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THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINE HUKBALAHAP INSURGENCY: 1946-1954

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8 March 1971

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USAWC RESEARCH PAPER

THE UNITED STATES AND THE PHILIPPINE HUKBALAHAP INSURGENCY: 1946-1954

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT REPORT

by

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8 March 1971

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Leo S. Comish, Jr., LTC, FA
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The purpose of this report is to review United States policies and programs towards the Republic of the Philippines during the Hukbalahap (HUK) insurgency (1946-1954). The historical research method is used to determine what influence those policies and programs had on the growth and the eventual defeat of the insurgency. The report examines the political, social, economic, and military conditions from the postliberation period through 1954 when the insurgency was defeated. Emphasis is placed on the economic and military aspects of United States-Philippine relations. The report concludes that the United States did not recognize the seriousness of the problems confronting the Philippines. Consequently, many initial US policies and programs were not realistically designed to help the Philippines solve their problems. Moreover, many US actions actually exacerbated many of the problems. It was not until early 1950 that the US recognized that the Philippines was dangerously close to falling to the Communists. At this point, US policies and programs were re-examined and new programs based on a pragmatic appraisal of the situation were introduced. This, coupled with the remarkable leadership of Ramon Magsaysay, turned the tide and led to the defeat of the rebellion.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the Hukbalahap (Huk) insurgency in the Philippines. In fact, so much that it is difficult to sort it out, analyse it, and arrive at a balanced understanding of why the insurgency nearly succeeded.

Supposedly, the Filipinos, after 47 years of "enlightened and benevolent" tutoring under the United States had been steeped in the democratic tradition of its mentor. The trappings of democracy were all there. They had an enlightened constitution which provided for the basic freedoms considered essential in a democracy. Additionally, political leaders had been trained and a relatively efficient bureaucracy established. More importantly, a belief in the democratic system had been inculcated into the minds of the people. The Philippines was to become a "showcase" of democracy in Asia--one to be emulated by other peoples as they threw off their colonial yokes. The people of the United States thought that they could be justly proud of their accomplishments.

In 1899, Rudyard Kipling exhorted the United States to:

> Take up the White Man's burden--
> Ye dare not stoop to less--
> Nor call too loud on Freedom
> To cloke your weariness.[1]

So the United States took up the "White Man's burden," albeit somewhat reluctantly--and it was not until 4 July 1946 that it was able to fulfill a later plea by the New York World:

We've taken up the white man's burden
Of ebony and brown;
Now will you kindly tell us, Rudyard,
How we may put it down?[2]

The circumstances under which the United States "put it down" were, however, much different than had been envisioned during the long period of tutelage. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 provided for a ten-year transition period, after which the Philippines would be granted full independence. In 1953, a Commonwealth Government was established and the Filipino people were on their way to that long sought freedom from foreign domination.

Unfortunately, that ten-year transition period was interrupted by the war with Japan. Although Americans and Filipinos fought gallantly side by side, they were no match for the superior Japanese forces and the Philippines quickly fell to the invading Japanese.

The Japanese occupation was a traumatic experience for the Filipinos Not only was their land plundered, their economy wrecked and thousands killed or imprisoned, but more importantly, their moral values were seriously degraded. Many were forced to live by the law of the jungle, particularly the young. It became honorable to kill and steal in the name of resistance. Nor was this always aimed at the Japanese--collaborators, old enemies, political opponents and even innocent common citizens fell prey to lawlessness.

The guerrilla movement, while hurting the Japanese and giving valuable assistance to the Allied war effort by providing

intelligence and keeping the Japanese from transforming the Philippines into a secure base, contributed to the atmosphere of lawlessness. A further degeneration of moral values was caused by the cooperation of many Filipinos, in one form or another, with their Japanese occupiers. Respected politicians and public and private officials collaborated openly with the invaders. Some collaborated in the honest hope of shielding the people from the Japanese--others for personal gain--still others as a matter of accommodation--some, of course, were forced to do it.

The eroding of values caused by the invasion and occupation left a bitter legacy. In the words of Carlos P. Romulo:

> Philippine democracy, the strongest and the healthiest democracy on the western side of the Pacific, had been dealt a body blow. It had been attacked in its most vital elements, of which the major ingredients are first the individual's concept of his obligation to his neighbor, and secondly, those processes of law which experience has evolved through the centuries to enforce this obligation, and which Filipinos had inherited ready-made from the Constitution and the underlying principles of the United States.[3]

On 22 October 1944, American forces landed in the Philippines. Commonwealth President Sergio Osmeña, who had been in exile in the United States, accompanied General MacArthur when he went ashore. Three days later, General MacArthur returned civil government to President Osmeña. In making this move, he indicated that he would restore "government by constitutional process under the regularly constituted Commonwealth government as rapidly as the several occupied areas are liberated and the military

conditions will permit. . . ."[4] On 27 February 1945, full civil authority over all of the Philippines was restored to the Commonwealth.[5] Now came the immense task of rebuilding the Philippines; politically, economically, socially, and militarily. The attitudes, policies, and programs of the United States Government were to a large extent the key to the future--for the Philippines lay prostrate, in no condition to do it by themselves.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1. Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (7th ed., 1964), p. 476.

2. Ibid., p. 478.

3. Carlos P. Romulo, Crusade in Asia (1955), p. 82.

4. Robert Aura Smith, Philippine Freedom, 1946-1958 (1958), p. 112.

5. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

POSTLIBERATION UNITED STATES POLICIES

In turning over civil government to the Filipinos, General MacArthur was carrying out the wishes of a 1944 Congressional resolution to:

> Restore as quickly as possible the orderly free process of government to the Filipino people, and thereupon establish the complete independence of the Philippine Islands as a separate and self-governing nation. . . .[1]

President Osmeña was now in the civil driver's seat but for a long time his powers were more on paper than real.[2]

Osmeña was not the strong leader that Manuel Quezon, who died in exile in the United States in 1944, had been and he soon found that his followers were difficult to control.[3] This, coupled with the physical destruction, economic chaos, and general lawlessness, presented an almost impossible task. In addition, the primary interest of the United States at this point was still the defeat of the Japanese and it was using the Philippines as a staging area for the invasion of Japan. To point this out, George E. Taylor refers to a statement allegedly made by General Courtney Whitney, head of MacArthur's Civil Affairs Section, as representing the High Command's attitude. "These people are so happy to be liberated from the Japs, that if we do nothing more for the next six months, it will be all right. . . ."[4] Actually, this was an unfair comparison and undoubtedly taken out of context

because the US military was doing a great deal to help the Filipino people. More will be said about this later. Regardless of the veracity of the statement, the US military did maintain control over most facilities and services. This further complicated the Commonwealth Government's position. To quote Taylor again:

> Though its legal authority had been restored, the Commonwealth government lacked funds, and it took second place for office space, equipment, and supplies. Osmeña had responsibility without power, a dangerous role in a country whose people expected a miraculous return to the conditions that preceded the conflict.[5]

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

With the myriad of problems facing the new Commonwealth, it would have seemed that the question of the advisability of prolonging the transition period would have been seriously considered. This, however, does not appear to be the case. Professor Claude A. Buss, in the introduction to Shirley Jenkins' book American Economic Policy Toward the Philippines, indicates that some Filipinos at least considered the idea of continuing the Commonwealth relationship, but nothing really came of it.[6]

In January 1946, an American view of the situation was transmitted to President Truman by Paul V. McNutt, the reappointed High Commissioner to the Philippines. Mr. McNutt stated:

> The situation here is critical, it does not at this moment seem possible for the Filipino people, ravaged and demoralized by the cruellest and most destructive of wars, politically split between the loyalists and enemy collaborators, with several sizeable well-armed

> dissident groups still at large, to cope with the coincidence of political independence and the tremendous economic demands of rehabilitation.[7]

Rather than a move to postpone independence, it appears that the contrary was true. The 1944 Congressional resolution mentioned above also gave President Truman the authority to grant the Philippines independence at an earlier date if he considered it advisable.[8] According to Taylor, President Osmeña was in favor of an earlier date but "President Truman refused on the ground that the Philippines need time to get their house in order and to work out future relationships with the United States. . . ."[9]

Thus the original date, 4 July 1946, remained United States policy. It seems as though the United States, faced by ever increasing responsibilities, particularly in Europe, was anxious to cut the umbilical cord as quickly as practicably possible, but not before the original date.

Collaboration

That the Filipinos needed time to get their house in order was certainly an understatement. Unfortunately, some actions taken by the United States, rather than help, actually contributed to the problems facing the Filipino leaders. Perhaps the most important--one that would have lasting consequences--was the US policy toward collaborators.

Wartime US policy on the question of collaboration appears to have been one of permitting each occupied area to establish its own policies in this regard after they were liberated.

However, it appears that this policy did not apply to the Philippines which was technically US territory. David Wurfel indicates that United States policy established in Washington was to punish collaborators. He quotes General MacArthur as declaring in November 1944 "that he would run to earth every disloyal Filipino. . . ."[10] This brought up the sticky question of who were collaborators and by what standards should they be judged.

> Truman defined a collaborator as a person who was disloyal to both the United States and the Philippines by assisting the enemy in the formulation and enforcement of political policy and the spread of propaganda. . . .[11]

A broad interpretation of this definition would place a large number of the Filipino elite in the category of collaborators. Postliberation investigations uncovered thousands of cases of suspected collaboration. US forces arrested and confined many suspects and forced Osmeña to establish "People's Courts," but the whole question was so complicated it was very difficult to obtain proof except in cases where the accused had participated in direct Japanese military actions against the people.[12]

Some alleged collaborators, including Jose P. Laurel, former Supreme Court Justice and head of the Japanese puppet regime, claimed that President Quezon, before he left the Philippines, had told them to "make the best accommodation that they could with the Japanese in the interest of the Filipino people. . . ."[13] Another defense, advanced by Claro M. Recto, claimed that because the United States failed to protect the Philippines, it lost its

sovereignty over the Islands and therefore the Filipinos could not be held responsible for coming to the best terms possible with their new masters.[14] Other defenses, such as coercion, were also advanced.

