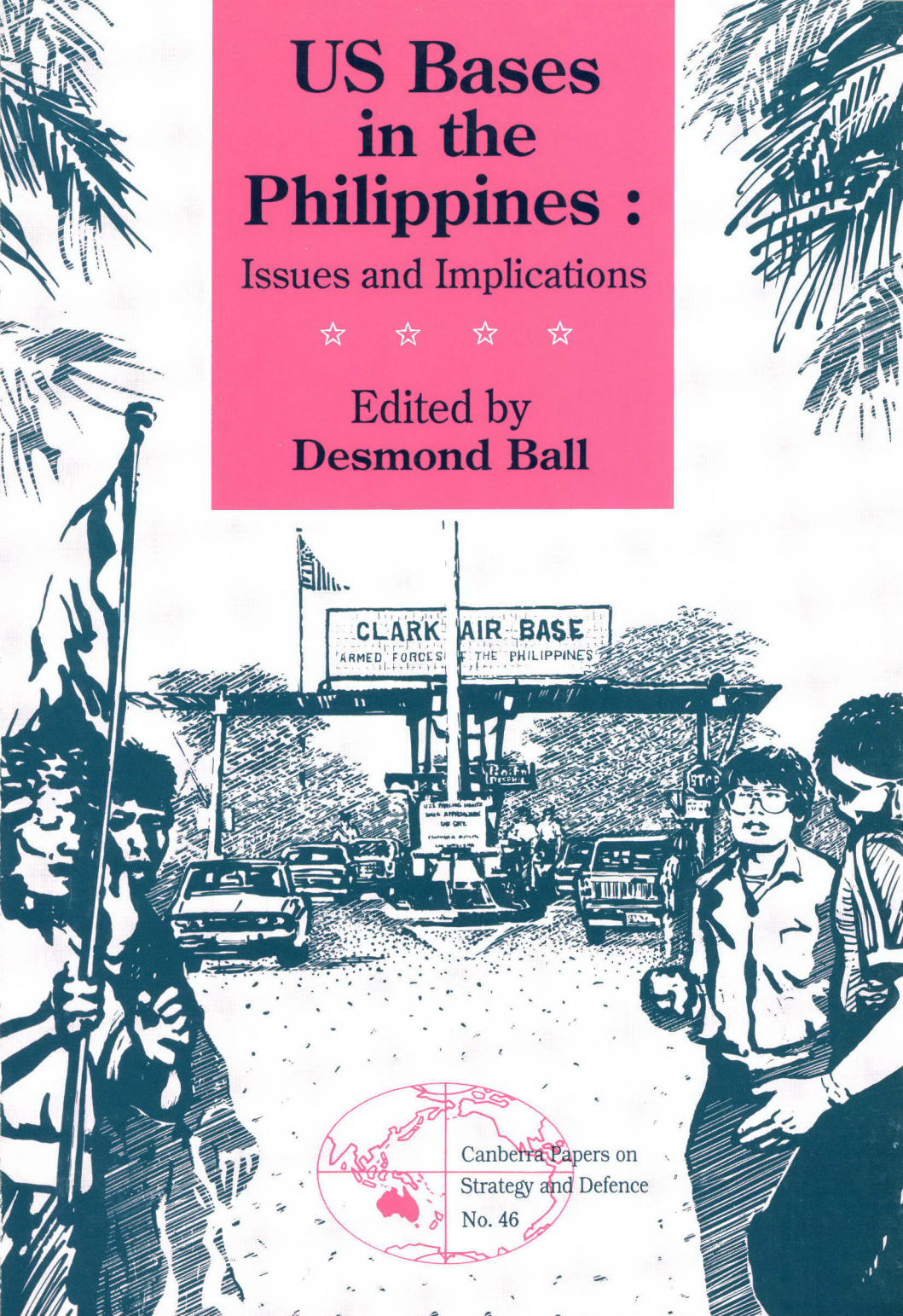


US Bases in the Philippines :

Issues and Implications



Edited by
Desmond Ball



Canberra Papers on
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No. 46

**CANBERRA PAPERS ON
STRATEGY AND DEFENCE NO. 46**

US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES: ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Desmond Ball

Editor

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ABSTRACT

The United States maintains in the Philippines its most significant military presence - in terms of bases, facilities, forces and capabilities - in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific region. The bases are designed to support US military operations not just in this region but also in Northeast Asia and throughout the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf region.

The Subic Bay Naval Base is the largest US overseas naval installation, and Clark Air Base is one of the largest US overseas air bases. There are also more than a dozen other lesser US facilities in the Philippines. Together they represent an enormous investment. Relocation of the bases and facilities is likely to cost more than \$5 billion.

The Military Bases Agreement (MBA) between the United States and the Philippines expires in September 1991. There is a very real possibility that the Agreement will not be renewed and that the US will have to vacate the bases and dismantle the facilities.

This monograph is intended to provide a basis for informed discussion of issues involved in the presence of the US bases and facilities in the Philippines and their possible closure and relocation elsewhere in the region.

It includes discussions of the general political relationship between the United States and the Philippines; the current Philippine domestic political issues; the attitudes of the ASEAN countries; the various redeployment options available to the United States in the region; and the strategic and political implications of the bases issue for Australia.

The monograph is a product of a Workshop organised jointly by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre and the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, and held at the University on 5 May 1988.

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Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence are a series of monograph publications which arise out of the work of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University. Previous *Canberra Papers* have covered topics such as the relationship of the superpowers, arms control at both the superpower and South-east Asian regional level, regional strategic relationships and major aspects of Australian defence policy. For a complete list refer to the last pages of this volume.

Unless otherwise stated, publications of the Centre are presented without endorsement as contributions to the public record and debate. Authors are responsible for their own analysis and conclusions.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Desmond Ball

The US maintains in the Philippines its most significant military presence - in terms of bases, facilities, forces and capabilities - in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific region. The bases are designed to support US military operations not just in this region but also in Northeast Asia and throughout the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf region.¹ They also represent an enormous investment. Relocation of the bases and facilities is likely to cost more than \$5 billion.² The US has also planned to invest a further \$1.3 b. between 1986 and 1992.³

On 16 September 1966, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Narciso Ramos signed and exchanged diplomatic notes concerning the US bases in the Philippines in which they agreed that the lease on the bases should remain extant for 25 years - i.e. to 16 September 1991 - 'after which, unless extended for a longer period by mutual agreement, it shall become subject to termination upon one year's notice by either government'.⁴

The new Philippines Constitution, ratified on 2 February 1987, states under Section 25 of Article 18:

After the expiration in 1991 of the Agreement between the Republic of the Philippines and the United States of America concerning Military Bases, foreign military bases,

¹ See Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases: U.S. Redeployment Options*, (Congressional Research Service, Washington, D.C., 20 February 1986).

² 'Question of US Bases in Philippines', *Defence Asia Pacific*, 11/12-1987, p.9.

³ Bowen, *Philippine Bases: U.S. Redeployment Option*, p.1.

⁴ 'U.S. and Philippines Amend Military Bases Agreement', *The Department of State Bulletin*, (Vol.LV, No.1424), 10 October 1966, p.548.

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troops, or facilities shall not be allowed in the Philippines except under a treaty duly concurred in by the Senate and, when the Congress so requires, ratified by a majority of the votes cast by the people in a national referendum held for that purpose, and recognized as a treaty by the other contracting State.

As Leszek Buszynski has noted,

Democracy in the Philippines means that the future of the bases will be affected by popular issues such as the state of the relationship with the United States and the perennial urge of Filipinos for greater international respect and autonomy.⁵

Given the very real possibility that the US will have to vacate the bases and dismantle the facilities in three years' time - and that complete relocation could take as long as 10 years - it is appropriate to address the range of issues involved:

These issues include:

- How important are the US bases in the Philippines - with respect to the defence of the Philippines itself, the support of US military operations in Southeast Asia, and US military operations further afield (i.e. Northeast Asia and the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf)? Which of the bases are the most important?
- What other US interests are involved in the maintenance of the bases?
- What are the relevant issues and political stances in Philippines domestic politics (e.g. sovereignty; the amount of rent; economic and military aid; nationalism)?
- What compromises are possible? Relocation of some but not all facilities? Greater Philippine control?

