fifteen per cent of the population, that provided the negative comments in the referendum, though some are so cynical as to avoid martial law "elections" entirely. (Other surveys confirm this estimate.) Only a small minority have engaged in any kind of organized or public protest. Politically aware peasants, workers, students, clergy, middle-class professionals, and landlords—from left to right—compose this group. For many their behavioral acquiescence is determined only by their pragmatic assessment of the monopoly of force.

If this analysis be accurate, then it is clear that the acquiescence in, and legitimacy granted to, the Marcos regime hangs, month by month, on performance, on policy output and administrative effectiveness which reinforces the support or neutralizes the opposition of key elements in the society. Marcos must devise strategies to meet the various threats to his rule with care, since the absence of non-violent means for changing government leadership makes the consequence of failure dire indeed.

Dealing with Peasants

Judging by the rhetoric used in September 1972, the chief threat to constituted authority was a mobilized and aroused peasantry, capable

of posing a serious danger of revolution. While the threat was exaggerated even at that time, it is now clearly regarded as of less importance. The pace of land reform is slowing and is accompanied by a growing attentiveness to the wishes of smaller landlords. The President and his advisors seem to assume that peasant support has been won by the steps toward land reform already taken, and that as long as expectant tenants do not become secure in the new status of owners, they will continue to feel dependent on the maintenance of martial law for the fulfillment of their dreams.[23] Thus a partially implemented land reform has its advantages, and does not necessarily show inattention to peasant potential. This shift of tactics has been made easier by the President's ability to entice, by threats and promises, the leadership of the old (pro-Russian) Communist Party and that of their affiliated peasant movement, MASAKA, who have been bitterly attacked by the NPA. In the same general ideological camp, Huk veterans, now mostly over 50, have been allowed to organize, been invited to the Malacañang Palace, and been given official endorsement in their quest for World War II back-pay (as was granted to other recognized guerrilla groups in early post-war years).

The high priority given to the expansion of agricultural production—as in previous regimes—reinforced the tendency to disregard peasant interests. The massive distribution of government funds for agricultural credit (a program dubbed "Masagana 99") was originally justified as a way both to promote the planting of high-yielding varieties of rice and to facilitate land reform by providing institutional replacements for landlord credit sources. More than one billion pesos in loans had been allocated by the end of 1974 through the rural banks and the PNB. But the temporary success was soon threatened by a rapid rise in delinquent borrowers, because of an inability to pay on the part of many farmers and an unwillingness to do so on the part of others, compounded by slipshod and sometimes dishonest administration. By 1976 non-repayment had become so serious as to threaten the continued existence of nearly half of the rural banks.[24] So the courts, the police and the military are being used with increasing frequency to force farmers to pay. Fertilizer and insecticide producers and distributors—whose sales rose several times over because of Masagana 99—made great profits, as did the rural banks, but the volume of loans has now been sharply restricted and for many borrow-

[23] See Marcos interview with *Asiaweek,* reprinted in *The Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser* (Honolulu), October 31, 1976, p. H-3, which hints at this approach.

[24] *Philippine Daily Express,* October 13, 1976.

ers "the last state of the man is worse than the first." These developments, together with the corporate farming policy noted above clearly imply that peasant discontent is no longer regarded as a serious threat by the regime. Yet the New People's Army has in certain localities successfully exploited the collapse of Masagana 99 or the ejection of cultivators by corporate farms in the process of mechanization.

The Urban Threat

Several observers have suggested that the regime now fears urban unrest more than its rural counterpart, but policies designed to satisfy worker demands are even less in evidence. The sharp decline in real wages has already been mentioned; they would have fallen somewhat farther if it had not been for the government subsidy of retail rice-prices—the one significant effort to soften the inflationary blow on lower-class consumers. The President also announced an increase in the minimum wage from ₱8.00 to ₱10.00 on Labor Day, 1976, but because of the emasculation of the labor movement it had little meaning. The Minimum Wage Law has almost never been followed in shops where unions were not strong. (In any case, "jeepney" bus fares and rice prices were raised a few days later, and these are major components in a wage-earner's family budget.)

In order to facilitate Department of Labor control over the labor movement, which had grown rapidly in political awareness during the last few years before martial law, President Marcos decreed that all unions must be "restructured" on a rational industry-by-industry basis and then affiliated to a single national trade union confederation.[25] So far this policy had not produced the desired results. The process of trying to change over from a haphazardly organized labor movement, rent with factional infighting, to a single national structure has, in fact, created more conflict than ever. If the Department of Labor vigorously enforces the new Labor Code and refuses to register—thus effectively dissolving—any local union not affiliated with one of the official industry-wide unions (as it is empowered to do), then labor's hostility toward government will be intensified, since there are still many unaffiliated locals.