As the controversy raged, General MacArthur made a move which to a large degree changed the whole collaboration issue and according to Wurfel, "sabotaged what attempts were being made to prosecute collaborators. . . ."[15] MacArthur exonerated his old friend Manuel Roxas who had been a minister without portfolio in the wartime Laurel cabinet and had been responsible for supplying rice to the Japanese Army. Although MacArthur's act was contrary to United States policy and confused the whole question of collaboration, he may have recognized the magnitude of the problem and deliberately acted to effectively nullify that policy. Taylor points out that Harold L. Ickes, as Secretary of the Interior, attempted to exclude collaborators from receiving US rehabilitation funds.[16] Taylor goes on to point out that:

> If the United States had pressed the collaboration issue with the threat of withholding financial help unless all collaborators were tried and punished, the Communists would have ridden to power. . . .[17]

Passions ran high on both sides. Ickes later wrote: "MacArthur promptly set free the collaborationist Roxas and proceeded to cover his collaborationist activities with a thick coat of whitewash. . . ."[18] A Filipino view of the issue was expressed by the old patriot, General Emilio Aguinaldo, when he said:

> The economic, political and legal elite of the country confined in the very prisons to which as lawmakers, prosecutors or judges, they had themselves sent ordinary criminals. It was the ultimate of humiliation.[19]

Aguinaldo maintains that MacArthur exhibited extremely poor judgment in dealing with what he considered to be a relatively small number of key Filipinos who had allegedly collaborated with the Japanese. In Aguinaldo's words:

> General MacArthur should never have started anything which he could not or did not wish to finish. Because he failed to do so, we Filipinos continue to have no clearcut concept of treason and loyalty.[20]

General MacArthur's act in exonerating Roxas launched the accused collaborator on the road to the Philippine Presidency where he solved the collaboration issue, at least from the legal viewpoint, when in 1948 he proclaimed a general amnesty. In commenting on Roxas' action, Smith points out:

> It was morally as well as physically impossible to try all the cases that had been brought. Many of them would have required the wisdom of Solomon, and more than that, it was conservatively estimated that to carry out the trials would have kept the Philippine courts clogged for at least thirty years. President Roxas did the sensible as well as humane thing.[21]

Although very few people were tried and convicted of collaboration, the issue itself tore at the very fabric of the struggling nation and the Communists took advantage of it in every way they could. Luis Taruc, the Hukbalahap leader, expressed the Communist line when he said:

> They [the U.S.] needed 'strong men' who would carry out ruthless policies. Former

> collaborators, under the shadow of punishment for treason, made the best and most willing tools. . . .[22]

Had United States policy been more pragmatic, perhaps the Filipinos could have expended more of their passions and energy against the fast rising Hukbalahap insurgency. It seems that without question, an enlightened policy would have made the post-liberation transition a much more orderly process. US shortsightedness, perhaps tinged with a measure of guilt for not protecting its ward, did not endear Americans to many Filipinos.

ECONOMICS

The most urgent problems facing the Philippines after liberation were economic. In the words of Carlos P. Romulo:

> The position of the country and the government could hardly have been worse. The Japanese invader had been destroyed, but in the last vicious struggle for survival and in sheer wanton vengence he had destroyed much of the country's resources. Public buildings were rubble heaps, money was gone, records were burned or lost, schools had vanished, and the roads of which we had been justly proud were at best tracks of smashed asphalt and at worst rutted lanes under tangled jungle growth.[23]

It has been variously estimated that Manila was 50 to 80 percent destroyed. "General Eisenhower reported that Manila had suffered more devistation than any capitol except Warsaw. . . ."[24] Harbors were wrecked, shipping destroyed, and other towns and areas devastated. The production of food in many areas was crippled because the Japanese had slaughtered work animals.[25]

In sum, just about everything that could be wrong from an economic viewpoint, was wrong.

Initially, the United States Army provided most of the emergency relief needed by the Philippines. Food, clothing, and medical supplies were distributed either directly to individuals or sold through commercial outlets. Under the Army Civil Affairs Program, schools, hospitals, and other essential public services were established. As an example of the magnitude of the operation, up until 31 July 1945, approximately 200 million pounds of food had been distributed.[26]

These measures, however, were only emergency stopgap actions. The US military was primarily interested in restoring public order and repairing, rebuilding, or constructing facilities to further the war effort. However, as Frank H. Golay pointed out in 1961:

> This required restoration of basic public utilities, including land and interisland transportation, electric power, water supply, and sanitation, as well as establishment of semipermanent supply facilities, troop housing and so forth. The indirect contribution of military construction to Philippine rehabilitation, particularly communications, was substantial. Even today the visitor to the Philippines soon becomes aware of this contribution by the ubiquitous "Bailey bridges" and other military type structures still in use.[27]

The US military did not want to get stuck with long range rehabilitation efforts which were properly the responsibility of other government agencies. The Army Civil Affairs Program was rapidly reduced after the Commonwealth Government was established

and on 1 September 1945 the limited US military rehabilitation programs were taken over by the Foreign Economic Administration.[28]

Immediate economic needs were being taken care of by the emergency relief programs and through an influx of American dollars under various programs which will be discussed later. The influx of dollars provided the foreign exchange necessary for the Filipinos to import needed goods. As might have been expected, the Filipinos went on a spending binge. Besides necessities such as food, clothing, and building materials, "there was also a demand for items that were nonessential, in the strict view, but that were part of the psychological hunger of a newly liberated people. . . ."[29]

To many, it appears that the Filipinos squandered much of the money that should have been spent in laying a solid economic base for the country. This, however, was probably inevitable because of what Smith called the "hungry market," and the general economic chaos that existed at the time. Additionally, if US guidance was being given at the time, this writer cannot find much evidence of it. Taylor points out that the key problem in the immediate post-liberation period was long-term economic development, yet no US government agency gave effective consideration to it.[30]

The apparent ineffectiveness of the United States in helping the Philippines establish a viable economic base can be attributed, at least partially, to the absense of an overall plan. Although some planning activities had been carried out during the war by some agencies including the Department of the Interior, the

War Department, a joint Philippine-American commission on rehabilitation, and several committees composed of Filipinos living in exile in the United States, little of concrete value was accomplished.[31] As Professor Buss points out: "Conflicting ideas, as between Americans and Filipinos and as between different Americans, prevented the translation of plans into action. . . ."[32] Taylor reinforced this view when he said:

> But nothing can conceal the fact that instead of a bold and imaginative program based on careful planning during the war years, such as was divised for defeated Japan, the U.S. Congress served up a sterile compromise based on the restoration of prewar economic dependence.[33]

More will be said later about the programs that eventually emerged from the US Congress, which in fact did make the Philippines an economic dependency of the United States.

United States economic policies, or the lack thereof, during this critical period contributed to the general confusion that existed at the time. Had the US taken effective steps to support the Commonwealth Government in stabilizing the economic situation, it could have gone far towards ameliorating the problems which fed the growing Hukbalahap movement. However, the United States had worldwide commitments and, unfortunately, the Philippines was low on the priority list.

SOCIAL

> The United States occupation of the Philippines was a half century of compromise. It was a compromise between claims of jingoistic American

> imperialism at the turn of the century, and the ideals of Filipino nationalism. . . .[34]

The main manifestation of that compromise was the failure to develop a broad political base among the people of the Philippines. Rather, the landed aristocracy was permitted to become firmly entrenched as the dominant political force in the country. As such, they used their power to maintain the status quo. In Golay's words:

> Its members generally equate an expansion of government functions to a redistribution of income at their expense. In the past they have tended to utilize political power to frustrate changes in the economic organization of agriculture, to minimize government revenues, and frustrate changes in the composition of local government.[35]

The landed aristocracy was successful in resisting what agrarian reform efforts the United States made. "Landlordism was the curse of the Philippine Islands. It was a curse under the Spaniards, and remained an undiminished curse under the Americans. . . ."[36] And it was even more of a curse for the postliberation Commonwealth Government.

Landlordism and a high tenancy rate kept a large percent of the peasant population in a state of virtual servitude. However, the situation had changed considerably, particularly in central Luzon. During the Japanese occupation, many landlords fled to the cities because they no longer enjoyed the protection of the government against their often resentful tenants. When they tried to return after liberation, in many cases they found that

the Huks had already seized their estates and set up their own administrations in the area.[37]

It appears that United States policy with regard to the aristocratic elite was one of omission. Instead of recognizing the explosive situation that existed and doing something to correct it, the United States reinstalled the old ruling class and effectively returned the Philippines to the old status quo.

The agrarian, political, and economic problems, a general breakdown in law and order, a new sense of nationalism, and the erosion of moral values mentioned earlier, provided an ideal setting for the growth of the Hukbalahap movement.

The failure to recognize the Hukbalahap movement as a full-blown revolutionary force is indicative of the United States' lack of appreciation of the problems facing the Philippines. The US Army did disarm some Huk forces and arrested some of the movement's leaders, whom they released prior to the transfer of power. However, the US Army did not grasp the magnitude of the threat, although Brigadier General Lansdale, an intelligence officer with the US forces, claims to have recognized at the time that the Communists were a threat and would challenge the new government.[38]

And challenge it they did! As the Japanese forces retreated, the Huks assumed control over several provinces in central Luzon. They set up de facto governments in five provinces,[39] however, the Osmeña government refused to recognize the Huk civil officials and with US Army backing installed legal government administrations.[40]

The Huk guerrillas, estimated to be 10,000 strong, supported by 100,000 militia, had acquired a large arsenal of weapons and ammunition and in Taylor's opinion: "Until the liberation had been the largest, the best-trained, and the best equipped Philippine army in the country. . . ."[41] Balgos, the Huk Commander-in-Chief, demanded that Huk units be incorporated into the Philippine Army, however, his request was ignored and the Huks were ordered to turn in their weapons. Most refused, hid their weapons, dispersed, and waited. Their first military action against the government occurred in May 1946.[42]

The Huks also showed their versatility by joining in the 1946 electorial campaign. Using front parties, they managed to elect six Communist delegates to the legislature.[43]

In assessing the situation at the time, Taylor says:

> Since many influential Americans and Filipinos thought of the Huks as warm-hearted agrarian reformers who should be talked out of their unfortunate addiction to violent methods, it was difficult for Osmena to start a vigorous campaign against them.[44]

MILITARY

After American forces landed in the Philippines, a large number of Filipino guerrilla units were incorporated into the US Army. Some of these forces were even tagged to participate in the invasion of Japan.[45] When the war came to an end, there was no further need for large Filipino forces in the US Army, so a demobilization program was begun. By independence, when the US

Army turned over control of Philippine forces to the new nation, they had been reduced to about 37,000 officers and men, divided into two parts: an armed forces proper consisting of about 13,000 men, and a Military Police Command (later renamed the Philippine Constabulary) with 24,000 men. The Military Police (MP) Command was placed under the Department of the Interior and was made responsible for internal security. The armed forces proper was placed under the Department of Defense.[46]

Unfortunately, the MP Command was a far cry from being the effective fighting force that the prewar Constabulary had been. It lacked competent officers, proper equipment (it had mostly war surplus), and proper training.[47] It was not prepared to take on the well-trained, well-equipped, and well-led Huk squadrons. In retrospect, it seems incongruous that the United States could have left such a relatively impotent force to deal with the internal security problems faced by the new Republic.