⁵ Leszek Buszynski, 'The Philippines, ASEAN and the Future of the American Bases', *The World Today*, (Vol.44, No.5), May 1988, p.83.

- Given their particular functions and capabilities, to what extent can the requirements of US operational control and the demands of Philippine sovereignty be compatible?
- What are the attitudes and policies of other states in the region?
- What are the options for relocation of the bases and facilities? Are suitable alternative sites available in the region? Would other countries be willing to accept the bases and facilities? To what extent would relocation degrade the effectiveness and efficiency of US operations in the region?
- What are the implications for Australia?

In order to discuss the issues involved in the debate on the US bases and facilities and the question of their relocation, it is important to be aware of their range, physical characteristics, functions and capabilities. Most of the debate is focussed on the bases at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base.

The Subic Bay Naval Base is the largest US overseas naval installation, and Clark Air Base is one of the largest US overseas air bases. The US base at Subic Bay is the primary port, training area, and logistics support base for the US Seventh Fleet, which operates in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean.⁶ It supports 10-12 ships and submarines in port at any one time.⁷ Its facilities include a major supply depot for the fleet, a Naval Magazine, a Ship Repair Facility which offers capabilities second to none in the region', an airfield for use by the Seventh Fleet's carrier striking force, and capabilities for provision of 'training in all phases of naval warfare for American and Philippine forces'.⁸

Clark Air Base is the headquarters of the 13th Force, which is responsible for the Southeast Asia and Southwest Pacific region; the 3rd

6 Frank L. Jenista (ed.), *Background on the Bases: American Military Facilities in the Philippines*, (United States Information Service, 1986), p.11.

7 William M. Arkin and Richard W. Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Battlefields: Global Links in the Arms Race*, (Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985), p.229.

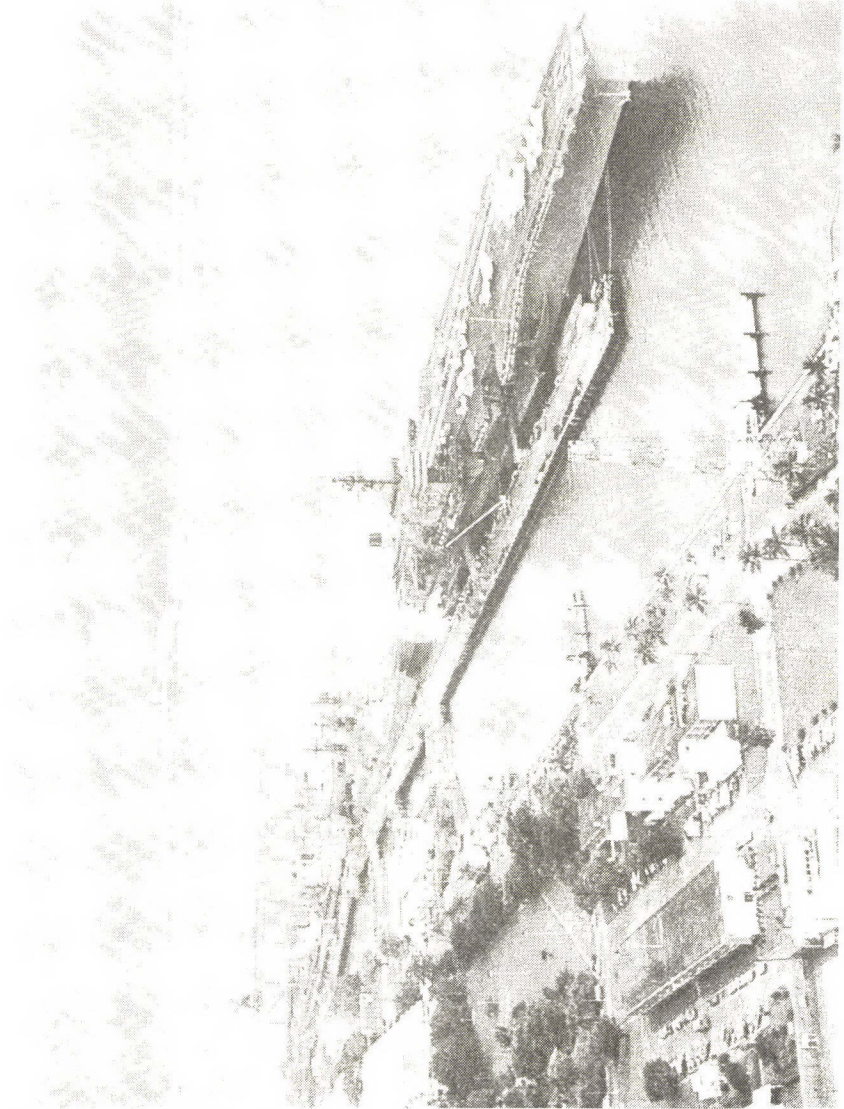
8 *Ibid.*; and Jenista (ed.), *Background on the Bases*, p.11.

FIGURE 1
US NAVAL BASE SUBIC BAY



Source: United States Information Service (USIS).

FIGURE 2
US NAVAL BASE SUBIC BAY



Source: United States Information Service (USIS).

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Tactical Fighter Wing; and a tactical airlift wing. The base serves as a staging point for strategic airlifts into the Indian Ocean, including to Diego Garcia; it permits surveillance of the 'choke points' at the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Straits; it can handle large-scale aircraft deployments from the continental US into the region; it maintains a program of air combat readiness; it provides training and upgrading of aircrews from the United States, the Philippines, and other allied countries; and it contributes to the air defence of the Philippines.⁹

In addition to the bases at Clark and Subic, there are more than a dozen other US facilities in the Philippines which, although of lesser importance and political profile, are nonetheless of strategic and defence significance. There is no comprehensive compilation of these publicly available, but they include the following:

- the Naval Air Station at Cubi Point, which is the primary land base for the Seventh Fleet's carrier striking force (Task Force 77). It also serves as a base for P-3 Orion long-range maritime patrol aircraft.
- the Wallace Air Station in La Union, which provides air control and radar coverage for air defence. It also has a live-fire range and supports tactical air training.
- a US Air Force Electronic Security Command AN/FLR-9 signals intelligence (SIGINT) station.
- a US Navy SIGINT station at the San Miguel Naval Communications Station in Zambales.¹⁰
- the Pacific Barrier (PACBAR) satellite detection and tracking radar at San Miguel.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ US Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad*, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1971), Vol.1, pp.92, 103. See also 'Alternative Snooping', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 June 1976, p.5.

¹¹ US Congress, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Military Construction Appropriations, *Military Construction Appropriations for 1983*, (U.S. Government Printing

- the Crow Valley bombing range located in the mountains north of Clark Air Base.
- a Net Control Facility (NCF) for the US Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS).
- the Tabones training complex.
- the US Global Command and Control System, Giant Talk/Scope Signal III transmitter at Camp O'Donnell and receiver at Dau.
- two US Air Force nuclear detonation (NUDET) detection stations.
- a SOSUS fixed undersea sonar array system.
- a troposcatter communications terminal at Mount Cabuyo.
- numerous other communications facilities.
- a rest and recreation centre at the John Hay Air Station. The Station also provides facilities for a Voice of America transmitter complex.