In addition the martial law regime has prohibited strikes in "vital industries," which now include public utilities, transportation, communication, oil refining and distribution, banking, hospitals, schools, and vaguely defined "companies engaged in the production or proc-

[25] See P. D. 442 (1974), The Labor Code, and Implementing Rules and Regulations.

essing of essential commodities for export." In other industries strikes are only legal on economic issues, and if the dispute has not been certified by the National Labor Relations Commission for arbitration—which means in effect almost never. In November 1975 Marcos decided to pull the noose even tighter and prevent strikes altogether "during the period of national emergency."[26] At the same time he prohibited any aliens, including clergy, from assisting labor unions—a role in which some foreign priests and nuns had been especially effective. Apparently in this matter Marcos underestimated the response of the Catholic Church; bishops, religious orders, and lay groups protested around the country, with the support of Cardinal Sin. In late November nearly 4,000 Manila workers and their supporters held an open-air mass and rally which ended in cries of "Strike, Strike!" Then again on December 6, during the visit of President Ford to the Philippines, more than 4,000 workers and religious gathered for worship. After prayers they spontaneously decided to march on Malacañang to protest the strike ban, gathering more than 2,000 additional supporters along the way. Police restraint and the discipline of the crowd prevented an outbreak of violence.[27] But the message had been given. On December 16 another presidential decree[28] again limited the strike ban to "vital industries." As noted, however, exceptions to a total ban are very rare in practice. The numerous illegal strikes in the Manila area in 1976, even though strike leaders are always arrested and often their followers as well, is one measure of continuing labor discontent.[29] In any case, if the positive gestures toward labor are feeble, the increasing efficiency of the metropolitan police in handling unrest is a compensating factor for the regime.

Urban slum-dwellers, referred to as "squatters" when they have no legal claim to their house-lot, have become another focus of mass unrest. The regime does not seem unmindful of the dangers, and—primarily under the direction of the First Lady—has treated them to showplace urban-renewal projects, which they can probably never afford to inhabit, as well as to increasingly stern treatment from the military. Slum clearance was speeded in 1976 by Madame Marcos's

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[26] P.D. 823, November 3, 1975.

[27] AMRSP, *Signs of the Times,* December 12, 1975.

[28] P.D. 849. The prohibition against aliens participating, directly or indirectly, in labor union activity was not lifted, however.

[29] For a report on six such strikes see *Signs of the Times,* June 19, 1976. Strikes of sugar workers in Negros who were not even getting paid were being surpressed with equal vigor in late 1976.

desire to "beautify" the city for the International Monetary Fund conference in October. In May, against the background of growing tension, leaders of a slum-dwellers' organization which had been invited to attend the Habitat Conference in Vancouver were denied exit permits. Thousands of their supporters tried to hold a prayer meeting and demonstration in front of the Manila Cathedral and nearly 2,000 were arrested. Evidence of militancy merely caused the police to augment their force when moving squatters. And the pace of forcible ejection was accelerated, regardless of the fact that the government had made no advance preparations in most cases. Squatters were commonly dumped in a field by army trucks, given some building materials and told "this is home." Sometimes there was not even any running water within easy walking distance. In the long run resettled squatters may be given their own house-lots, but such a distance—and transport cost—has been put between their homes and their only possible employment that most wage-earners among them have either moved back into the central city with family or friends or entered the ranks of the jobless.

Dealing with the Catholic Church

As should be clear from the foregoing, the Catholic Church has provided the most effective leadership for mass discontent against the martial law regime. It is today the most significant non-governmental linkage between the elite and masses in the country, and only a small portion of its potential has as yet been utilized. Since the legitimacy of its leadership is probably more widely respected today than is that of the government, and the contents of its vast communication network more widely trusted, Marcos deals with this threat in a subtle, cautious—but no less firm—fashion. The potency of the threat is greatly lessened, however, by the fact that the Church is not united on how to treat the regime. While the superiors of the religious orders and more than a dozen of the younger bishops—led by the tough-minded Ph.D. in anthropology, Bishop Francisco Claver, S.J. of Bukidnon (in Mindanao)—are willing to confront Marcos on issues of human rights and social justice, and to organize the faithful for this purpose, the elderly Cardinal Rosales of Cebu—who is close to the Romualdez family—and many other bishops are horrified at the prospect. The conservatives regard the progressives as not just a threat to the government, but to their own leadership, as indeed is the case. The progressives, on the other hand, perceive government attacks on "politics from the pulpit" and police crack-downs on clergy-led movements for

social justice as threats to the integrity of the Church as an institution,which is also valid.