THE FUTURE

In the midst of the postwar confusion, the Commonwealth Government managed to hold an election. Manuel Roxas, then President of the Senate, ran against Osmeña for the Presidency. Roxas carried on a vigorous countrywide campaign, while Osmeña never left Manila. Roxas was elected by a slim majority in the April balloting, and his party won control of Congress, also by a slim majority. There were accusations of fraud and intimidation

on both sides--an issue that Roxas would later use to unseat the six elected Communist delegates to the lower house.[48]

US policy during the election appears to have been one of noninterference, at least overtly. However, George Farwell says:

> In Huk country military police [presumedly Filipino] intimidated opposition voters and distributed pamphlets while American fighter aircraft flew low over towns and barrios at full throttle. . . .[49]

Additionally, General MacArthur's earlier exoneration of Roxas may have been interpreted by some as an indorsement of him.

Roxas was inaugurated as President of the Commonwealth in May 1946. With independence he became the first President of the Republic of the Philippines.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Smith, p. 113.

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3. George Farwell, Mask of Asia: The Philippines Today (1967), p. 74.

4. George E. Taylor, The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership (1964), p. 109.

5. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

6. Shirley Jenkins, American Economic Policy Toward the Philippines (1954), p. 4.

7. Farwell, p. 74.

8. Smith, p. 113.

9. Taylor, p. 109.

10. Wurfel, p. 697.

11. Taylor, p. 116.

12. Ibid., p. 117.

13. Smith, p. 123.

14. Ibid.

15. Wurfel, p. 697.

16. Taylor, p. 119.

17. Ibid.

18. Hernando J. Abaya, Betrayal in the Philippines (1946), p. 9.

19. General Emilio Aguinaldo, A Second Look at America (1957), p. 231.

20. Ibid., p. 233.

21. Smith, p. 126.

22. Luis Taruc, Borne of the People (1953), p. 220.

23. Romulo, p. 83.

24. Farwell, p. 73.

25. Smith, p. 116.

26. Jenkins, p. 44.

27. Frank H. Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development (1961), p. 60.

28. Jenkins, pp. 97-98.

29. Smith, p. 117.

30. Taylor, p. 115.

31. Jenkins, pp. 20-21.

32. Ibid.

33. Taylor, p. 114.

34. Onofre D. Corpuz, The Philippines (1965), p. 65.

35. Golay, p. 24.

36. Brian Crozier, The Rebels (1960), p. 38.

37. Jenkins, p. 6.

38. US Army Command and General Staff College, Reference Book RB 31-3, Internal Defense Operations: A Case History, The Philippines 1946-54 (1967), p. 37 (hereafter referred to as "RB 31-3").

39. Richard M. Leighton, Ralph Sanders, and LTC Jose N. Tinio, The Huk Rebellion: A Case Study of the Social Dynamics of Insurrection (March 1964), p. 27.

40. Taylor, p. 122.

41. Ibid.

42. RB 31-3, p. 46.

43. Leighton, p. 28.

44. Taylor, p. 123.

45. Ibid., p. 181.

46. Leighton, p. 28.

47. Smith, p. 144.

48. Wurfel, p. 697.

49. Farwell, p. 76.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATION FOR BUILDING A NATION

The picture painted thus far is not a bright one, either from the viewpoint of the Filipinos, or for many US policies and actions that impinged upon it. This chapter will be concerned with specific United States policies and programs which were designed to help the Philippine Government get on its feet.

There should be no doubt at this juncture that strong action was needed. The Filipinos were not capable of doing everything for themselves and quite naturally looked to the United States to help them rebuild their country. As Carlos P. Romulo observed: "We did not know what lay ahead on July 4, 1946. We were certain only that the line we planned to follow would be the American way."[1]

The Philippine Government was committed to follow the "American way." However, a big question remained unanswered--was the United States as fully committed to the Philippines? The answer here appears to have been both yes and no, depending on who was looking at it. From the moral standpoint, the United States was committed to the rehabilitation of the war-torn country; otherwise, US commitments appear to have been rather one-sided in favor of the United States. In the words of Milton W. Meyer:

> Because of wartime destruction, the United States Government admitted a moral obligation to provide for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of its ward. Congress realized these aims in 1946, shortly before Philippine independence, in a twin program consisting of a rehabilitation and a trade act. United States

policies, not Philippine policies, were paramount in molding these basic acts which governed economic relations. The Philippine diplomatic story with regard to the formulation of these laws was one of American action and Philippine reaction.[2]

THE PHILIPPINE REHABILITATION ACT

The rehabilitation needs of the Philippines were urgent and statements which had been made by high US officials, including Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, led the Filipinos to believe that the US would bear most of the expense.

On 13 August 1943, President Roosevelt had committed the United States to the rehabilitation of the Philippines when he "stated that the Philippines would be assisted in the 'full repair' of ravages caused by war. . . ."[3]

In November 1943, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was amended by Congress "to provide for the establishment of a 'Philippine-American Commission on the Rehabilitation of the Philippine Islands. . . .'"[4] In June 1945, the War Damage Corporation dispatched a special mission to the Philippines. The mission estimated that a total of approximately $800 million in losses had been inflicted upon private, church, and government properties. The mission's estimates were in contrast to the Census Office of the Philippines estimate of $1,295 million in damages.[5]

In October 1945, Senator Tydings introduced legislation in the US Senate to provide for Philippine rehabilitation. The United States Congress, however, did not have the same sense of

urgency the Filipinos had and it was not until 30 April 1946 that a much changed version of the bill was finally approved.[6] It should be noted that this was more than fourteen months after the US had returned civil power to the Commonwealth Government.

Although many of the provisions of the Act did not completely satisfy the Filipinos, they realized that it was probably the best they could hope for under the circumstances. From the US viewpoint it appears to have been an honest effort, within the scope of its worldwide rehabilitation commitments, to do the right thing for the Philippines. In all fairness to US policies, it should be remembered that the Filipinos had only a Filipino view of what the United States should or could do. Nevertheless, some of the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act did create some difficult problems for Philippine-American relations.

As approved on 30 April 1946, the Rehabilitation Act provided for:

> 1. The establishment of a Philippine War Damage Commission to make compensation to claiments for property losses.
> 2. The transfer to the Philippine Government of American surplus war property in the Philippines.
> 3. The restoration of public services, within the limitations of the funds available.[7]

In addition to the operating provisions, a provision tying the act to the Philippine Trade Act had been added. This provision prevented payment of private property damage claims over $500 until an executive agreement on trade had been concluded.[8] In other words, the Filipinos would have to accept both pieces of

legislation or have neither. This would not have been a matter of great significance had the trade bill, as will be explained later, not contained some provisions which impinged on Philippine sovereignty.

The Rehabilitation Act only provided for about one half of what the Philippines considered just compensation. However, the US Congress considered the $620 million authorized for its various programs to be generous.[9]

The first two provisions of the Act were the most controversial. The first because so many individuals were involved, and the second because it opened the door to widespread corruption. The third provision appears to have been carried out with relative efficiency.

The War Damage Commission

The problems facing the War Damage Commission, which was formally organized in June 1946, were staggering. A total of over one million claims from private individual, corporations, and government agencies were expected and the validity of each claim had to be verified--a very difficult task in view of existing conditions. The Commission was given about four years to complete its work. This meant the processing of about 1,000 claims each day.

Difficulties in setting up the administrative machinery caused the Commission to get off to a slow start. The first government claim was paid in December 1946, however, it was not until April 1947 that the first private claim was paid.

By February 1948, 1,256,602 claims had been submitted. Of these, 80 percent were for $500 or less. The total value of the claims reached almost one and one quarter billion dollars. By the time the Commission completed its work it had paid out more than $388 million.[10]

Needless to say, the disparity between what was claimed and what was paid indicates that many of the claims were based on a desire to cash-in on a good thing. Unfortunately, it was another manifestation of the moral decay alluded to earlier. Moreover, it left the United States open to charges of not fulfilling its obligations.

In any program as large and complex as the one carried on by the War Damage Commission, there are bound to be inequities. Undoubtedly, some valid claims were rejected and some fraudulent ones paid. On the whole, however, according to Milton Meyer, the Commission accomplished its mission without excessive criticism.[11]

War Surplus

The war surplus provision of the Rehabilitation Act proved to be a disaster for the Philippines. Although the purpose of the provision was basically sound, the execution was another example of US shortsightedness.

At the end of the war, US surplus valued at $638 million (procurement cost) was stored in the Philippines. This property was designated to be turned over to the Philippine Government for disposal. Using a liquidation ratio of 21.4 cents to the dollar,

the fair value of the property was set at $137 million. The proceeds from the disposal of the property were to be used for rehabilitation.[12]

From the start, the program was a monument to inefficiency and mismanagement and provided a splendid opportunity for theft, graft, and corruption. In the words of Carlos P. Romulo:

> Unfortunately, before the plan could be put in effect, the schemes of less scrupulous people moved faster. Cupidity was aroused by this unexampled massing of wealth and sources for more wealth, and it was abetted by the nationwide lapse from essential moral values engendered by the years of resistance against a foe who knew neither morals nor law. Actually, the enormous surplus stores had been left abandoned under the most tenuous of regulations, which were enforced poorly or not at all by venal officials, both American and Filipino. There was wealth for the taking by all who could gain access to the surplus stores--and many did, by connivance from both sides.[13]

The United States did not take proper precautions in the securing and disposal of the property. Smith maintains that in addition, "the American inventories were totally inadequate and often false," and that "many Americans expressed themselves as being interested only in 'getting rid of the stuff' and getting out of here. . . ."[14]

In April 1947, press reports alleged that over $400 million (procurement value) worth of surplus material had been lost. The US Army blamed pilferage for the losses and maintained that Philippine estimates were highly exaggerated. Both sides blamed the other. Prodded by newspaper reports, "both Congress and Roxas

created committees of inquiry to investigate alleged losses, but investigators mired down in politics."[15]

In August 1947, it was estimated that losses over the previous two years totaled $300 million (procurement value). The loss was out of $435 million (procurement value) which had already been transferred to the Philippine Government.[16]

Much of the surplus found its way into the black market. Private buyers also purchased and exported large quantities at considerable profit. Some even found its way back to the United States. The Huks also managed to take advantage of the opportunity. Smith cites an example:

> Several years later one of the Huk leaders declared that his organization had used, from the beginning, military supplies that had been filched from the 'surplus.' He stated that the reason his men were unwilling to turn in American-made arms was that they had abundant American-made ammunition for them.[17]

When the surplus property program came to an end, the Philippine Government had only realized $40 million from it. Even worse, national morals and faith in the government had been further eroded.[18]

> But the surplus scandal was only one aspect of the general moral collapse. It marked the beginning of a reign of greed and graft--and the start of the weakening of popular faith in the government.
> --Carlos P. Romulo[19]

Again, the United States must share the blame.