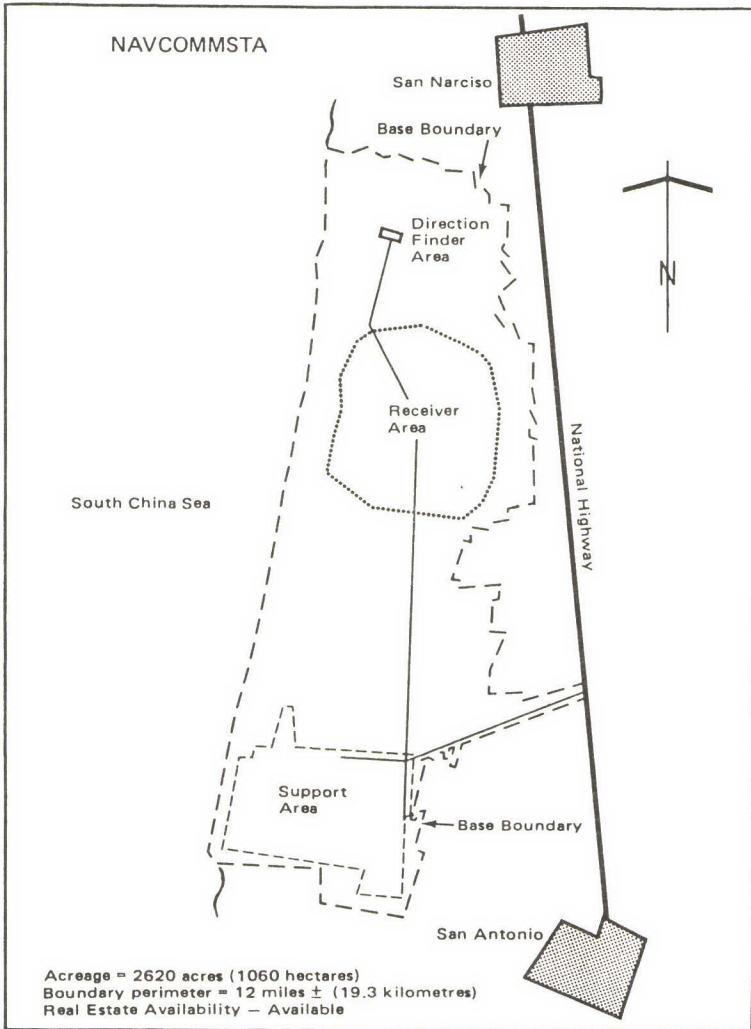
These bases and facilities differ greatly with respect to such critical factors as their strategic importance to the United States; their perceived importance to the various US Services and agencies concerned; their implications for Philippine sovereignty and the extent and intensity of the opposition they have aroused within the Philippines; their value for the defence of the Philippines itself and their utility in regional operations as compared to those further afield; the prospects for compromise solutions; their acceptability elsewhere in the region; and the costs and physical and technical aspects of their possible relocation. It is important that these differences be recognised from the outset of any discussion of the US bases in the Philippines.

This monograph is intended to provide a basis for informed discussion of issues involved in the presence of the US bases and facilities

FIGURE 3
US AIR FORCE AN/FLR-9 HF DF SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE (SIGINT) FACILITY,
CLARK AIR FORCE BASE

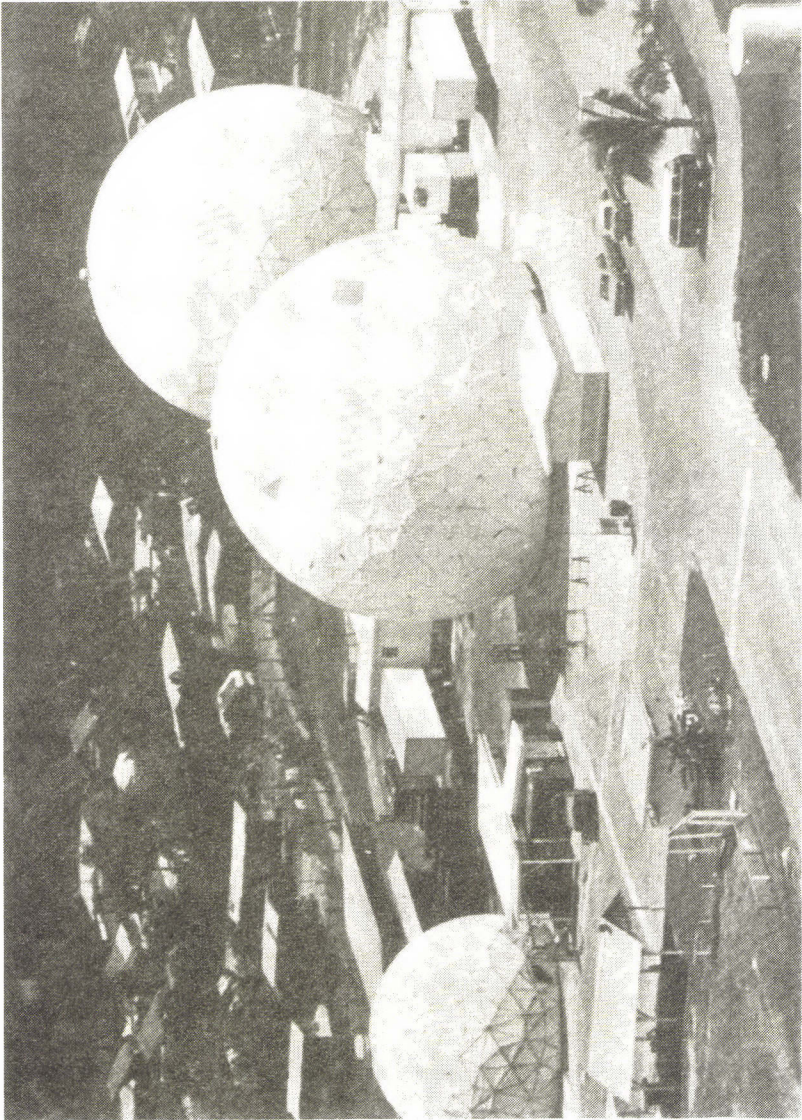


FIGURE 4
US NAVAL SECURITY GROUP (NSG) SIGINT FACILITY, SAN MIGUEL



Source: US Congress, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad*, (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1971), Vol.1, p.92.

FIGURE 5
US DEFENSE SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM (DSCS) NET CONTROL
FACILITY (NCF), CLARK AIR FORCE BASE



in the Philippines and their possible closure and relocation elsewhere in the region.

Chapter 2, by Professor Jamie Mackie, is intended to delineate three sets of strategic and political issues which should be disentangled in any discussion of the US bases in the Philippines from an Australian perspective - first, the general purposes and importance of the bases; second, the effect of the bases on US-Philippine relations; and, third, Australia's interests in the matter. The chapter stresses that the US bases must be placed in the context of the 'special relationship' that has characterised relations between the US and the Philippines since independence was granted in 1946. Professor Mackie highlights a central dilemma - on the one hand, the maintenance of a strong US naval presence in the South China Sea preserves the strategic balance in East and Southeast Asia and hence contributes to the stability of the region; on the other hand, the presence of the US bases in the Philippines is an increasingly divisive domestic issue which could lead to or exacerbate internal conflict and hence endanger regional security. In his view, the continued retention of the US bases in the Philippines is of declining strategic importance, while abandonment of the 'special relationship' and the acceptance of a more normal one will in the longer term lead to a more stable domestic situation and hence greater regional security.