The Marcos tactic has apparently been to stress those issues which divided the Church and to show restraint in action which might unite it, though such an approach has not always been either consistent or successful.[30] In any case, taxation, or its threat, seems to have been an effective weapon. Church-owned school property was made taxable for the first time in 1973 by PD 76. Then a "stay of execution" was given until the end of 1974 (PD 261). During 1975 and early 1976 church and other private schools were given month-by-month stays, forcing some influential Catholic educators to approach Malacañang in supplication and thus weaken the independent stance advocated by other churchmen. In August 1976 the President signed a decree formalizing the exemption for a two-year period ending December 31, 1976.[31] Taxation, along with divorce, became the topic of greatest discussion at the annual Conference of Catholic Bishops in January 1976.

The threat of a presidential decree permitting divorce, under certain circumstances—first unveiled in 1975—seemed to have had unintended consequences. The conservatives in the hierarchy were shaken at the prospect and moved to strengthen such lay oragnizations as the Catholic Women's League and Catholic Action to oppose such a move. The progressives, hardly pro-divorce in any case, were pleased to see that even the older leadership could become "political" when they felt it was necessary. Thus the prospect of an amendment to the Civil Code permitting divorce tended to unite an institution torn over issues of social justice. By mid-1976 mention of such an amendment had almost disappeared from the controlled press.

Whatever unity the Church now enjoys is partly the product of good leadership. Cardinal Jaime Sin, the Archbishop of Manila, a Church politician of considerable finesse, assumed his present position after martial law. Though he is not committed to the "conscientization" and mass mobilization of the laity to demand civil rights and social justice which they perceive as their due—as are some of the younger priests and bishops—he is sensitive to the fact such a viewpoint is growing within the Church and if it is ignored, the Church as an institution will suffer, not least through the shrinking of

[30] In fact, for one only baptized a Catholic at marriage, and surrounded by Protestant advisors, he has been remarkably sophisticated in dealing with the Church hierarchy. His most influential assistant in 1976, Jacobo Clave, his chief "technocrat" and economic advisor, Gerardo Sicat, and the PC Commander, General Fidel Ramos, are all Protestants.

[31] *Philippine Daily Express,* August 11, 1976.

the ranks of the clergy. Thus he raised his voice in protest against a needlessly ostentatious, and fruitless, military raid on a convent in August 1974, against torture of political prisoners and against the ban on clerical assistance to labor unions in 1975. His basic approach provides some leverage for the progressives, though at other times he has opposed them, e.g. his refusal in May 1976 to allow squatter demonstrators from entering the Manila Cathedral, perhaps with the purpose of trying to head off confrontations with police, or simply through lack of sympathy with the cause.

The increasing frustration of the military with clergy-supported mass organizations—as epitomized by the press attacks on the "Christian Left" in September 1976[32]—could lead to more strong-arm methods against churchmen. The summary deportation of foreign priests and the closing of some Church radio stations in November 1976 might be just a beginning.[33] This could dramatize the threat to the Church already perceived by many and thus consolidate opposition to the regime within the hierarchy, as has happened under similar circumstances in Brazil. Marcos, however, is counting on his allies within the hierarchy to head off such a development.

Youth

Before martial law, student leadership was an important segment of the opposition elite, capable of organizing an impressive mass following at times. President Marcos, faced with a continuing drop in employment among college graduates—to forty per cent in 1974[34]—has planned carefully to avoid the recurrence of student demonstrations. On the one hand, informers reporting to military intelligence are found in large numbers on all college and university campuses. When, even under martial law, students are too daring in their expression of opposition—as happened at the University of the Philippines in early 1976—their leaders are arrested. On the positive side, Marcos has actively wooed both in-school and out-of-school youth (with emphasis on the latter) through the *Kabataang Barangay,* the youth organization within the *barangay,* which now covers urban neighborhoods as well as rural villages. KB members down to 15 years of age have been given the right to participate in New Society referenda, and are automatically represented on the *barangay* councils.

[32] See, for instance, Alex Allan, "The Christian Left: Just What Is It?," *Philippine Daily Express,* September 9 & 10, 1976.

[33] *Honolulu Star-Bulletin,* November 20, 1976. UPI dispatch.

[34] *Sharing in Development: A Programme of Employment, Equity and Growth for the Philippines* (The Ranis Report) (Manila: NEDA/ILO, 1974), p. 310.

Presidents of regional KB federations have even been appointed to the national Legislative Advisory Council.