THE PHILIPPINE TRADE ACT OF 1946 (BELL ACT)

While the Rehabilitation Act provided at least a partial remedy for the "ravages caused by war," much more was needed if the Philippines was to become a viable independent nation. Political independence had been assured by the independence act, however, economic independence was another matter, and trade relations with the United States were the key to economic independence. Prewar US policies, most notable, "free trade," had served to tie the Philippine economy so closely to that of the United States that it would be impossible to just cut them loose. In early 1946, Commissioner McNutt explained the Philippine position this way:

> When you say trade in the Philippines, you mean the national economy. It is a trading economy. And I might and should say here and now that we, the United States, managed it that way. We are responsible for the sole dependence of the Philippines on the American market. Our businessmen and our statesmen in the past years allowed the Philippines to become a complete economic dependency of the United States to a greater degree than any single State of the Union is economically dependent on the rest of the United States.[20]

In September 1945, Congressman C. Jasper Bell of Missouri, introduced legislation in the US Congress designed to assist in the economic recovery of the Philippines. From the beginning, the bill was highly controversial and went through five versions before it was finally passed in April 1946. According to Taylor:

> The passage of the Act was marked by a grim battle of special interests that would have gone on much longer if there had not been a fixed date for independence. . . .[21]

Unfortunately, the battle was primarily between competing American interests, with little regard for what was in the best interests of the Philippines. The Philippines was not in a very strong bargaining position because their economic needs were so urgent.

The Osmeña government objected to certain provisions of the bill, however, the Roxas government supported the Act. Osmeña later supported Roxas in his campaign to persuade both the Philippine Congress and the Filipino people to accept the Act because it was the best that could be obtained at the time and was "the wisest and most expedient course. . . ."[22] The Filipinos were counting on renegotiation of the more onerous provisions at a later date. There was also another compelling reason for acceptance of the Trade Act. As will be recalled, the Rehabilitation Act had been tied to the acceptance of the Trade Act.

From the viewpoint of the Filipinos, the Trade Act contained some obvious and unwarranted infringements on their sovereignty. The two most controversial provisions were the so called "parity clause," of which more will be said later, and a provision pegging the peso to the dollar. In the latter case, the Philippines could not change the par value of the peso without the consent of the President of the United States.[23]

At this juncture, it should be pointed out that the United States Congress did not maliciously impose these provisions on the Philippines. There were cogent arguments supporting each of the provisions.[24] And of course, the US Congress does not

operate in a vacuum. It must, of necessity, consider US interests, including those of special interest groups within the United States. The problem was one of orchestrating the desires of the divergent groups, including Philippine interests, into a policy that at least partially satisfied the most. Perhaps the most serious error made by the Congress was its failure to recognize the impact that the limits placed on Philippine sovereignty would have on the nationalistic sensitivities of the Filipinos.

The Philippines really had no choice but to accept the Trade Act and so "amid mixed cries of 'Faith in America' and 'Economic Slavery, . . .'"[25] the Philippine Government authorized the executive agreement which would put the Act into operation.

The Parity Clause

By far the most controversial provision of the Trade Act was the so called parity clause because it required an amendment to the Philippine Constitution which specifically limited the disposition, exploitation, development, or utilization of natural resources to citizens of the Philippines.[26] The Trade Act required that United States citizens be given equal rights in this area. For the Filipinos, it was a bitter pill to swallow.

President Roxas had a major fight on his hands in order to get the amendment passed by Congress, which required a three-fourths vote for approval, and then obtain the approval of the people through a national plebiscite. Roxas threw his full power and energy behind the amendment. He even brought Romulo home from

Washington to lend his power and prestige to the fight. Romulo viewed his contribution as an anti-Communist fight. "The Trade Act had come under fire of the Communists; they had served, then, to bring me home."[27] It was not that simple--serious opposition to the parity clause came from many quarters, both public and private.

Several months were consumed in heated debate and political maneuvering on both sides, including the unseating of ten minority representatives in Congress. Taruc and other Communists representing the Democratic Alliance were among those refused their seats "on the grounds that they had been elected with the aid of fraud and violence. . . ."[28] Finally, on 18 September, the national plebiscite was approved by the Philippine Congress by a narrow margin. The vote in the Senate was 16 to 5, and 68 to 18 in the House. According to the government, this was two more votes than were necessary in the House, and exactly enough in the Senate.[29]

If the ten minority representatives had not been unseated, it is doubtful that the amendment would have passed. Writing about it later, Luis Taruc, the Huk leader said this:

> There was, of course, a reason for the haste of Roxas to have the DA /Democratic Alliance/ Congressmen unseated. Approval of the Bell Trade Act and its parity provision necessitated an amendment to our Constitution, requiring a two-thirds /sic/ vote of the Philippine Congress. After we had been unseated, the resolution to amend the Constitution was approved by only a one-vote margin in the lower house /sic/. In that naked way was the will of the people frustrated.[30]

A national plebiscite was set for 11 March 1947, and Roxas, Romulo, and others campaigned throughout the country in support of the amendment. When the voters went to the polls, they accepted the amendment by an eight to one majority.[31] However, for one reason or another, almost 60 percent of the voters stayed away from the polls.[32]

Perhaps the best way to sum up the Trade Act and the parity clause amendment is to look at the view of another Asian. Dr. Sung Yong Kim, a Korean politician and statesman, viewed it this way:

> However well-intentioned the overall aims, the implicit limitations of Philippine sovereignty gave rise to serious tensions in subsequent relations with the United States. In domestic politics, it gave impetus to nationalistic aspirations. Traditional Philippine nationalism, in its maturity, had been fully cooperative with the United States; now there was a cogent issue upon which a new form of nationalism could be forged--a form highly critical of the United States.[33]

UNITED STATES-PHILIPPINE MILITARY RELATIONS

The Philippines emerged from the war as dependent upon the United States militarily as it was economically. US military policies and programs, like those in the economic area, produced some difficult problems for both the United States and the Philippines. Again, it was a clashing of interests in some important areas that caused the most difficulties.

Back Pay and Veterans' Benefits

One of the first major problems faced by the United States was back pay for Filipinos who had been absorbed into the United States Armed Forces, Far East (USAFFE). According to Aguinaldo, "backpay had been promised them through radio announcements as part of the campaign to keep up Filipino resistance against the Japanese. . . ."[34] The problem for the United States was not one of recognizing its obligations, but one of determining who was eligible to receive the benefits.

> The legislative definition of a veteran included membership in organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed or subsequently recognized by the United States. This opened up the opportunity for claims by thousands of Filipinos who may or may not have been attached to bona fide guerrilla units as defined by the U. S. Army.[35]

Further complicating the army's problem was the issue of collaboration and what to do about Huk guerrillas. In the case of the Huks, Taruc claims that although the Huks "throughout the war had fought against the back-pay psychology . . . /and had/ emphasized the political and moral values of patriotism, . . ." instead, they decided to apply for back pay because many Huk families were desperate and needed the money. Also, they needed the "funds to build the people's organizations as part of our peaceful legal struggle, . . ." According to Taruc, he assisted a US Army team in compiling a roster of eligible Huks (which he later regretted). Taruc also claims that:

> . . . some Huks were recognized despite the official anti-Huk attitude of the American

> Army. . . . In the main, however, recognition was never extended as a policy to the Hukbalahap.[36]

As was the case with the war damage payments, the question of eligibility involved so many individuals, it could not help becoming highly controversial. Aguinaldo viewed it this way:

> Backpay as a policy was both a joy and a headache. The sums distributed as such to members of the USAFFE and recognized guerrillas gave to almost a million men and their families a good start toward personal rehabilitation . . . . Yet there were unforeseen repercussions. Hundreds of thousands of unrecognized and unpaid guerrillas could never be convinced that they had less claim to backpay than those who were recognized and paid.[37]

Ramon Magsaysay, in testimony before the US House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in 1950, maintained that because of recognition procedures employed by the US Army, 50 percent of the eligible enlisted men did not gain recognition because "USAFFE processing teams in early 1945 had directed 'these ignorant soldiers, especially enlisted men' not to include guerrilla activities in the processing papers."[38]

In April 1947, President Roxas expressed the Philippine sentiment in an address to Filipino USAFFE veterans:

> I believe it is our right not only to ourselves but also for the honor of the organization to which you belong to respectfully submit to the Government and the Congress of the United States that the USAFFE of the Philippines, Americans as well as Filipinos, be accorded the same treatment because they were part of the same force, because they fought for the same things, because when Japanese bullets were hurled against them, these bullets did not inquire whether the person who was to be shot down was an American or a Filipino, and because we were loyal to the same institutions and the same flag. It is our right to expect that we

> be given the same evidences of the recognition and appreciation by the people and the Government of America.[39]

Although falling far short of Filipino expectations, the United States paid out a considerable sum to Filipino veterans. In the five years after 1945, $473 million in back and current pay was disbursed. In addition, for the next ten years, $124 million each year was paid to Filipino veterans by the US Veterans' Administration. Nevertheless, Aguinaldo claims that:

> Filipino soldiers and veterans have been deprived of at least $3,457,274,000 which they should have received from the U. S. Government under provisions of various American laws and Philippine executive orders approved by General Douglas MacArthur as Allied Supreme Commander in the Pacific.[40]

In addition to the back pay problem, the Filipinos were highly critical of veterans' benefits which were "extended to Filipino veterans on the reduced scale of one peso /two peso = one dollar/ per dollar of comparable obligation to an American veteran."[41] Also, such benefits as medical care were not available in the Philippines. This was later corrected when the US Congress appropriated money for a Philippine veterans' hospital in 1948. Burial benefits were also extended in 1951.[42]

Back pay and veterans' benefits, like war damage payments, left a legacy of ill will toward the United States among many Filipinos. Undoubtedly, because of the very nature of the program, it was bound to cause some ill will. However, had the United States been more circumspect, both in the promises it

made, and in the execution of the programs, many of the problems could have been avoided.

US Troop Behavior

A relatively minor irritant, but one which received wide publicity in the Philippine press, was alleged misconduct of American troops stationed in the Philippines. Among others, there were reports of US Marine guards mistreating Filipinos at the naval base at Olongapo. Congresman Ramon Magsaysay investigated the alleged American misconduct and while finding evidence substantiating those and other allegations, "he admitted that the incidents were isolated cases without any set pattern. . . ."[43]

In discussing the parity clause of the Trade Act, Shirley Jenkins cited Philippine worries about equal rights and referred to a Manila Chronicle editorial which said:

> At the rate the U. S. Army is taking over Philippine territory, Filipinos will soon live like Indians, on reservations. . . . It seems that there is no need of amending our Constitution to grant Americans 'special rights' in this country. They are making themselves at home even without it, and driving us out into the backyard of our own house.[44]

In a report to General Eisenhower, Army Chief of Staff, made in October 1946, General MacArthur admitted that there had been incidents but that their importance had been over-emphasized. "MacArthur concluded that the root of the problem stemmed from an 'understandable feeling' of Filipino nationalism."[45]

Although the problem of US troop behavior did not reach major proportions, it did contribute to a growing sense of

indignation among many Filipinos at what they considered unfair treatment of the Philippines and Filipinos by the United States.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND BASE RIGHTS

During this period, two important military agreements were concluded between the United States and the Philippines. Neither agreement was accomplished by much controversy at the time. However, the Bases Agreement was destined to become a hot political issue later on.