In Chapter 3, Dr Ron May discusses the various Philippine domestic political issues. It is clear that the nature of these issues has evolved markedly over the past four decades. As Major William Berry has observed,

The major point of contention in the 1950s and early 1960s was not whether the bases should stay or go. Security considerations still convinced most Filipinos that the bases were necessary. The real issue was greater Philippine control over the use of the bases and increased Philippine criminal jurisdiction over both on- and off-base offences.¹²

In 1979, formal control of the bases was transferred to the Philippines. On 16 February 1979, Clark and Subic became Philippine military installations

¹² Major William Emmerson Berry, Jr., *American Military Bases in the Philippines, Base Negotiations, and Philippine-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, May 1981), p.234.

with US facilities included within them.¹³ The issues of contention now became the number of US personnel stationed at the facilities, the acreage of land occupied by the facilities, and, increasingly, the particular functions of the facilities and their relevance to Philippine security, and the more general issue of Philippine sovereignty. In 1977, President Marcos had himself questioned the value of the bases to the Philippines. By the mid-1980s, as Dr May observes, there was a substantial body of Philippine public opinion supporting the actual removal of the bases, and the question of financial remuneration had come to the forefront. The bases are no longer seen as essential to Philippine security. Whether the bases will be retained after 1991 will be largely determined by the state of the domestic political climate. As Dr May concludes,

Should there be a shift towards repression or militarization of the government, popular sentiments against the bases may strengthen; but if 'democratic space' is maintained and some economic recovery takes place the salience of the bases is likely to decline and their continued presence to become more certain.

Given the contribution which the US bases in the Philippines make to regional security, it is important to consider the attitudes of countries in the region to the bases and the likely regional consequences of the possible closure and relocation of them. Regional attitudes have not been static; moreover, there are differences in attitudes as between the various countries in the region. However, as Dr Leszek Buszynski observes in Chapter 4, the ASEAN countries generally believe that the US presence in the Philippines provides a bulwark against the threat of external attack against them and allow them to devote resources to economic development and internal security that would otherwise have to be diverted to increased military capability. The forced closure of the US bases in the Philippines could well lead to differential increases in military capabilities among the ASEAN countries and a diminution in ASEAN political cohesion, and, more problematically but also more disturbingly, could place ASEAN 'upon the path of inevitable and ineluctable decline'.

The debate over the possible closure of the US bases in the Philippines has forced the US to seriously consider possible redeployment options. It is clear that, as a result of this exercise, the US is now

13 *Ibid.*, pp.379-380.

somewhat more sanguine about relocation possibilities. For example, the US Pacific Command (PACOM) undertook a study of redeployment alternatives in early 1988 and concluded that 'it is not quite as difficult as we had anticipated prior to getting into some of the details'.¹⁴ There are no sites in the region to which the major bases at Clark and Subic could simply be transferred with all their current missions, capabilities and operational effectiveness intact. On the other hand, as Admiral David E. Jeremiah, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, noted in April 1988, substitutes could be provided 'in a distributed way'.¹⁵ Several of the ASEAN countries, and most particularly Singapore, have port facilities and an ability to provide some naval repair and support activity. Guam has extensive air, naval, and communications facilities which could be augmented. Some capabilities could be transferred to Japan. And some of the more marginal activities could be undertaken in Australia. Each of the redeployment options - and the various 'distributed' combinations - has different implications with respect to cost and operational effectiveness. These are examined in detail by David Hegarty in Chapter 5.

Finally, in Chapter 6, Dr Ross Babbage discusses the strategic and political implications of the bases issues for Australia. Dr Babbage argues that Australia has a 'central interest' in a continued American political, economic and military commitment in our northern approaches. Any diminution in the operational effectiveness of US military capabilities attendant upon the relocation of the bases in the Philippines would reduce Australia's security. There are also some direct connections between the US facilities in the Philippines and those in Australia. The SOSUS array and the SIGINT facilities in the Philippines produce intelligence which feeds into the US Ocean Surveillance Information System (OSIS), to which Australian SIGINT facilities also contribute.¹⁶ The US geostationary SIGINT satellite ground station at Pine Gap in central Australia maintains

14 Admiral Ronald J. Hays, Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), cited in Michael Richardson, 'U.S. Weighs Plans to Relocate its Bases in the Philippines', *International Herald Tribune*, 22 June 1988, pp.1, 2.

15 See Sam Jameson, 'Admiral Says U.S. Might Move Bases in Philippines to Guam', *Los Angeles Times*, 10 April 1988, p.5.

16 See Desmond Ball, 'The US Naval Ocean Surveillance Information System (NOSIS): Australia's Role', *Pacific Defence Reporter*, June 1982, pp.40-49.

a direct communications link with Clark Air Force Base.¹⁷ And there are some half a dozen Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) terminals in Australia - at Pine Gap, Nurrungar in South Australia, North West Cape in Western Australia, and Watsonia in Victoria - which communicate through DSCS satellites controlled by the DSCS Net Control Facility (NCF) at Clark Air Force Base. The relocation of the various facilities in the Philippines would require some adjustment on the part of the counterpart Australian operations. In the event that the US were forced to remove its bases and facilities from the Philippines, there would be some limited possibility of relocation to Australia - not of the major air and naval assets, but of some specialised intelligence and communications facilities, training and rest and recreation facilities, and perhaps staging facilities. Although there would undoubtedly be considerable domestic opposition to the relocation to Australia of any US facilities in the region, this must be reckoned to be a secondary concern. The general stability and security of the region is of far more fundamental importance. Australia's policy makers must ensure that policies are prepared to preserve and enhance our general security interests in the region regardless of the outcome of Philippine domestic political decisions and US capability redeployments. An informed public debate in Australia can only assist the formulation of such policies.

¹⁷ Des Ball, *Pine Gap: Australia and the US Geostationary Signals Intelligence Satellite Program*, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988), p.70.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW: THE US BASES AND THE POLITICS OF THE US-PHILIPPINES RELATIONSHIP

Jamie Mackie

The aim of this chapter is to delineate three sets of strategic and political issues which must be disentangled before sensible discussion of the current issue of the US bases in the Philippines can proceed. In doing so I want also to stress one other aspect of the problem that seems to me extremely important but too often not adequately recognised. That is the relevance of the bases to the perpetuation of the postcolonial 'special relationship' between the US and the Philippines, which has had adverse effects on the relations between the two countries ever since independence was granted in 1946, for reasons I will return to later. We Australians, of all people, should be familiar with the psychological ambivalences, political problems and dependency syndromes created by 'special' relationships, first with Britain, then with USA, as well as with the difficulties foreign bases create for both the health and honesty of our domestic politics and our foreign policies. But before we turn to the complexities of that topic, let me first set out the three basic sets of questions.

1. What purposes do the bases currently serve in broader US military strategy in the Asia-Pacific region? How essential are they? Why do they still matter - and how much? What price is it worth while for the US to pay to retain them, either in hard cash or in terms of the political and security implications? Could the US armed forces in the Pacific, the Seventh Fleet in particular, manage without them - and at what cost? I will sketch some very general answers to these questions shortly, but the more detailed aspects will be explored later.
2. What effect does the presence of the bases - and their symbolism in the eyes of both Filipinos and Americans -

have upon the current state of US-Philippines relations? Or upon the stability of the Aquino government? How important is it, in terms of the domestic political balance, for President Aquino's government either (a) to get rid of the bases, thereby mollifying nationalist and left-wing critics, but at the cost of alarming or alienating the more right-wing forces currently supporting her, including the Army; or alternatively (b) to negotiate a new agreement, either now or before 1991, when the agreement is due to expire, that would extend US tenure over them, even though it would antagonise the left and many nationalistic Filipinos of the centre? What would her government itself regard as a satisfactory agreement for the sake of minimising the loss of domestic support over issues of nationalist sensitivity? There are no simple answers to these questions, for the bargaining politics of all this are going to prove immensely complex, even with the best will in the world on both sides.

3. What are - or should be - Australia's interests or priorities in all this?

On the one hand we have a general stake in the maintenance of a strong US naval presence in the South China Sea in order to preserve the broader strategic balance in East and Southeast Asia (not least because the ASEAN nations also regard that as essential to the security of the region: and their views on this matter cannot be lightly disregarded by Australia), for which the bases are commonly said to be essential. On the other hand, we in Australia - and also the other ASEAN countries - have an equally important stake in preserving a peaceful and stable Philippines, yet disagreements over the bases issue could give rise to serious internal conflict there. In the long run this could only benefit the New Peoples Army (NPA) by intensifying nationalist sentiment, thus creating a danger of political instability and increasing polarization between the left and right over a highly contentious and emotionally charged issue.