The most malleable leaders in the KB have been chosen for attendance at two remarkable "secret" training camps, one near Manila and the other in Cebu. Besides being indoctrinated about New Society programmes, participants listen to recorded excerpts from The Leader's speeches, do pre-dawn calisthenics and chant slogans that glorify the accomplishments of the President and his wife. A few of the more sophisticated KB leaders reflect on the experience when they return home and are able to see similarities with Nazi and Maoist training, but for most it seems to have been an intense emotional encounter which produces some of the desired after-effects.[35]

Many former student leaders and their radical faculty advisors have been coopted in a more subtle way. The Development Academy of the Philippines, created by Dr. O. D. Corpuz (now concurrently president of the University of the Philippines), has hired a vast staff at rates far above university salaries to undertake research on a great variety of topics. These bright young social scientists are given a sense of participation in the policy-process unprecedented for Filipino academics, thereby neutralizing in most cases any ideological objections they may have had to the regime. Some of the research has been quite significant.

Dealing with the Old Elite

Aside from the Catholic hierarchy, no other non-governmental civilian elite group today has a substantial mass following, or any communication network to build one. (Senator Jose Diokno, imprisoned during the early months of martial law, and Senator Jovito Salonga, almost killed in the Plaza Miranda bombing of 1971, have gone as far as any laymen in trying to disseminate their opposition views, but have been warned by the regime to go no farther and neither has attempted to organize, though their quiet followers are undoubtedly numerous.) Nevertheless, President Marcos does seem to fear the potential threat inherent in the wealth and political skills of segments of the civilian social elite which are now in political eclipse. He manifested one dimension of that fear soon after the proclamation of martial law when he charged Eugenio Lopez, Jr., and other young scions of prominent families, with hiring foreign gunmen to kill him.

[35] See P. L. Han, "Youth Indroctrination Centers," *Pahayag,* October 1976, pp. 7, 10; and "Inside the Camp September 21st Movement: *Kabataang Barangay* Training Program Bared," *Signs of the Times,* March 26, 1976, pp. 9-12.

In fact, some journalistic observers have marvelled at the President's ability to avoid such a fate.

He has dealt with the threat in at least three ways. First, he has kept hostages. The young Lopez, as well as sons of other famous fathers, continue in jail or under house arrest. This discourages their families' plotting. Second, as one might expect, Marcos has been unstinting in the training and financing of an expanding intelligence network, now under the supervision of General Fabian Ver, also commandant of the Presidential Guards and widely believed to be the President's half-brother. The extent of surveillance has greatly expanded and the quality improved in recent years, partly with American assistance. A detachment of the U. S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations helped train and equip the Presidential Security Command in 1975. The detachment leader, a Filipino-American captain, received the Philippine Legion of Honor for his services.[36] Third, Marcos has also tried to avoid giving the economic elite too extreme provocation. Even those family fortunes which have been hard hit by Marcos depradations have not been wiped out. They still have a large stake in not further angering the President—e.g., by implication in an unsuccessful assassination plot. As long as business is generally good they may hope to recoup their losses by playing the role of "good corporate citizen," and whatever the fate of a few families, most great fortunes have continued to rise at a rate more rapid than that of economic expansion nationally.[37]

However, in the longer run the aggrandizement of Marcos family interests at the expense of other corporate empires may well be a threat to the regime. If, for instance, the private profit of nearly ₱5 billion projected from the Manila Bay dredging operation by the Construction and Development Corporation of the Philippines (in which the Marcos family is widely reputed to have the major interest) should not materialize according to plan, serious dislocations could result. Profits were estimated on the basis of 1973 costs and a re-sale value of filled land at approximately ₱10 million per hectare.[38] Furthermore, a financial crisis for Marcos family interests might well arise from economic trends affecting others adversely as well, thus

[36] *Pacific Stars and Stripes,* October 23, 1975.

[37] But sugar planting, the foundation of most great Filipino fortunes, has become utterly unprofitable in recent months, which could cause widespread defaulting on sugar-crop loans from the Philippine National Bank, the government corporation which controls sugar marketing now. Understandably "planters are murmuring dark threats against President Marcos." See Bernard Wideman, "Philippine Sugar Crisis Looms," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* November 26, 1976, pp. 54-55.

[38] See *Far Eastern Economic Review,* January 2, 1976.

causing pressures exerted under those circumstances to create acute discomfort within the elite.