Military Assistance

The question of military assistance caused barely a ripple of dissent in either the United States or the Philippines. The United States was committed to the defense of the Philippines, not by treaty, but as a moral obligation as well as for its own security. Also, the Philippines was in no position to provide for its own defense--it needed and wanted US help and "United States military assistance was taken for granted, almost to a point of indifference by the Philippine Congress. . . ."[46]

The Military Assistance Act of 1946,[47] provided for assistance in training and equipping the Philippine Armed Forces. The original agreement provided assistance for a five year period, renewable at Philippine request, and authorized the establishment of a Joint United States Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG).[48] The US Congress appropriated over $19 million for the program for fiscal year 1947. JUSMAG was established in March of 1947 and

over the next decade administered a $169.3 million program.[49] More will be said later about the activities of JUSMAG.

When President Roxas signed the assistance agreement he "characterized the grant of both material and training personnel as a 'boon beyond price.' He pointed out that the Philippines received much and granted nothing in return. . . ."[50] Roxas also indicated that the program was for both external and internal security.[51] Taruc expressed the Communist viewpoint of JUSMAG when he said:

> He /Roxas/ was given an American Military Advisory Group to train his armed forces, to train them for war against the peasants, and he was backed up with the promise of greater aid if the people's movement got too strong for him.[52]

In assessing the Military Assistance Act, George E. Taylor points out that the significance of the close American-Philippine military association:

> Is often underestimated, yet in the long run the military relationship may be more important than the political and economic because it is more closely associated with national pride and prestige.[53]

To a large extent, Taylor's observation would be borne out later.

Military Bases Agreement

Like military assistance, there was never any doubt that the Philippines would grant the United States base rights after independence. The basis for this was laid in the original

independence act (Tydings-McDuffie Act) of 1934, which permitted United States retention of naval bases and feuling stations after independence.[54]

In May 1945, Commonwealth President Osmeña signed an agreement with President Truman which provided for United States retention of military and naval bases in the Philippines. Soon afterwards, at the request of the Philippine Government, the United States provided the terms for the agreement.

The Philippines established a panel, headed by Vice President Quirino, to negotiate the agreement with the United States. After a thorough examination of the provisions, "the final draft as recommended to Roxas, had the approval of the whole Philippine panel. . . ."[55] The final version of the agreement was signed in Manila on 14 March 1946, and its provisions, effective for ninety-nine years, entered into force on 26 March 1947.[56]

The Military Bases Agreement provided for United States retention or future use of twenty-three bases in the Philippines. The retention of sixteen of the bases was extended outright, while the remaining seven were made subject to US determination that they were required by military necessity, and upon notification of the Government of the Philippines of that necessity. A provision for the negotiation for the expansion, exchange, return, or the acquisition of additional bases, at the request of the United States, was also included. Another provision precluded the Philippines from allowing, without prior consent of the United

States, the establishment of any bases by any third power. The agreement also spelled out United States and Philippine rights and obligations with respect to the bases, including a provision which gave the United States jurisdiction over:

> Any offense committed by any person within any base except where the offender and the offended parties were both Philippine citizens (not members of the armed forces of the United States on active duty) or the offense is against the security of the Philippines.[57]

Other provisions outlined off-base jurisdiction.

It only took the Philippine Senate nine days to approve the agreement by a vote of 18 to 0 (three members were absent). During the course of the debate there was some criticism of the ninety-nine year provision and one Senator who had been a member of the negotiating panel unexpectedly criticized "the United States bases as an encroachment of Philippine sovereignty, as an invitation to atomic attack, as too numerous, and as usurping the Philippine jurisdictional rights. . . ."[58] Many of these same criticisms would be heard later. In answering the critics of the agreement, President Roxas stated that "if the military bases agreement were abrogated 'we would be sacrificing our national security on the alter of mistaken dignity. . . .'"[59]

From the Philippine viewpoint, the bases agreement was not altogether satisfactory; however, it did accomplish their immediate objective of providing for their security without requiring the expenditure of badly needed money for national defense. They traded some more sovereignty for security.

BASIC POLICIES ESTABLISHED

With the signing of the various agreements discussed above, basic United States policies toward the Philippines were established and in the opinion of Dr. Sung Yong Kim:

> The Philippines remained tied to the United States in economic and military--and accordingly political--relations almost as closely as before the severance of colonial bonds. This gave rise to constant frustration in nationalistic elements who had dreamed of an independence untrammelled in their own eyes and in the eyes of all Asia.[60]

Although the United States thought it had provided the wherewithal which would give the new Republic a good start, it did not recognize the seriousness of the situation which confronted the Philippines from almost every quarter. The foundation was poorly laid and it was only a matter of time before the Philippines would arrive at the brink of the abyss and come very close to falling to the Communists. Shortsighted United States policies and programs may not have been responsible, but they most certainly contributed to the overall decline.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. Romulo, p. 10.

2. Milton Walter Meyer, A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic (1965), p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Golay, p. 64.

5. Jenkins, p. 47.

6. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

7. US Department of State, The Philippine Rehabilitation Program: Report to the President by the Secretary of State, August 31, 1954 (released November 1954), p. 3.

8. Meyer, p. 8.

9. Ibid., p. 9.

10. Jenkins, pp. 50-51.

11. Meyer, p. 86.

12. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

13. Romulo, p. 84.

14. Smith, p. 120.

15. Meyer, p. 38.

16. Jenkins, p. 51.

17. Smith, p. 120.

18. Ibid., p. 121.

19. Romulo, p. 86.

20. Jenkins, p. 59.

21. Taylor, p. 126.

22. Jenkins, p. 87.

23. Golay, p. 64.

24. Smith, p. 129.

25. Jenkins, p. 89.

26. Ibid., p. 67.

27. Romulo, p. 39.

28. Wurfel, p. 698.

29. Jenkins, p. 91.

30. Taruc, p. 227.

31. Meyer, p. 53.

32. Wurfel, p. 698.

33. Sung Yong Kim, United States-Philippine Relations, 1946-1956 (1968), p. 5.

34. Aguinaldo, p. 200.

35. Taylor, p. 120.

36. Taruc, p. 217.

37. Aguinaldo, pp. 200-201.

38. Meyer, p. 101.

39. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

40. Aguinaldo, p. 227.

41. Golay, p. 66.

42. Meyer, pp. 100-101.

43. Ibid., p. 40.

44. Jenkins, p. 93.

45. Meyer, p. 40.

46. Ibid., p. 41.

47. Actually ratified on 21 March 1947, but retroactive to the date of independence.

48. Meyer, p. 42.

49. Taylor, p. 149.

50. Meyer, pp. 42-43.

51. Ibid., p. 43.

52. Taruc, p. 251.

53. Taylor, p. 128.

54. Jenkins, p. 95.

55. Meyer, p. 45.

56. US Department of State, Military Bases in the Philippines, Treaties and other International Acts, Series 1775 (1947), pp. 18-19 (hereafter referred to as "Bases Agreement").

57. Ibid.

58. Meyer, p 47.

59. Kim, p. 6.

60. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE ROAD DOWN

UNITED STATES ATTITUDES

The United States policy toward the Philippines in the first five postwar years appears to have been characterized by a desire to meet whatever obligations that existed as expeditiously and painlessly as possible and then be shed of them. While enlightened guidance was needed, little was forthcoming until conditions had deteriorated to such a precarious point that the United States could no longer ignore them. As Professor Buss points out:

> A psychological indifference or neglect seemed to characterize American relations with the Philippines between the declaration of Philippine independence and the outbreak of the Korean war. There was a general disposition to criticize local conditions in the Philippines, perhaps to preach a bit, but very little inclination to admit our own historical shortcomings.[1]

There were several reasons for this attitude on the part of the United States. First, the American people had been psychologically conditioned over the years to accept Philippine independence as a natural evolution of US policy toward them. This led to the attitude of "indifference" mentioned above. Moreover, the American conditioning included the naive assumption that because of the past "benevolent and enlightened" policies, the Filipino people were prepared to govern themselves in the image of the United States. All that was needed was help in the

physical and economic rehabilitation of the country--the rest would take care of itself.

Secondly, the United States had a multitude of problems in other parts of the world, most of which took precedence over those of the Philippines. International communism was on the move and it was imperative that the United States stop it. Ironically, while the US focused its attention on Europe, communism in Asia was emerging in full-bloom.

A third reason, and perhaps the most important, was apparent American reluctance to get involved in the domestic affairs of the Philippines. Although the US did impose some one-sided economic and military policies on the Philippines, this was not done in an effort to dominate them, but to give them what was honestly considered, however shortsighted, the best chance for economic revival. At any rate, the Philippines was given the chance, within the framework of the terms of independence and other agreements, to work out its own political and economic destiny, with little United States interference.

ECONOMIC MALADJUSTMENT

It is not the purpose of this study to make a detailed economic survey of the Philippine economy. However, because economic issues were paramount in United States-Philippine relations, it is necessary at this point to briefly discuss the

development of the Philippine economy during the critical period between independence and the early 1950s.

As discussed earlier, the war left the Philippine economy in shambles. However; because of the injection of vast amounts of US aid in its various forms, a good currency situation,[2] favorable terms of trade, and no necessity for large defense expenditures, the Philippines was actually in a favorable position for economic rehabilitation.[3]

Rather than use the considerable resources available to lay a firm economic base; the Philippine Government, through a combination of mismanagement, financial and budgetary irresponsibility, and rampant corruption, permitted a favorable economic outlook to dissipate into a series of economic crises which would eventually cause the United States to alter its policies toward the Republic.

Within two years after the war it was evident that things were not going well, however, "a superficial prosperity concealed the fundamentally precarious economic position of the new state. . . ."[4]

US aid helped produce the atmosphere of economic well-being because it put money in the pockets of individual Filipinos--money with which to buy many of the things they had been deprived of during the war. This led to heavy imports and did little to stimulate internal production. Also, the demand for scarce goods contributed to an inflationary spiral which inevitably hit the common man the hardest.