A Philippines racked by civil war or serious socio-economic deterioration would be a major threat to the security of the entire region, in much the same way as Indonesia was under Sukarno in 1963-65, since it is in just such situations that the risks of appeals for foreign intervention

and hence of international conflicts in the region are most dangerous. So we in Australia face the awkward dilemma that, on the one hand, the preservation of the strategic balance seems to require maintenance of the US bases - and thereby the 'special relationship' between the US and the Philippines - yet, on the other, the longer that special relationship continues, the greater the likelihood that it will play into the hands of the nationalist and left-wing elements opposed to the US and its security interests. I would imagine that men like Jose Ma Sison and other NPA leaders would prefer to have the bases there so that they can go on exploiting the nationalist potential of the issue rather than see them withdrawn by mutual agreement. One should not forget, moreover, that many Filipinos of a nationalist persuasion regard the bases as relevant only to the security interests of the US, but not to those of the Philippines itself, arguing this point along much the same lines as critics of the US bases in Australia are inclined to do.¹ No matter what counterarguments may be advanced against this view (e.g. that the Filipinos also benefit from the joint defence and security they create) they do not have anything like the same instinctive appeal to people concerned primarily with the peace and welfare of their own country, as they see it, not with the global strategic balance or the security of the US or Australia.

These are some of the main questions which have to be considered. Let me now start to sketch out some possible answers.

The Strategic Significance of the Bases

First, why do the bases still matter to the US? We know that they were very important to the broader US security mission in the Asia-Pacific region prior to 1975, at the time of the war in Vietnam and the 'containment' of China, and in the earlier postwar years of Strategic Air Command. But that is all long past now and Clark Air Base is nowhere near as vital to US global strategic concerns as it used to be. When I asked people in Washington about this question in 1977, during the course of enquiries into the future shape of US policy in Southeast Asia in the post-Vietnam era, I was repeatedly given two main types of answer to that question, broadly as follows:

¹ E. Garcia and F. Nemenzo, *The Sovereign Quest: Freedom from Foreign Military Bases*, (Claretian Publications, Quezon City, 1987).

- (a) that the Subic Bay docking and ship repair facilities were essential for the forward deployment of US naval vessels in the South China Sea, especially for nuclear-armed submarines, and that any relocation of those facilities to Guam, for instance, would be prohibitively expensive, even though it was not entirely out of the question in technical terms; i.e. it was not so much a strategic consideration as a financial one;
- (b) that although the various Clark airfield installations were no longer as important to the US as they had been during the Vietnam war when Clark was extensively used by aircraft staging into and out of the various operations there (but not for bombing raids, which the Philippines government disallowed), they might still become necessary again in the event of a crisis in Korea or even the Middle East - e.g. if the US found it necessary to send troops or supplies to the Gulf west-about by air in the event that the European-Mediterranean route were closed, an unlikely contingency, perhaps, but not inconceivable. So Clark Air Base was seen as a valuable potential asset not to be thrown away lightly. But arguments of that kind have much less force today than they used to have.

The notion of withdrawing from the Philippines bases was then regarded as almost unthinkable in US military circles, although a few sceptics in the State Department were beginning to query the conventional wisdom. But in the decade since then, much has changed, both in the regional security situation and on the technological side of the equation; so it is worth asking whether those answers are still as convincing today. Of greatest importance is the fact that the Russians have acquired naval facilities in Cam Ranh Bay since 1979-80, hence they have now extended the potential reach of their forces much more deeply into Southeast Asia than previously. So the case for maintaining a forward deployment of Seventh Fleet units in waters to the west of the Philippines to counter them is even stronger than it was in 1977 and for this purpose the Subic Bay Naval Base is now seen by many Americans to be even more significant strategically than it was then. But whether that alone is a sufficient reason to argue that the Subic Base is indispensable is far from clear, for the

political costs of retaining the bases must also be calculated on the other side of the equation.

An American naval presence in the South China Sea could almost certainly be maintained from other bases and facilities elsewhere in the Pacific, even if the Philippines bases were no longer available, although at vastly greater cost and with some reduction in effectiveness. The US defence forces have given a good deal of attention in the 1980s to the search for alternative sites and although they have not come up with any entirely satisfactory ones, it is clear that they no longer regard the prospect of having to move elsewhere as utterly disastrous. These matters will be discussed later. The point I want to emphasise is that the issues are now as much political in character as narrowly strategic, particularly as to the willingness of the US Congress to fund the additional facilities and ships required by any such shift, which could be a matter of many billions of dollars. The loss of Clark Air Base is something the US forces could fairly easily adapt to, but Subic would be much more costly to replicate elsewhere. It could be done, at a pinch, perhaps not all in one place - although the US Navy would no doubt prefer not to have to think about such a nightmare. But the Washington authorities will have to balance the financial and strategic costs involved in such a move against the political consequences for the US-Philippines relationship.

The international political implications of the whole matter are also very complex and unpredictable, too tangled to be reduced to a few words. There has been some speculation about the possibilities of a trade-off between the dismantling of US bases in the Philippines and the removal of Russian facilities from Cam Ranh Bay. The old ASEAN concept of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia (ZOPFAN) has been dusted off as a basis for speculations about such an outcome, presumably linked also to a settlement of the Vietnam-Kampuchea problem also, as I will touch on below.² But there seems to be little positive enthusiasm for any such development at present from any ASEAN government, so it is likely to remain a rather distant dream rather than an imminent reality.

² P.M. Kattenburg, 'The Case for Ending the Special Relationship and Leaving the United States Bases in the Philippines', in Carl H. Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation: Philippines Challenges and American Policy*, (The Washington Institute Press, Washington, 1987), pp.547-560.

The other ASEAN nations are, in fact, not at all eager to see the Americans reduce their naval presence in the South China Sea, precisely because of their suspicions of the Russians (and the Chinese, in some quarters) - although they prefer that US ships remain, in general, 'over the horizon' and out of sight and mind as far as possible, so as not to arouse awkward domestic political arguments. They are generally not eager to host naval facilities for the Americans themselves (apart from Singapore, perhaps) and are quite willing to acquiesce tacitly in the continuance of the bases in the Philippines for the sake of maintaining the status quo. The present situation suits them fine, but any change might entail unpredictable consequences. Certainly they do not want the Americans to withdraw their forces substantially from East and Southeast Asia - just as, in 1977, they became very uneasy at the thought that President Carter's bid to reduce US forces from South Korea might betoken a more general weakening of US will to remain involved in the power politics of the region after the failure in Vietnam. The more hawkish elements in the US debate over the future of the US bases in the Philippines frequently cite this ASEAN concern for a continued US involvement in Southeast Asia as a strong argument for keeping the bases. (Not all Filipinos feel they should subordinate their country's interests to the wishes of the other ASEAN countries, or to US security perceptions.) But even on this issue, some dissident voices have expressed scepticism that the other ASEAN governments really have very strong views on the matter.³ And the fact that the latter were reluctant to give Foreign Minister Manglapus the kinds of public statements in favour of the bases that he was angling for during his visit to the ASEAN capitals in November 1987 is quite striking testimony to that proposition.

To summarise on this issue; the strategic purposes served by the US bases have changed considerably since the 1970s. Whereas they were generally thought to be an essential element in US strategic dispositions twenty or thirty years ago, it is an open question whether they really are any more. Subic Bay is a very valuable asset to the US because of its proximity to the South China Sea and because of the skilled and very cheap labour force available there, which will be hard to replace and far more expensive.

³ F.T. Underhill, 'Report on the Discussion: United States Policy and the Philippines' in Carl H. Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation*, pp.561-565.