The elements of the pre-1972 elite most disadvantaged since martial law are the members of Congress. Only Senator Aquino is still in prison and a few have both done well financially and remained politically prominent. All (except one, who became a cabinet member) have, however, suffered a sharp loss of power and most have declined in economic status as well.[39] Marcos showed his distrust of the "old politicians" as soon as the new Constitution was "ratified" by *barangay* assemblies. Though the 1973 Constitution provided that the interim National Assembly—to be composed of the former members of Congress and cooperative delegates to the ConCon—"shall exist immediately on the ratification of this Constitution,"[40] the President interpreted the constitutional authorization that he convene that Assembly as implying his right to refrain from convening, so that it has never met. From time to time regime supporters have been prompted to make statements to the press about how "the people" do not want the interim Assembly convened because of the "reprobate ways" of "Old Society" politicians. A move in January 1976 by ex-President Macapagal to promote the idea that the National Assembly convene itself[41] was nipped in the bud, though not without considerable effort by the regime. When it was learned that Macapagal had invited former members of the ConCon and the 1972 Congress to his house for a "family thanksgiving," presidential assistant Gilberto Duavit, himself a former ConCon delegate, invited the same persons to *his* house, and government helicopters were sent to fetch many of those who accepted. His guests far outnumbered Macapagal's. Waverers were offered judgeships, and other government plums.[42]

The President was already talking about an appointed Legislative Advisory Council. He saw such a Council as a way to counter foreign criticism of the complete absence of even a quasi-legislative body, as a means to elevate some younger men to be "dependable" leaders of the "New Society," and as a method of sidetracking the interim National Assembly. The desire to have the world think well of his regime[43]

[39] Perla Makil, *Mobility by Decree: The Rise and Fall of Philippine Influentials since Martial Law* (Quezon City: IPC, Ateneo de Manila University, 1975), p. 37 ff.

[40] Article XVII, Section 1.

[41] See Macapagal's letter stating his reason for supporting the call of the interim National Assembly published in the *Philippine Collegian,* the UP student newspaper, on January 12, 1976, just before publication was suspended.

[42] See Arnold Zeitlin, Associated Press dispatch, February 17, 1976.

[43] See, for instance, article by leading "New Society" journalist, Teodoro Valencia in *Philippine Daily Express,* September 13, 1976.

accelerated events. PD 995 created the *Batasan ng Bayan,* or Legislative Advisory Council, on September 10, 1976 in time for it to convene prior to the IMF meeting in Manila. It is composed of the President, his cabinet, and members of the executive committee of the national federation of provincial councils, plus anyone else the President may wish to appoint, e.g., *Kabataang Barangay* leaders.

Then on October 16, just after the IMF meeting, President Marcos held another "referendum," in which he received the now "traditional" 90 per cent support for the "right" answers to the several questions posed at the last minute. Even though brief press mention of opposition views on the referendum was made in Manila for the first time since martial law began, the media were still primarily a tool of the government. The boycott movement gained the endorsement of fourteen bishops, and even ex-President Macapagal; two mass demonstrations were organized by the movement's supporters. But administration control of the polling process was an assurance of its "success." Marcos announced that the referendum had ratified nine amendments to the 1973 Constitution, accomplishing, among other things, the abolition of the interim National Assembly and the creation of a partially elected Legislative Council of not more than 120 members, including the President and his cabinet. (No date for the elections has been promised.) Nevertheless, the President will retain legislative power as long as martial law continues and may issue decrees whenever he believes the Legislative Council is not performing well.[44] Thus has the ruler attempted to gain legitimacy both at home and abroad. A more serious test of his views on competition from the old elite will come when electoral procedures are announced. Indirect elections, by the local *Sangguniang Bayan,* has been hinted already to be the preferred approach; they would be much easier to control.

Given the dangers inherent in the holding of public discussions or even indirect elections for a regime that cannot tolerate genuinely free debate or real opposition, one sometimes wonders at the time and effort given to such matters by Marcos. Certainly there is no evidence that he sees these steps as a beginning of the end of one-man rule, as a transition toward the restoration of genuine electoral democracy, despite the occasional announcement designed to raise hopes.[45] Many believe that a little freedom—the opportunity for "hundred flowers to bloom"—is given from time to time to permit the intelligence agencies to identify whom to watch. But there is still another important reason:

[44] See Arnold Zeitlin, AP dispatch, October 19, 1976.