In 1947, as a result of a request for a $400 million loan, a Joint Philippine-American Finance Commission was established. The Commission consisted of three Filipinos and three Americans and was empowered to investigate Philippine financial and budgetary problems. As part of its report, the Finance Commission stated:

> The Commission regards the next few years as a period of national emergency; not in the sense that survival is at stake, but in the sense that emergency measures and an emergency national psychology will be required if the country is to grasp the opportunity for rapid economic development which is presented.[5]

The Commission's findings indicated that United States loans would not solve the basic problems and "that the Philippines was not making the most of resources already at its disposal. . . ."[6]

There can be little doubt but that the Philippines was not properly using the resources available and the Finance Commission's recommendations apparently did little to change the situation. Shirley Jenkins clearly pointed out the dilemma when she observed: "These suggestions, however, indicated what could be done rather than what would be done. . . ."[7]

By 1949, despite an increase in the production index to almost prewar levels, an increase in national income, and declining prices, the economic crisis was becoming acute, particularly in the fiscal area. As Golay observes:

> The Philippine fiscal crisis were clamorous and imperative, not because of their magnitude and difficulty of solution, but because of the refusal of the government to face up to the minimum fiscal responsibilities. By the end of 1949 the government seemed willing to let the

> military go unpaid and the educational system wither from want of funds, and even to succumb to the Huk rebellion, rather than face up to minimum responsibility for government functions. The demanding economic symptoms were manifestations of a deeper moral crises.[8]

Conditions grew steadily worse and by early 1950 had become so bad that drastic measures would be necessary to correct them. The Philippine Government was unable to handle the problem by itself so early in 1950, President Quirino asked President Truman to provide a special economic mission to assist in the problem.[9]

The United States, now facing direct Communist aggression in Asia, recognized the necessity of strengthening its Asian allies. A reappraisal of United States policies toward the Philippines was in order and the dispatch of the Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines, headed by former Undersecretary of the Treasury Daniel W. Bell (no relation to Congressman C. Jasper Bell) was to be the beginning of it. The activities of the "Bell Mission," as it became known, will be discussed in the next chapter.

A PEOPLE LOSE FAITH

Concomitant with the economic problems, social and political problems proliferated in the first few years of independence. All of the problems were closely interrelated and the lack of progress in one area had a debilitating influence on the others.

Faced by what seemed almost insurmountable problems, President Roxas tried hard to steer the country in the right direction. According to many writers, including Romulo, Roxas

was an able and dedicated leader who understood the complex problems facing the Philippines. In the opinion of Robert A. Smith:

> Mr. Roxas was dynamic and forceful. He was a 'leader' in the accepted Philippine sense. He dominated his party and his government, and was indefatigable in his efforts to speed postwar rebuilding. A strong administration was obviously needed, and Mr. Roxas gave it.[10]

Roxas apparently knew what was required but the Filipino people were not ready to make the sacrifices needed to make his programs successful. Had Roxas lived longer, he may have been successful in pulling the people--most of whom apparently trusted him--together behind the common goal of solving their problems. Unfortunately, less than two years after taking office, Roxas died suddenly of a heart attack while visiting Clark Field. Carlos P. Romulo called his death on American soil in the Philippines, symbolic.[11] Luis Taruc also called it symbolic, but for another reason. He said:

> In April 1948, Manuel Roxas died unexpectedly, symbolically in the arms of his masters, while visiting the U. S. army air base at Clark Field, Pampanga. His usefulness to the American imperialists had been declining fast; his policies were discredited, and the masses were becoming restless under his administration. Significantly, many people believed he had been poisoned by his masters. . . . His faithful adherence to American imperialist interests and the excessive corruption in his government had exposed him to the people.[12]

Taruc's statement about the restlessness of the masses could not be dismissed as merely Communist propaganda. The lot of the peasant, who made up about 75 percent of the population, was

not improving. Although laws to improve the conditions of the tenant farmers were passed, large landowners, through their control of many of the local courts, were able to thwart the aims of the laws. Nor had the problem of public and private morality improved; corrupt public officials reduced many government programs to ineffectiveness and the gap between the rich and the poor became wider.

The Hukbalahap took advantage of the situation to strengthen and expand their organization. Government attempts to control the Huks proved futile. The Constabulary, which was responsible for maintaining law and order, had succumbed to the debilitating influence of politicians and the rich and actually did more to alienate the population than protect it.[13]

Conditions were not good at the time of Roxas' death, but they were not yet at the explosive point. However, it did not take his successor, Elpidio Quirino, long to allow them to arrive there. Corruption was a problem under the Roxas administration, but it reached catastrophic proportions under Quirino.

Quirino was not the strong leader Roxas had been and according to Romulo, "only a few months after Quirino took office, the tides of democracy, which had been rising so gloriously in our islands, turned and began ebbing in the opposite direction."[14] Romulo's statement may have been an oversimplification, but nevertheless, the beginning of the Roxas administration

marked the start of a precipitous decline in the faith of the Filipino people in their government.

In an attempt to solve the Huk problem, Quirino offered a general amnesty to all Huks who turned themselves and their weapons in to government officials. Taruc actually went to Manila and took up his seat in the Congress, however, the amnesty negotiations foundered on the question of the Huks turning in their weapons. Taruc knew that once the Huks were disarmed, the movement would be finished so he returned to the hills and intensified his operations against the government.[15] Quirino responded by assigning the Philippine Army the responsibility for eliminating the Huks. Like the Constabulary, the Army proved ineffective against the Communists. In Smith's opinion:

> The truth is that they [the army] had no stomach for such a fight. They had no conception of national cause. The only thing of importance was to get it over as quickly and painlessly as possible and get back behind the barbed-wire road blocks. Meanwhile, their superiors back in Manila could report to President Quirino that the campaign was progressing satisfactorily, that hundreds and even thousands of Huks were being killed or 'dispersed,' and that ultimate victory was in sight.[16]

The Quirino administration's ineffectiveness in dealing with the Huks and the growing dissatisfaction and distrust of the people in the government should have sounded the alarm, but those who recognized it were either powerless or apathetic and the graft and corruption continued on an unprecedented scale.

In November 1949, President Quirino won re-election in what became known as the "dirty election" because it was the most corrupt in Philippine history. According to David Wurfel:

> The election outcome was decided by the political machine of the majority party which, with armed men, money, and few scruples, delivered a vote of nearly 52 per cent for Quirino. Competent observers estimate that about one-fifth of Quirino's total resulted from fraudulent tallying, and voter intimidation.[17]

By early 1950, the Philippines had reached such a low point--morally, economically, politically, socially, and militarily--it seemed only a matter of time before the Communists would take over. Fortunately, two things happened to prevent it. First, the United States finally recognized the seriousness of the situation and started to take action to help the Philippines out of the crisis. Secondly, and perhaps the most important, in September 1950, President Quirino appointed Ramon Magsaysay to the position of Secretary of National Defense.[18]

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1. Jenkins, p. 22.

2. At the beginning of the war, the Philippines had substantial funds deposited with the US Treasury. In addition, gold bullion was taken out of the Philippines by submarine and deposited in the United States. See Jenkins, pp. 112-113.

3. Golay, p. 68.

4. Jenkins, p. 110.

5. Ibid., p. 118.

6. Ibid., p. 122.

7. Ibid.

8. Golay, pp. 71-72.

9. Jenkins, p. 135.

10. Smith, p. 137.

11. Romulo, p. 55.

12. Taruc, p. 258.

13. Monte Ballew, Jr., LTC, The Development of Stability and Internal Forces to Counter Insurgency in the Philippines. Thesis (Carlisle Barracks, 3 March 1967), pp. 22-23.

14. Romulo, p. 57.

15. Smith, pp. 144-145.

16. Ibid., pp. 145-146.

17. Wurfel, p. 700.

18. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE ROAD BACK

CHANGING UNITED STATES POLICY

The start of the war in Korea signaled some fundamental changes in United States-Philippine relations. At the same time President Truman ordered US forces to Korea and the Seventh Fleet to the Formosa Strait, he also ordered US forces in the Philippines strengthened and an increase in US military assistance.[1]

Under the pressures of its worldwide commitments, the renewed United States interest in the Philippines became predicated on mutual security based on the security of all of Asia, rather than on a bilateral special historical association. As such, the Philippines became just one of many nations competing for US attention and aid and few if any special favors could be expected in the future.

The change in US policy was not as abrupt as it may have seemed. As the various US aid programs instituted after the war were coming to a close, the question of new aid arose. The United States, however, was not prepared to give further aid without the assurance that it would be properly used. A clear warning of this was sounded by Secretary of State Dean Acheson in January 1950. Referring to some $2 billion which he claimed the US had extended in direct aid and benefits, Acheson said:

> Much of that money has not been used as wisely as we wish it had been used, but here again we come up against the matter of responsibility. It is the Philippine Government which is responsible. It is the Philippine Government which must make its own mistakes. What we can do is advise and urge and if help continues to be misused to stop giving help.[2]

Acheson's remarks were bitterly denounced in the Philippines. "Quirino deplored the insinuations that the Philippines was a 'second China.' . . ."[3] One Congressman "demanded a Congressional investigation to draw up a balance sheet of United States aid. . . ."[4]

Acheson was not the only American critical of conditions in the Philippines. The American press was also vocal in this respect. Romulo alluded to this when he said:

> In Washington, I read in the newspapers and in the Reader's Digest and Saturday Evening Post and other magazines, exposes of the corruption and graft in the Philippines, and I had no answers for those whose questioning became acute, for they were based on facts I knew to be true.[5]

Congressman Ramon Magsaysay, upon his return to the Philippines from a trip to Washington in May 1950, "said that Philippine prestige in the United States was at its lowest ebb because of the impression abroad that the Philippine Government was 'not sound.' . . ." Magsaysay went on to advocate "that the government take steps to purge dishonest and corrupt officials. . . ."[6]

There is no question that much of the US aid was not used as well as it could have been, but as Shirley Jenkins points out, the Filipinos were not altogether to blame. A further indication of this may be found in a US Department of State paper released on 19 January 1951, which said in part:

> US aid to the Philippines in the postwar period, while to a limited extent aimed at the alleviation of structural weaknesses of the Philippine economy such as maldistribution of income and purchasing power, was on the whole sporadic and stop-gap in character. Payments for services rendered during the war, war damage compensation, and aid to the government to stabilize the economy were essentially good-will gestures and short-term shots-in-the-arm rather than serious efforts to rehabilitate the Philippine economy.[7]

THE BELL MISSION

At this point there was nothing to be gained from engaging in mutual incriminations--action was needed and both countries knew it. It will be recalled that President Truman had agreed to send an economic mission to the Philippines. After some initial misunderstandings, the mission arrived in the Philippines in July 1950. The Philippines wanted the mission to be composed of both Filipinos and Americans but the United States insisted that it be composed only of Americans. President Quirino finally accepted US terms and the mission went to work and "after three months of assiduous work which practically omitted the 'cocktail circuit,' it turned in its report to Truman on October 9."[8]

All American authors surveyed by this writer considered the Bell Mission Report to be a factual hard-hitting and fair appraisal of the economic conditions that obtained in the Philippines at that time. In Taylor's opinion, it was "an example of a thoughtful, carefully prepared statement of policy based on a well-documented survey of the situation and an integrated view of Philippine society. . . ."[9]

As expected, the report found that economic conditions in the Philippines were unsatisfactory and warned that unless prompt steps were taken "it must be expected that the economic situation will deteriorate further and political disorder will inevitably result. . . ."[10]

The mission's investigation was very comprehensive and included an analysis of some of the social and political problems that contributed to the economic situation. As an example, the report stated:

> The inequalities in income in the Philippines, always large, have become even greater during the past few years. While the standard of living of the mass of people has not reached the prewar level, the profits of businessmen and the incomes of large landowners have risen very considerably. Wages and farm income remain lower than the economy can afford because of the unequal bargaining power of workers and tenants on the one hand, and employers and landowners on the other. Under such conditions any policy that keeps prices high has the effect of transferring real income from the poor to the rich. This is what has happened in the Philippines, where prices on the average are three and a half times as high as prewar. The inflationary conditions which have made this possible were caused by large budgetary deficits and an excessive creation of credit, much of it for the Government and Government corporations.[11]

The above statement sounded very much like the theme of much of the propaganda being put out by the Communists at the time. No wonder it was effective!