How much the continued maintenance of the bases is worth to the US in terms of the financial costs involved in replacing them would be very difficult to assess; but I suspect the financial aspect of the question will ultimately not prove to be the key consideration so much as the political costs likely to be entailed. Americans learnt two lessons quite painfully in the final years of the Marcos regime. One was the danger of becoming locked into too close a relationship with an unpopular regime from which it was very difficult to dissociate. The other was that political strife and social polarization were causing the communists to gain ground at an alarming rate in the Philippines, almost reminiscent of the situation in China in 1946-49 when Washington was vainly backing Chiang Kai-shek.

If the political consequences of retaining the bases seem likely to lead to a resumption of political strife and social polarization between left and right in the Philippines, as in the late Marcos era, a lot of influential Americans will start to ask whether the political costs are any longer worth paying in return for whatever security benefits the bases supposedly represent for their country.

The Bases Issue in Philippines Domestic Politics

On the second set of questions, about the significance of the bases issue in the politics of the Philippines, any answers we give are overshadowed by the fact that the complexities of the political horse-trading and manoeuvring going on over the current negotiations with the US (essentially about financial arrangements until 1991) are positively Byzantine. Almost certainly President Aquino herself would prefer to negotiate some sort of mutually satisfactory compromise with the Americans rather than face the momentous decision to end the bases agreement or push Washington too far. But she cannot unilaterally call the shots on this matter in the Manila politics of it all, for other leading political figures are playing very different games for diverse objectives. She can probably feel some confidence that if the issue of extension is submitted to a referendum, for which the new constitution makes provision but does not actually require, there is every likelihood that the popular vote would fall out in favour of their retention, although the campaign would be an intensely emotional and bitter one. (What else could one conclude about a country in which a campaign to seek

acceptance as the 51st state of the USA could amass overwhelming popular support in 1971 and which has something like a million Filipinos living in the US, with scores of thousands applying for visas each year in the hope of joining them?) But what sorts of financial arrangements and concessions to Philippines sovereignty over the control of the bases, either symbolic or substantive, could the Americans reasonably be expected to make that would be sufficient to assuage Filipino nationalist susceptibilities and ensure an outcome to the negotiations that would leave everyone satisfied to some degree?

If the US government is disposed to be accommodating and the Philippines authorities reasonably sensible, it should be possible to work out some form of mutually satisfactory compromise, perhaps along the lines of a phased withdrawal over a period of years. On the other hand, if the US takes a hard-line retentionist stand, or if President Aquino appears to have sold out Philippines interests too cheaply, either in cash terms or on the symbolic issues about reasserting the country's sovereignty over the bases, her government will be highly vulnerable to criticism from the left and a much broader range of nationalist critics. But which outcome would, in fact, be most likely to contribute towards an increase in the strength and popular appeal of the left-wing forces, the NPA and National Democratic Front (NDP), the NPA's open-front political arm - an early end to the bases agreement, or their retention by the Americans for an indefinite period on controversial terms? My fear is that the latter will contribute towards a further polarization of the country into two sharply divided camps, the very outcome that I believe we in Australia (and the Americans) should be most concerned to avoid.

It is hard to believe that US retention of the bases on current terms will do other than strengthen the hand of the left in the long run, by leaving on their hands a highly emotive issue and a major nationalist symbol to exploit. Moreover, even if the continued existence of bases does help strengthen the hand of the military and the right wing in the domestic political contest (by ensuring the armed forces have continuing access to equipment, ammunition, technology, training, etc.), this can only be a relatively marginal advantage in the event of a crisis situation, surely unless the Americans are prepared to become involved overtly in a domestic civil conflict, which would be the height of folly. (There must be better ways for them to help the military if that is the objective.) In fact, I find it hard to see how US retention of the bases can work to the direct advantage of the right-wing forces in any way these days, since it must

entail a surrender of the nationalist high ground to their opponents, even if a massive US cash pay-out for use of the bases can be obtained (which seems most unlikely). And the Aquino government will have a far more difficult task than Marcos did in 1983 to negotiate a compromise agreement that contains enough symbolic concessions to nationalist susceptibilities over matters like sovereignty over the base areas or no nuclear weapons on Philippines soil without pushing the US into a mood to threaten to disengage entirely. (That option was not really credible in either 1978 or 1983; but the very process of exploring other bases options since then has changed the ball-game. The US may no longer be bluffing if it makes such a threat.) On the other hand, the US Congress is unlikely to be sympathetic to requests for economic aid if the Philippines proposes stiff conditions for retention of the bases, like a ban on nuclear-powered ships or nuclear weapons. But almost certainly the name of the game this time will be bluff and counterbluff in the early stages of the negotiations, leading up to some kind of elaborate mix of compromises, perhaps pointing in the direction of a long-term withdrawal of US forces (possibly phased, from Clark first, Subic last - but not immediately?) and perhaps geared in some way to the regional international situation.

The negotiating strategies of both Manila and Washington have nearly always involved a good deal of bluff and grandstanding for domestic effect on both sides before a compromise bottom-line formula is reached (usually a more generous cash payment, or some symbolic gesture to Philippines sovereignty). There is every indication that the bargaining politics will be even more convoluted than usual this time; but it would take too long to say much of significance about that here. One reason in particular is worth noting, however. Both countries currently have weak presidents and rather strong, or at least stropy, legislative branches, very eager to put pressure on the executive. (I doubt that either a Bush or a Dukakis presidency will alter this much.) In neither case can the executive branch be sure of congressional endorsement for an unpopular formula; so neither government will find it easy to adopt a statesmanlike or far-sighted view of what is at stake at the expense of lesser short-term political considerations, such as keeping one's flanks guarded against domestic critics. This is therefore not a very propitious time to be renegotiating the bases agreement. Although it is not entirely essential that the major issues be taken up immediately, since the agreement does not lapse until 1991, the US will need to know where it stands well before then. Moreover, President Aquino urgently needs to gain some political mileage from the

issue, not find at the end of the day that she is losing ground politically from it.

My own hunch is that, if both sides were willing to compromise, it should not be too difficult for them to devise a satisfactory formula that would be acceptable to Filipino nationalist susceptibilities and could be presented as a great achievement by the Aquino government - especially if the Americans were prepared to negotiate a phased withdrawal from the bases as at present constituted, conceding the principle that they will in due course move out entirely, but seeking a *quid pro quo* on the pace and form of the withdrawal. But even that looks unlikely to be easy to negotiate in the mood currently prevailing on both sides.

It would all be simpler, perhaps, if the issue could be internationalised, in the sense of being meshed in with the problem of achieving a Soviet withdrawal of naval facilities from Cam Ranh Bay, or progress towards the ASEAN notion of ZOPFAN; but that seems unlikely at the moment and it raises various other questions about ASEAN attitudes, which will be discussed later.

Australia's Interests in the Outcome

On the third set of questions, regarding Australia's conflict of interests on all this, I do not wish to add much more to the essential dilemma I have already mentioned. Our national interests are not identical with those of the US, particularly in the long term, since the stability and tranquility of the Southeast Asia region matters to us far more immediately than it does to the US, while the bases themselves mean a good deal less to us and our perceptions of regional security. The Americans may also attach less importance than we do to the risk of social conflict and political polarization there (to judge by their behaviour in Nicaragua) as a price to be paid for the sake of holding on to the bases and avoiding the need to relocate from Subic to Guam, or wherever. Australia should set the highest priority on achieving the political and social preconditions for a tranquil and more prosperous Philippines that will not be riven by internal conflict, in my view. In trying to balance our regional security interests against the importance we attach to the US alliance, and thereby to the global strategic concerns of the US, to which the Philippines bases undoubtedly have some relevance (but how much?), we may find ourselves faced with some difficult choices between loyalty to the

protector' and our own perceptions of how the security of our region is best maintained.