[45] See "Marcos Bares Plan to lift Martial Law," *Philippine Daily Express,* September 23, 1976.

he is intent on creating an alternative hierarchy to the military so as not to become too dependent on the latter. Even the creation of the *Sangguniang Bayan,* (expanded councils at the municipal and provincial level) was motivated in part by a desire to create a counter-weight to the military, many of whom had plans to move into control of local governments in their areas after the terms of elected officials expired on December 31, 1975.[46]

Dealing with the Military

One only need study recent Asian history to know that Marcos rightly fears the military most. Though before 1972 the Philippine armed forces had been as dependent on the elected politicians as had the civilian bureaucracy, the very existence of the martial law regime now requires the continued support of the military. And the officers, as well as Marcos, are increasingly aware of that fact. One of the President's first moves after the declaration of martial law was to increase the base-pay of all commissioned officers by 150 per cent.[47] He still holds the power of appointment and promotion, and uses it skillfully to forestall the formation of cliques opposed to him. In March 1976 he was able to retire eight generals, including the commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force, and reassign twenty-one other top officers without apparent incident, thus indicating the degree of control he still exercises. This control has been maintained with the stick as well as the carrot. The chief of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency was believed by Marcos to have leaked martial law plans in advance to Senator Aquino. Within a week after that fateful September 21, 1972, General Soliman was reported in the press to have died of a heart attack; but sources close to his family assert that he was actually shot by men of the President.[48]

Such ruthlessness has been carefully balanced with inducements such as subsidized commissaries and housing, and opportunities for high-ranking officers to be appointed to boards of directors of government corporations. For instance, the privately owned Jacinto Iron and Steel Sheets Corporation (sequestered by presidential order soon after the declaration of martial law) is now run entirely by the military. Furthermore, the President has closed his eyes to growing corruption among the military, symbolized by colonels and their wives driving Mercedes-Benz automobiles. The President's public commitment to a

[46] Mijares, *op. cit.,* pp. 457-8.
[47] General Order No. 11, September 30, 1972.
[48] Mijares, *op. cit.,* p. 143.

"purge" of unsavory elements in the Department of National Defense made in the fall of 1975 was never carried out. When it was threatened, Secretary Juan Ponce-Enrile submitted the resignations of a long list of top officers to the President. Thereafter the Department was allowed to "clean its own house," though the results were negligible. The parameters of presidential power over the military had been more clearly defined.[49]

Military satisfaction is most fundamentally assured by providing the armed forces with a generous budget. While current expenditures of the national government nearly tripled between FY1972 and FY1975, the percentage of national defense outlays rose from 13.4 to 21.8 per cent of the total.[50] The size of the armed forces has also more than tripled since 1972, permitting rapid promotion of top officers. However, as the rate of expansion slows down (as is projected), career frustrations will increase. The increasing military bite of the national budget is already causing intense dissatisfaction in the civilian bureaucracy; releases of funds for civilian departments regularly fall short of budgetary commitments, the very reverse of the situation in the Department of National Defense.

Affluence for the military is still not a sufficient guarantee of loyalty and satisfaction, however. There is a war going on in Mindanao and Sulu. It engages about half of the entire army; thousands have already been killed, including many young officers. (Civilian casualties may run to over 10,000.) Though the Muslim rebellion itself—spearheaded by a faction-ridden army of several thousand—does not pose a direct threat to the Marcos regime, the problems which flow from it could, if improperly handled, cause political instability in Manila.

The war in the South might already have had such a spin-off had it not been for another piece of Marcos good luck. As early as June 1972 Col. Kaddafi of Libya had promised to send money, arms and even volunteers to the *Moro Bangsa* (Liberation) Army.[51] By 1973 the flow of supplies into Sulu, aided by Sabah's Chief Minister Tun Mustapha, was a reality, and the level of fighting increased. Then Mustapha's defiance of Kuala Lumpur on a variety of questions brought his

[49] Bernard Wideman, "Politics of the Purge," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* October 31, 1975.

[50] At the same time education expenditures dropped from 31.1 to 19.6 per cent. See Cheetham and Hawkins, *op. cit.,* p. 398. A USAID report released in June 1976 projected a further doubling of the Philippine defense budget between 1976 and 1978, rising to nearly 25 per cent of the national budget. Arnold Zeitlin, AP dispatch, June 3, 1976.

[51] Peter Gowing, "Muslim Filipinos between Integration and Secession," paper read at Association of Asian Studies meeting, Chicago, March 1973.

downfall.[52] After his party lost the April 1976 elections, a new government swept out his henchmen in the police; Sabah ceased to be an arms conduit to the Philippines.[53] Though the rebels also buy weapons from the Army (as happened earlier in Vietnam), the number of their initiatives fell off; medicine was also in short supply.