The Bell mission made sweeping recommendations designed to assist in correcting the situation. These ranged from increased efficiency in public administration and finance, to improvements in public health and education. It also recommended $250 million

in American loans and grants over a five-year period. However, the report attached some strings to future US aid. "The report was clear in making future United States aid contingent on effective Philippine use of the aid, and recommended that the United States retain control of the funds."[12]

With regard to US participation in the implementation of the recommendations of the report, the Bell Mission suggested the establishment of a United States Technical Mission which would not only give "general advise, but also assist the Philippine officials in the actual day-to-day operations and in the formulation and implementation of changes in policy which must be brought about."[13] Further, the proposed $250 million in United States aid was made contingent on the Philippine Government undertaking some basic reforms. These were:

> (1) to effect an equitable tax program by January 1, 1951, in order to provide revenues of at least P565 million to balance the budget and counteract inflationary trends; (2) to enact a minimum wage law for all farm workers as a first step toward general labor and rural improvement; (3) as a measure of social reform, the Philippine Congress was to pass a joint resolution expressing its intention to carry out general social and economic development measures recommended by the Bell Mission.[14]

As part of its overall evaluation of the situation, the mission also reappraised the Philippine Trade Act and came to the conclusion that some of its provisions should be changed because "the Act under which the Agreement was made was passed more than four years ago. Conditions have changed very radically since then and new policies have become necessary to deal with them. . . ."

The report went on to recommend the establishment of a Joint Commission to study the Act in light of the new conditions.[15]

As might have been expected, there was some Filipino criticism of the Bell Mission's report. Some viewed supervised aid as a further encroachment on Philippine sovereignty. However, a survey of twenty-four provinces made by the Manila Bulletin "showed that the people interviewed, regardless of party affiliation, favored acceptance of American supervision over United States aid."[16] In an effort to allay the fears of some Filipinos, William C. Foster, head of the United States Economic Cooperation Administration, in a speech before the Philippine Congress:

> . . . stressed the 'partnership concept,' but he frankly added: 'It must be clear that a partnership implies rights, as well as obligations on both partners. As partners we, of course, have a normal interest in the proper conduct of affairs. Like any partner, we reserve the right not to invest when we feel such investment would not yield proper returns.'"[17]

On the positive side, President Quirino "termed the report fair and accurate. . . ."[18] Other influential officials also accepted the report with the same grace as had the President and "despite American fears, its recommendations were generally well received in the Philippines."[19]

On 15 November 1950, after a short period of negotiation, President Quirino and Mr. Foster signed what became known as the Quirino-Foster Agreement, which provided for the implementation of the Bell Mission's recommendations. However, it took the Philippine Congress much longer to pass legislation required by

the report. When the Philippine Congress did act, its legislation did not meet all the criteria set by the report. Nevertheless:

> . . . in a message to President Quirino, made public on April 14 /1951/, President Truman stated the American intention 'to proceed rapidly and actively carry out its commitments in the programs upon which we had agreed. . . .'[20]

The Bell Mission Report became the basic economic policy guide for the Philippines and remained so for the next three years. From the American viewpoint:

> It was the first effort by the United States to bring about changes in the political and economic policies of an independent Philippines in full view of public opinion in both countries.[21]

MILITARY RELATIONS

As part of the United States program to strengthen the Philippines, US military policies and programs also came under review. Basic US policies had been established in early 1947 with the signing of the assistance and bases agreements. The Military Assistance Agreement was designed to give the Philippines the capability of providing for its own defense with an implied emphasis on internal defense. The Bases Agreement, although not specifically saying so, provided a deterrent against an external threat; with US forces stationed in the Philippines, it was not likely that an overt military move could be made against the Philippines without involving the United States.

By 1950 Huk successes and the poor performance of the Philippine Armed Forces made it obvious that something was wrong

with the assistance program. Further, the necessity for strengthening US forces in the Philippines after the outbreak of the war in Korea, indicates that US implementation of the Bases Agreement was not all that it should have been.

It is difficult to assess the reasons for the apparent lack of success of the JUSMAG in the first few years of its operation. Certainly, political conditions in the Philippines was a major factor. The armed forces of the Philippines suffered from the same social and political ills that had infected the rest of the country. In describing the Philippine Army of 1950, Carlos P. Romulo said:

> They, too, had been allowed to drift in the general letdown of the Republic. Here too was influence, nepotism, greed. Officers were activated and deactivated without any regard to their ability or their service records, but rather to their family and political connections and above all to their 'services' to the party entrenched in power in Malacañan and the regime which ruled it.[22]

Effectively advising a foreign military, particularly in a newly independent nation where nationalistic sentiments often becloud the issues, is difficult under the best of circumstances--it becomes almost impossible when conditions such as described by Romulo exist. The Philippine Army needed new tactics and techniques but persisted in fighting the unconventional Huks using conventional means. While some of the operations against the Huks were executed with textbook efficiency, they were unsuccessful. Brigadier General Lansdale clearly pointed this out when he said:

"According to the usual military doctrine, they should have won. But, they didn't."[23]

In the view of many Filipinos, the United States was responsible for the condition of the Philippine armed forces because it had failed to live up to its commitments under the assistance agreement. In February 1950, Senator Osias accused the United States of neglect. "In his words, 'the United States has turned over to us arms deteriorated, battle worn, insufficient and inadequate even to cope with internal order.'"[24] The next month, the Secretary of National Defense claimed that the United States had provided "only $70 million out of $226 million of expected aid. . . ."[25] In a strong note of rebuttal, the US Ambassador set total US aid up to that time as $163.5 million. He also added the criticism "that the tendency of Philippine officials to make inaccurate and deprecatory statements had an unfortunate effect on public opinion in the United States. . . ."[26]

Although Filipinos were critical of US assistance, they still wanted it. On 11 March 1950, they signed a three year extension of the Military Assistance Agreement. The new agreement did, however, provide for increased assistance.[27]

The Filipino feeling of neglect also carried over into the external security aspects of US policy. At the time, the US did not have a formal commitment to come to the aid of the Philippines in the case of an external attack, although as indicated earlier, the presence of United States forces in the Philippines was an

implied commitment. The Philippines, however, wanted something more tangible than an implied commitment and verbal assurances of United States protection. The Filipinos were also disturbed at the change in United States policy toward Japan. The American desire to permit Japan to establish military forces for its own defense, made a formal mutual defense pact all the more imperative from the Filipino viewpoint.[28]

For the United States, the question of protecting the Philippines was largely academic. However, to placate those in the Philippines who wanted something more, the United States negotiated a mutual defense treaty with the Philippines. The treaty, which was signed on 30 August 1951, reflected the reluctance of the US Congress to enter into any more self-enforcing military pacts.

> The heart of the treaty, Article IV, declared: 'Each party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific area on either of the parties could be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common dangers in accordance with its own constitutional processes.'[29]

Although the terms of the treaty were pretty nebulous, the treaty satisfied most Filipinos. The Philippine Senate voted 20 to 0 for approval (three members were absent). President Quirino saw the treaty "as both the end and a beginning, and foresaw a more comprehensive pact in the future. . . ."[30] The "mutual" aspects of the treaty enhanced the badly shaken prestige of the Philippine Government in the eyes of its own people. On the part

of the United States, it cost almost nothing, but was another step toward equality in United States-Philippine relations--a matter of great importance to Filipinos.

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The renewed US interest in the Philippines, coupled with the appointment of Ramon Magsaysay as Secretary of National Defense, provided the ingredients for the defeat of the Communist attempt to seize power. A new era had begun and it was an era in which the US military was able to exert considerable influence on the conduct of the campaign against the Huks. Magsaysay respected the US military and recognized that their support of his programs was vital if they were to succeed. Romulo implies that Major General Leland Hobbs, the Chief of JUSMAG, was instrumental in getting Magsaysay his appointment.[31] Another American (whose name has already been mentioned), Colonel (later Brigadier General) Edward Lansdale, became a close friend of Magsaysay and apparently made a significant contribution to his success.[32]

While it is beyond the scope of this study to cover the Magsaysay story in detail, no account of United States-Philippine relations would be complete without at least a brief summation of his activities.

Magsaysay's methods were unorthodox. He fired incompetent officers, reorganized the army, instilled a sense of purpose in the troops, and moved them out of their barracks into the field.