The Bases and the 'Special Relationship'

The crux of my argument here is that one of the most important factors to be taken into account in any cost-benefit analysis of the bases issue is its relevance to the continuation of the 'special relationship' between the US and the Philippines, with all the untoward neocolonialist overtones that term implies, for both parties, particularly within the Philippines. It is ironic that having led the world in granting independence to its former colony in 1946, after forty years of unusually enlightened colonial policies, the US has handled its postcolonial relationship with that country so ineptly, in a way that has frequently - and often justifiably - brought the charge of neocolonialism upon it. The steadily increasing importance of the bases in the global strategic calculations of the US between 1950 and the 1970s has undoubtedly been the main factor in that transmutation. The significance of US investments in the Philippines, which radical and neocolonialist critics of the US role in that country have stressed so often, has really been of relatively little significance in shaping US policy, for US capital has been moving out of the islands since the early 1950s, from the sugar industry in particular (where they owned mills rather than big plantations, but quickly sold them after independence), not clamouring to gain access to Philippines' resources.⁴ Overholt has collated figures which show that even during the years of the Marcos regime, when the welcome mat was laid out most ostentatiously to attract foreign capital, the increase in US investment in the Philippines was proportionately by far the lowest in any ASEAN country.⁵ A few big American corporations have substantial interests there; Dole Pineapples and Del Monte in Mindanao most notoriously, but in the global scheme of things they amount to very small beer. It is the past strategic significance of the bases and the sentimental bonds

4 F.H. Golay, 'Economic Collaboration: The Role of American Investment', in F. H. Golay (ed.) *Philippines-American Relations*, (Solidaridad Publications, Manila, 1966).

5 William H. Overholt, 'Pressures and Policies: Prospects for Cory Aquino's Philippines' in Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation*, p.100.

surviving from the colonial era that constitute the real ties that maintain the special relationship.

The peculiar significance of the special relationship in the political life of the Philippines has been well described by two American writers of far from radical views, who have both seen it as basically unhealthy for the two countries. According to Peter Stanley, one of the leading historians of the colonial period, the relationship was founded on the basis of the very distinctive form of collaboration established in the early years of this century between the Filipino elite and the conquering American colonial regime. American reliance on a system of indirect rule through the acquiescent cooperating local leaders gave the latter 'an effective veto power over social and economic policies...'. Ever since then, that relationship has been a durable although frequently an uneasy one, for 'it has always been with the ruling elite rather than with the country or the Filipino people at large... its effectiveness in perpetuating the power of the Philippines elite has postponed a reckoning with the social and economic pressures it was meant to contain'.⁶ In these circumstances, Philippines nationalism developed not as an ideology of the masses so much as a set of slogans manipulated by the elite leaders, Manuel Quezon in particular, to extort concessions from the Americans - including ultimate independence, which many Democrats had long favoured - and to fend off popular demands for social reforms by deflecting the blame for the country's ills against the colonizers. Stanley remarks that US reliance on a mixture of suasions and collaboration to maintain its insular empire gave the elite a privileged position of great power between the colonial government and the Filipino people as the 'indispensable mediators'. The outcome was 'that the imperialism of suasion became a bulwark of class interests'.⁷

Much the same line of interpretation is applied to the post-colonial relationship by a former US foreign service officer who had served in Manila in the Marcos period, Robert Pringle, who wrote:

The most enduring aspect of the postcolonial relationship is the matrix of reactive, contradictory emotions and

⁶ J.C. Thomson, P.W. Stanley and J.C. Perry, *The Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia*, (Harper and Row, New York, 1981), pp.268-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.119.

unrealistic expectations which it has engendered among both Americans and Filipinos.... Both parties want more from the other than reality warrants... emotionalism pervades all aspects of US-Philippines relations, from visa transactions to base negotiations. Special treatment is expected, slights and insults are magnified, motives are suspect.... The Philippines attitude to the US ... has been characterised as a neurotic manipulative, psychically crippling dependency. As long as this pattern is encouraged by an extraordinary American presence in the Philippines ... the US will remain an inevitable priority target for future outbursts of nationalism.⁸

For this reason he argued that:

Given the uncertain long-range potential for revolution in the Philippines this consideration is cogent cause for eradicating post-colonialism as soon as possible.

Views such as these were rarely encountered in Washington ten years ago, but are far less uncommon today. The reason is simple. The uncomfortable dilemmas confronting Washington in the last years of the Marcos dictatorship made both officials and politicians there realise how difficult it was to avoid being drawn into Manila's tortuous elite politics, usually on the side of the government no matter how objectionable or ineffective it might be, because of the special closeness of that special relationship. The latter was perpetuated by the significance of the bases to both the elite politicians in Manila and the defence lobby in Washington. So long as they remained, the special relationship would be felt to persist by all parties, in both countries, and therefore would persist.

Moreover, the very fact that the US Navy has felt it had to give serious attention for the first time to the question of where alternative base facilities might be found in case Subic or Clark were no longer available to the US has had the effect of making the unthinkable much more thinkable - and perhaps no longer as alarming as it once appeared. For even if those facilities were lost, alternatives could be devised, albeit less satisfactory ones, although they would of course be tremendously costly to replace.

⁸ R.W. Pringle, *Indonesia and the Philippines: American Interests and Island Southeast Asia*, (Columbia University Press, New York, 1981).

Within the State Department, views such as Pringle's about the need to give serious thought to alternatives to indefinite continuation of the bases agreement are now much more widespread than they were when his book was written. At the very least, this has changed the parameters of the bargaining strength of each side in the current negotiations. Marcos could be very confident in 1977-78 that the Carter administration could only be bluffing if it talked about pulling the bases out should agreement not be reached (at a time when the US was trying to apply pressure against him on human rights issues). Five years later he had no difficulties whatever in negotiating a new agreement with the Reagan administration, who put little pressure on him. This time, neither side will know quite when or whether the other is merely bluffing as part of a negotiating strategy, or not.

Two recent expressions of opinions very similar to Pringle's can be found in the contributions of two former Foreign Service officers at a conference on 'The Philippines and US Policy' held shortly after the overthrow of the Marcos regime in early 1986.⁹ While they may still be far from part of the mainstream of State Department thinking on the matter, I was told recently by a Washington friend that such views are now far more widespread in Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon than they were a few years ago. And the more unpromising or unpredictable the prospects of the Aquino government become, the more likely they are, I suspect, to gain acceptance there.

Any re-examination of the strategic rationale of the bases should include an equally rigorous examination of their impact on the bilateral relationship, argued Frank Underhill, a former US Ambassador to Malaysia and an old-time Southeast Asia hand. 'Has it not', he asked, 'been retarding maturation and encouraging dependency in the Philippines?' To which he answered that in addition to the financial costs, we should be counting the psychological costs, due to the 'huge civilian government presence' in the country as well as the military bases, all of which have 'perpetuated colonial attitudes and created ... an excessive intimacy ... poisoned on both sides by love-hate, unreasonable expectations and hypocrisy', all in all a degree of intimacy that 'has existed for so long and increased so much that we seem hardly aware of it'.¹⁰

⁹ Paul M. Kattenburg and Francis T. Underhill in Carl H. Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation*, pp.559-560 and pp.569-571.

¹⁰ F.T. Underhill, 'Report on the Discussion: United States Policy

Forty years of post-colonial intimacy have generated among the Filipinos a sense of dependency - or resentment - which he described, quoting Pringle, as a 'pathological' relationship, or at least an unhealthy one. It is quite unlike the relations prevailing between Americans and Malaysians or Indonesians, he says. Americans tended to treat the Filipinos in a patronising, condescending and proprietary fashion, he said, mixing affection with exasperation and contempt ('we are compulsive head-patters'). Filipinos responded by resorting to 'the tactics of the weak ... [they are] devious and indirect, difficult to pin down ... their manner swings from engaging friendliness and pliability to prickly sensitivity and stubbornness'.