Yet foreign support for the Moro National Liberation Front has not ended. There was even an abortive attempt in the last meeting of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers to give the MNLF the same status as that of the PLO.[54] And the Islamic Secretariat continues to promote peace talks between the head of the MNLF, Misuari, and the Philippine government, but such talks do not prosper because Misuari practically equates "autonomy" with independence, and President Marcos is unwilling to grant autonomy with any substance at all. New talks were scheduled for October 1976 in Libya but were not held as planned.[55] Communications with Muslims, even those trying to cooperate with government, have been further hampered since the dismissal of Executive Sectetary Alejandro Melchor. Muslims found him a more respectful listener and a more effective implementer than anyone who has fallen heir to his duties. The only area in which there has been any progress is in providing Muslims access to government funds through the new Amanah Bank and Southern Philippines Development Authority. But, as might be expected, it is the Muslim elites, not the masses, who benefit most.

In the meantime armed clashes continue. The MNLF struggle claims to be against the corrupt Muslim aristocracy as well as the Christians. But more and more the motivation for particular incidents seems to be that of a blood feud, with the relatives and friends of past victims creating new victims; "the enemy" on each side is defined in religious terms. In 1976 some military units even resorted to burning whole Moro villages, again reminiscent of Vietnam. The frustration level among (dominantly Christian) Filipino troops is high and rising. Firearms are frequently discharged on drunken sprees and rivalries between units often result in shoot-outs on the streets of (dominantly Christian) towns.

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[52] Robert O. Tilman, "Mustapha's Sabah, 1968-1975: The Tun Steps Down," *Asian Survey* (June 1976), pp. 495-509.

[53] The flow has apparently slackened even with the beginning of Mustapha's political troubles in mid-1975. See *DRC Reports,* I:2 (September 1975), Dansalan Research Center, Marawi City, Philippines.

[54] Support of Indonesia for the Philippines position internationally has been particularly useful. See Bernard Wideman in *Far Eastern Economic Review,* November 7, 1975.

[55] Rodney Tasker, "Waiting for Word from the Rebels," *Far Eastern Economic Review,* November 12, 1976, pp. 32-33.

The military is particularly frustrated by the restraints placed by Manila on their urge to retaliate against Moro raids with unlimited force—restraints dictated by the fact that many Islamic states are also oil-exporters. The government's "policy of attraction," while certainly preferable to all-out warfare, also causes problems. Elaborate ceremonies are arranged for the surrender of dissident leaders and their men. (The more prominent ones are brought to Manila to meet the President.) They are usually permitted to keep their weapons, or are given new ones; some are appointed to public office, or recruited to the Home Defense Force. It is bad enough for the habitually loyal to see how handsomely temporary disloyalty pays off. But the returnees not infrequently find that the favors bestowed do not signify any basic change in government policy and thus return to the hills to resume armed struggle, with their new weapons. Any troops which receive fire from these once-favored rebels are particularly bitter.

Deteriorating troop morale is not limited to Mindanao. There are groups of deserters also roaming the mountains and plains of Luzon and Panay. Some had been threatened with reassignment to Mindanao, while others deserted for their own reasons. In any case, whether political or merely mercenary in motivation, such groups have become a new "peace and order" problem. Some observers contend that the continuance of a moderate level of conflict in Mindanao is indirectly beneficial to Marcos, by justifying larger and larger defense expenditures and at the same time keeping the military distracted from attention to problems and opportunities in Manila. There is some logic in that analysis. But the deterioration of morale is difficult to handle under these circumstances; if it should worsen, it could have broad repercussions in the officer corps.

The U.S. Role

American military aid is partly responsible for a prolongation of the war in the South. To the degree to which Marcos need not cut civilian programs in order to finance the military, he is relieved of pressure to bring the conflict to a political solution. U.S. arms aid of all types to the Philippines was about 100 per cent higher in the three years after the declaration of martial law than in the comparable period before.[56] But Congressional criticism of the Filipino dictatorship (fed by anti-martial law organizations in the U.S.) and of similar regimes in South Korea and Chile was so vehement that at some

[56] Marjorie Bakker, Barbara Cort, et al, "The Logistics of Repression," *Philippines Information Bulletin*, Volume III, Nos. 2 and 3 (July 1975), p. 5.

points in 1976 further appropriations seemed to be in jeopardy. Economically the loss of U.S. aid to the Marcos regime would be merely significant, but psychologically it would be disastrous. Marcos is well aware of the fact that continuing American support provides some legitimacy for his regime in the eyes of many Filipinos. A total aid cutback would deprive him of a commodity he finds in increasingly short supply. Thus Marcos has placed considerable emphasis, in bases negotiations with the U.S, on extracting a fixed rental. Not only is the amount desired—based on Spanish precedent—very much greater than present aid levels,[57] but, by embodying it in a long-term agreement, the political uncertainties of the annual appropriation process in Washington might be avoided. American acceptance of such an arrangement would be a great boost both to the morale and the finances of the martial law regime.