Having been a guerrilla leader during the war, he recognized the importance of gaining and maintaining the loyalty and cooperation of the people and took effective steps to change the bad reputation of the military. Additionally, he instituted social programs designed to correct many of the grievances which fed the rebellion. Magsaysay's success was spectacular. "Within a year, as Magsaysay said, it was merely a question of 'mopping up' and saving as many men as possible from the ruins. . . ."[33] By May 1954, when Luis Taruc surrendered, the Huks were no longer a threat to the government.[34]

During his campaign against the Huks, Magsaysay was called upon to supervise the 1951 mid term elections; the government could not afford to have a repeat of the 1949 "dirty election." Magsaysay used the army to ensure that the election was carried out exactly as prescribed by law. On election day, "two million voters cast their ballots without fear, obstruction, or intimidation. This was the 'clean' election."[35] Attesting to the fact that the election was clean, Quirino's party "suffered a devistating defeat. . . ."[36]

The 1951 election helped restore the confidence of the people in democracy. Additionally, it further enhanced the growing popularity of Ramon Magsaysay. In February 1953, Magsaysay resigned his position as Secretary of National Defense. His resignation was an outgrowth of growing disagreement with President Quirino over the methods to be employed in dealing with the Huks,

and Magsaysay's own loss of faith in the Quirino administration. In his letter of resignation, Magsaysay said in part:

> It would be useless for me to continue as Secretary of National Defense with the specific duty of killing Huks as long as the administration continues to foster and tolerate conditions which offer fertile soil for Communism. Merely killing dissidents will not solve the Communist problem. Its solution lies in the correction of social evils and injustices, and in giving the people a decent government, free from dishonesty and graft.[37]

In 1953, Magsaysay ran for the presidency against Quirino. Romulo was his campaign manager and they both carried the campaign to the countryside. When the election was held, Magsaysay won by "the largest popular vote in Philippine history, and the widest margin of victory. . . ."[38]

After his defeat, the bitter Quirino accused the United States of interference in the election. In particular, he accused JUSMAG Chief, Major General Robert M. Cannon, of authorizing US personnel to "act as part of the Philippine Army in supervising elections and that they could enter electorial precincts. . . ."[39] Official United States policy had been noninterference and had been so stated several times during the campaign. Judging from Magsaysay's overwhelming victory, it probably would not have made much difference in the outcome had the United States openly interferred in his behalf. No overt actions were necessary because the Filipino people were already aware of the deep mutual admiration that existed between the United States military and Magsaysay.[40]

Ramon Magsaysay's inspired leadership was the most important factor in the defeat of the Huks. However, United States policies and programs also made significant contributions. George E. Taylor sums up the US military assistance contribution in these words:

> The military mission also contributed a considerable amount of advice and equipment to the struggle of the Philippine army and constabulary against the Huks. This help was probably as important as any other single factor, except Magsaysay's remarkable leadership, in breaking the military forces of the insurgents. It is generally believed that members of the mission also had something to do with the adoption of the new program of social and economic reform that was an essential part of Magsaysay's approach to solving the Huk problem. As the reputation built up by Magsaysay in the Huk campaigns was the basis of his successful bid for the presidency in 1953, the most startling political development of the period, his election may be said to have been due in some measure to the program of American military assistance.[41]

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1. Jenkins, p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 150.

3. Meyer, p. 89.

4. Ibid., p. 90.

5. Romulo, p. 91.

6. Meyer, p. 90.

7. US Department of State, Office of Intelligence Research, U.S. Aid to the Philippines Since VJ-Day (19 January 1951), p. 4.

8. Meyer, p. 92.

9. Taylor, p. 144.

10. US Department of State, Report to the President of the United States by the Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines (9 October 1950), p. 1 (hereafter referred to as the "Bell Report").

11. Ibid., p. 2.

12. Meyer, p. 92.

13. Bell Report, p. 100.

14. Meyer, pp. 94-95.

15. Bell Report, pp. 87-89.

16. Meyer, p. 94.

17. Jenkins, p. 159.

18. Meyer, p. 93.

19. Ibid.

20. Jenkins, p. 161.

21. Taylor, p. 136.

22. Romulo, pp. 101-102.

23. RB 31-3, p. 38.

24. Jenkins, p. 19.

25. Meyer, p. 104.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Kim, p. 7.

29. Ibid., p. 8.

30. Meyer, p. 107.

31. Romulo, p. 123.

32. Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin M. Gray, The Magsaysay Story (1956), pp. 164-165.

33. Smith, p. 159.

34. Ellis F. Anderson, LTC, The Triumph of Freedom's Forces: A Case History of Counterinsurgency in the Republic of the Philippines. Research paper (Newport, R. I., 1 March 1965), p. 56.

35. Smith, p. 161.

36. Ibid., p. 162.

37. Ibid., p. 165.

38. Ibid., p. 169.

39. Meyer, p. 111.

40. Romulo and Gray, pp. 213-214.

41. Taylor, p. 150.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

After eight years of struggle, the Philippines finally managed to bring the Communist-led Hukbalahap insurgency under control. There is no doubt that United States policies and programs contributed to the eventual success of the Philippine Government, however, some US policies, particularly in the early part of the campaign, often had a negative influence which detracted from their purpose. United States intentions were, for the most part, good but they were often shortsighted and not well executed.

The first mistake the United States made was not fully understanding the seriousness of the problems faced by the Philippines. After 47 years of intimate association, the United States really did not understand the Filipinos. American policies and programs were based on the naive assumption that all it needed to do was "prime the pump" with money and the Filipinos would respond automatically and satisfactorily. The United States also assumed that anything it did would be welcomed and deeply appreciated and that the American view was the logical and proper one for the Filipinos to accept. Americans did not comprehend the importance of nationalism and often unnecessarily offended the nationalistic sensitivities of the Filipinos. The United States also did not recognize the impact that the war and Japanese occupation had on the moral fiber of the new nation. This was a serious error.

Physical damage can be repaired relatively easy. Moral damage takes much longer to heal. Unfortunately, some maladministered United States programs exacerbated the malignant moral problem.

But the problems faced by the Philippines as it gained its independence were not all caused by the war or the postwar US policies and programs. Some of the basic problems, such as land tenure and the highly unequal distribution of income, existed even prior to the US colonial period and the United States did little to correct them. Additionally, the United States permitted the Philippine economy to become too closely tied to its own. A nation whose economy is almost completely dependent on that of another, cannot really be independent.

The United States left the Philippines with a political system patterned after its own but with many imperfections. A uniparty system was allowed to develop. Consequently, political power became centralized and although elections were held, they usually served only to select political leadership, not as an expression of the desires of the people on national issues. Political leadership became the domain of a powerful and rich elite, composed primarily of the landowning aristocracy, who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

The Philippines had two strikes against it when it gained independence and the United States should have recognized it and designed its policies and programs to assist in correcting the deficiencies of its colonial policy and the ravages caused by the

war and occupation. It took almost five years of rapid decline before the United States took effective steps to help the Filipinos help themselves.

The most serious shortcoming of United States policy in the immediate postwar period was the absense of an overall plan for dealing with the many and diverse problems confronting the Philippines. Many of the potential problems were easily recognized before liberation but insufficient thought was given to postwar solutions. Too often promises were made in the heat of battle without sufficient regard to their postwar impact.

The United States policy toward collaborators is a good example of a policy that was not realistic in its inception. Even a cursory knowledge of the magnitude of the problem should have been enough to warn American officials that a sweeping punishment policy would not work. Surely, US intelligence was good enough to provide a clear insight into the problem. Because it was an unrealistic policy, it was not fully implemented, but US vacillation on the issue caused a great deal of confusion and political instability and left a legacy of hate and distrust that permeated Philippine society for many years.

Back pay and veterans' benefits, however well-intentioned in concept, also proved to be extremely difficult to administer. Those who received what they considered their just due were happy. Those who did not, and there were many, resented their exclusion and blamed the United States.

Several other United States policies and programs caused serious problems for both governments. The surplus property disposal program is an outstanding example of a basically sound program which was poorly planned and executed. Besides not producing the desired rehabilitation funds, it added to the general moral decline.

Two other US policies which contained some particularly onerous provisions caused difficulties for the Philippine Government and for Philippine-American relations for years to come. The first was the Philippine Trade Act with its parity clause which placed limitations on Philippine sovereignty. The second was the Military Bases Agreement, which also impinged on their sovereignty. The Philippines was compelled to accept both agreements and this caused widespread resentment. Again, US intentions were good but the United States did not appreciate the significance of the growing sense of nationalism among the Filipino people. Any real or implied limitations on the sovereignty of a newly independent nation is interpreted, often irrationally, as a grievous insult and many Filipinos looked upon some US actions in this regard as such.

Many of the problems that the United States had to face in its relations with the Philippines during the early postwar period could not have been solved without creating additional problems. The United States found itself in the uncomfortable position of being damned if it did and damned if it didn't.

After meeting what it considered its commitments, the US more or less sat back and let the Filipinos run their own affairs, with minimum US guidance. This was also a mistake because the Filipinos were not ready to accept the full responsibility of self-government.

After some initial success, which proved to be more apparent than real, the situation in the Philippines took an alarming turn for the worse. By 1950, the Republic was teetering on the brink of a Communist take-over. At this point, this and other events in Asia forced the United States to once again become actively involved in the internal affairs of the Philippines. This time, however, it appraoched the problem much more realistically. New programs were devised after a comprehensive study of the requirements and were based on close Philippine-American cooperation in their execution. Although some of the programs revived the old cry of interference, they were generally accepted as being necessary if Philippine democracy were to survive.

The renewed United States interest and the emergence of a dynamic leader in the person of Ramon Magsaysay, who as Secretary of National Defense, was more amenable to US assistance and advice, turned the tide and started the country on the road to recovery. The importance of Magsaysay's leadership cannot be overstressed. Without it, it is questionable whether or not the new US policies could have accomplished what they were designed to do.

The Filipino people's response to Magsaysay's leadership reinforces the thesis that if the fight against an insurgency is to be won, the government must have the support of the people. The way to obtain that support is by offering a better alternative than that of the insurgents. This is what Magsaysay did--with the help of the United States.

For the United States, the Hukbalahap insurgency in the Philippines presented some unique problems, many of which would not be found in insurgency situations in other parts of the world. The past colonial relationship between the two countries both helped and hindered the solution of the many problems. The Filipinos were jealous of their independence and were anxious to make their own way and resented any US actions that smacked of neo-colonialism. The United States was also anxious for the Philippines to succeed, not only as a vindication of past policies, but because it was hoped that success would favorably influence other emerging nations in Asia. Both countries made mistakes and hopefully both learned from them, although subsequent events make this point questionable.

For the United States, one overriding lesson should have been learned and should be applied to any counterinsurgancy situation in which it may become involved. The lesson is that a thorough understanding of the situation is absolutely indispensable. This includes every facet of the national life of the country involved. After a decision to assist is taken and a

thorough and pragmatic appraisal of the situation has been made, an equally thorough and realistic plan must be formulated. The plan must be based on a "partnership" arrangement with the rights and obligations clearly understood by both countries. In the plan, nationalistic sensitivities must be recognized but in some cases it may be necessary to subordinate them to accommodate the overall objective. This, however, must be done with extreme finesse. Where social and political reforms are necessary, the US must be adamant in its insistance that they be accomplished according to a reasonable schedule. This does not mean that the United States should insist that the country adopt a "democratic" form of government. It should insist, however, that whatever form it is, it must be honest and provide for the needs of the people. Additionally, the plan and its execution must be closely coordinated among all US Government agencies involved, as well as with those of the recipient country.

The above should be the minimum prerequisites for US involvement. Had the United States applied these minimum conditions to the Philippines, the Hukbalahap insurgancy probably would not have become the threat that it did.

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