The morale boost would result from Marcos interpreting such an agreement as a signal of longer-term American intentions. Even before the appointment of William Sullivan—the former American proconsul in Laos—as Ambassador to Manila, Marcos had a deep-seated fear of the machinations of the CIA. Perhaps, unconsciously, he recognized a certain similarity in his own position and that of Ngo Dinh Diem in the early 1960's. It is widely believed that the dismissal of Melchor as Executive Secretary was, at least in part, motivated by a suspicion that the Annapolis graduate was too much "an American boy." Marcos's apprehension about Senator Manglapus and the anti-martial law movement in the U.S. is linked to a similar fear. Thus a long-term bases agreement with a large guaranteed dollar income would be understood to imply an American willingness to live with the Marcos regime for some time to come. It would, in fact, probably assure his tenure for at least an additional decade.

But even if Mr. Marcos is forced to accept less attractive terms for the continued presence of American bases, as is entirely possible, his term in power probably has several more years to run. His political skills are practically unequalled in Philippine history and, in fact, he must rank high among Asian power-holders today in the sophistication of his tactics—indeed one of Machiavelli's most apt disciples. He is also, unlike Diem, finely attuned to the nuances of Filipino behavior. Said Rafael Salas, his former Executive Secretary, who resigned before martial law, "He knows the average Filipino: to what

[57] U.S. government sources revealed that the Philippine government was asking for "several billion dollars worth of military equipment," but said they were "not taking the bid . . . too seriously." *Honolulu Star-Bulltein,* October 21, 1976.

degree [he] can be scared, what are the limits before he becomes violent. Within these limits, he will apply any sort of artifice."[58] Nevertheless, the task he has set himself—the long-term maintenance of one-man rule in a relatively well-educated society with over 50 years of experience with free, competitive politics—is an impossible one. The conflicts which had already emerged by 1972, between landlord and tenant, employer and employee, national entrepreneur and multinational corporation, majority and minority cultures, and—perhaps most crucial—between the forces of his wife and himself, have all been exacerbated. Since 1972 conflict between civilian and military, and between church and state, have been added. Without rules which are perceived as legitimate by the major actors, these conflicts are not likely to be resolved non-violently, and the present regime could not for long survive their violent resolution.

This is not to say that revolution is just around the corner. The next outbreak of violence will most likely occur between elite competitors. But unless that is followed by a new consensus on basic institutions and procedures achieved with unexpected ease, the succeeding stage of violence will probably include mass participation. Some contend that violent revolution is not inconsistent with the long-term development goals of the Filipino people, but what is tragic is that the chance to achieve those goals at a lower cost, which existed in 1972, may never again reappear. The two political extremes have been radicalized and the precious fabric of political legitimacy has been rent. Even the (most implausible) scenario of an early Marcos resignation would not restore political stability. The politicization of the military is hard to reverse. Thus in the longer run the pattern of Philippine political development is likely to resemble that of Indonesia, Vietnam, or one of the various political sub-types in Latin America. As a former University of the Philippines President, Salvador Lopez, has said, "It is far easier to lose freedom without bloodshed than it is to regain freedom without bloodshed."[59]

University of Windsor, Ontario, November 1976

Postscript

In a dramatic year-end development on the Mindanao war, Mrs. Marcos visited Libya and the pace of negotiations quickened. President Marcos

[58] Interview in *Asia Philippine Leader* (April 1, 1971).

[59] "Freedom with Responsibility," Commencement address, University of the Philippines, May 27, 1973.

appeared to make some concessions on autonomy and international supervision of a cease-fire, and an agreement was actually reached with the MNLF late in December. It remains to be seen how well MNLF leadership in Libya can enforce such an agreement, or how far Marcos will go in actually allowing Muslim autonomy. The confrontation with the Catholic Church sharpened early in 1977. The Catholic Bishops Conference on February 6 issued a strongly worded condemnation of government arrests and deportation of churchmen, of mistreatment of cultural minorities, and of excesses in the promotion of birth control. As compared with the 17 bishops who endorsed the previous opposition statement, this was signed by 66 of the 82 bishops in the Philippines, including both Cardinals and six archbishops. A document apparently "leaked" from the headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary revealed plans to arrest 155 more clergy and lay leaders, including four bishops. This, together with clumsy efforts by the Papal Nuncio to defend Marcos, seems to have triggered the bishops' reaction.

March 1977