He observed that Malaysians had regarded the level of US involvement in the events that led to Marcos' downfall as quite inappropriate (treating the Philippines 'like a small country in the Caribbean'), while Indonesians saw it as confirming their fears that national independence can be threatened by the embrace of one's friends as much as from the machinations of enemies. The conclusion to be drawn about how the US should relate to Corazon Aquino's government, he argued, was that 'we should be attempting to open some decent distance between ourselves and our former colony in our own interest as well'. 'We should be aiming to help her without smothering her in our embrace', he said, 'help, but not encourage patterns of dependence'.¹¹

Underhill did not advocate an abrupt unilateral pullout from the bases, however, which he believed would have harmful consequences; rather, he urged that the US should move towards the negotiation of a gradual withdrawal that would leave time for adjustments on both sides. 'We should ... be preparing for the time when she [President Aquino] says, "Now I'd like to talk about the bases"'. We should be asking: 'Could we be doing it all at greatly reduced levels?' and 'Do we need to be doing it at all?' Most interestingly of all, Underhill urged that thought should be given to the privatization of the Subic naval facilities, with Filipino or Filipino-US joint-venture contractors operating them in much the same way as private contractors now do at Brooklyn or Newport News, no longer as US government bases but simply as logistical facilities. Supply and maintenance are the primary functions of these facilities, he

and the Philippines' in Carl H. Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation*, p.571.

11 *Ibid.*, p.574.

maintained, and private contractors could quite well provide such services.¹²

A more specific and far-reaching set of proposals for reshaping a new relationship between the Philippines and USA was put forward on the same occasion by Paul Kattenburg, also a former senior Foreign Service officer of ambassadorial rank, another old Southeast Asia hand and recently a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University. His three-fold plan envisaged:

- (a) An end to the special relationship through abrogation of the 1951 Mutual Security Treaty and a complete end to whatever vestiges still remain of special economic ties. Although he recommended that help might be given to the Aquino regime against communist insurgents, if it became necessary, this should be done only 'at a distance', leaving it to Manila to work out its own solutions to the root problems.
- (b) A withdrawal from Clark and Subic Bases, which should be closed permanently, along with other major communications facilities in the islands.
- (c) A simultaneous proclamation that the US is 'in no way abjuring its interests in East Asia', but is determined to pursue a radically modified regional strategy appropriate to the changing political conditions there which will 'obviate the need for US bases ... while seeking to obtain maximum advantage in terms of global diplomacy from the voluntary relinquishment...'.¹³

The details of the strategy he envisaged for that purpose need not concern us here, beyond noting that it would involve a revival of the ZOPFAN concept for Southeast Asia (hence a withdrawal of the Soviet

¹² *Ibid.*, p.576.

¹³ P.M. Kattenburg, 'The Case for Ending the Special Relationship and Leaving the United States Bases in the Philippines', in Carl H. Landé (ed.), *Rebuilding a Nation*, pp.552-56.

naval facilities from Cam Ranh Bay in return for US closure of Subic and Clark, presumably) as well as a settlement of the Indo-China conflicts, closer Philippines reliance on ASEAN for its basic security arrangements and some degree of Soviet reduction in its Pacific and Indian Ocean fleet deployments.¹⁴ Kattenburg laid down some quite tough-minded bargaining conditions designed to induce the Soviet authorities to make matching concessions in return for any moves by the US, so his proposal was by no means a pie-in-the-sky vision of an alternative strategy, although it may have been too far-reaching and forward-looking to gain wide acceptance in the circumstances of the time. But his primary aim is to ensure that the US would not appear to be withdrawing from the Philippines under pressure, rather to be seen as making a deliberate decision to adjust to changing circumstances. He is less concerned with the psychological dimension of the 'special relationship' problem than Underhill in his more gradual and modest set of proposals; on the other hand his proposal is more oriented towards the global power politics of the situation. It is of interest here primarily because it illustrates the way one strand of thinking in Washington has been developing in recent years, although not necessarily because it represents the shape of things to come.

Conclusion

The conclusion to be drawn from all this, I believe, is that the Australian and US authorities should both be thinking about the future role of the Philippines bases as if they were the servants or instruments of our broader foreign policies, not the master, or as the means to achieve our ends (which in terms of the Asia-Pacific region today we have almost ceased to define except in the vaguest generalities), but not as the ends in themselves. 'In the spirit of Clausewitz, the bases should be an extension of US policy by other means, not a determining, dominating factor', comments Pringle, who sees them as already less important as operational facilities than as symbols manifesting American commitment and power, mainly in giving reassurance of American protection to the Japanese, Koreans, the ASEAN nations and even China.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.556-59.

¹⁵ Pringle, *Indonesia and the Philippines*.

This kind of advice is especially germane at a time when Americans at all levels are becoming increasingly worried about the extent to which they are over-extended in their military and economic commitments around the world. Their chronic budget deficits, increasing indebtedness to Japan and the loss of the hegemony that enabled the Americans to assume the imperial role they took on so confidently in the 1950-60s (a role they in fact began to repudiate as long ago as 1969, when the Nixon Doctrine was proclaimed) have already led to much talk about where they should begin to cut back their overseas commitments. I believe it is almost inevitable that the sort of thinking represented here in the views quoted from Ambassadors Underhill, Pringle and Kattenburg are likely to become part of the conventional wisdom of US policy rather than, as they probably still were until recently, rather maverick or uncharacteristically far-sighted personal opinions.

Australians, even more than Americans, need to be trying to foresee the likely shape of the Asia-Pacific power equation in the years ahead, through the 1990s and beyond. This may develop either with or without the continuation of a US-Philippines 'special relationship' buttressed by the bases agreements - but preferably without - in my judgement, for the sake of both parties and for the good of the region as a whole. The kinds of changes suggested by Underhill and Kattenburg are not likely to occur quickly; in fact, they are inherently gradualist in character and conditional upon complex negotiating processes, not sudden unilateral decisions. But they are the sort of changes I believe we in Australia should be trying to encourage, instead of just urging the Americans and the right-wingers in the Philippines elite to hang on to the bases as long as possible and at all costs out of a misguided belief that therein lies greater security for them as well as for us. Above all, the sooner the 'special relationship' ceases to be special and becomes a normal and non-preferential one, the better for all concerned.

CHAPTER 3

THE BASES ISSUE IN PHILIPPINES DOMESTIC POLITICS

Ron May

The presence of US bases in the Philippines has been a thorn in the side of Filipino nationalists since well before independence. But in the latter years of the Marcos regime, especially, the bases became an important symbol for the opponents of what was often referred to by the Left as 'the US-Marcos dictatorship'. Indeed in 1984, at a seminar at the Australian National University, the late Senator Jose Diokno suggested that it was the issue of whether or not to close down US bases that marked the dividing line between the Left and the Right.

This is not to say that antipathy to the bases was exclusively a left-wing phenomenon: in 1977 President Marcos himself queried the value of the bases to the Philippines, and Imee Marcos, as chairperson of Kabataang Barangay (the youth arm of the KBL [New Society Movement]), described the bases as 'a clear evidence of our American stooges'.¹

The presence of the bases, and the terms under which they have been operated have attracted opposition on several grounds.²

1 Quoted in Roland G. Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity: A Study of the US Military Bases in the Philippines*, (BALAI Fellowship Inc., Manila, Second Edition, 1985), p.99.

2 For a more extensive discussion of Philippine attitudes to the bases see Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity*, Patricia Paez, *The Bases Factor: Realpolitik of RP-US Relations*, (CSIS-Dispatch, Manila, 1985); A.R. Magno, 'Cornucopia or Curse: The Internal Debate on US Bases in the Philippines', (paper presented to conference on Military Bases in Southeast Asia, organized by Information and Resource Center, Singapore, 1987); Ed Garcia and Francisco Nemenzo, *The Sovereign Quest: Freedom From Foreign Military Bases*, (Claretian Publications, Quezon City, 1988); and *Solidarity*, 115, November-December 1987, (special issue on 'RP-US Relations').

First, their mere presence is seen by many as an affront to Philippine sovereignty. In the words of nationalist historian Renato Constantino, the presence of the bases 'constitutes a derogation of our national sovereignty, a threat to our national survival and an affront to our national dignity.'³ Similarly, present Philippines Foreign Secretary, and former chairman of the US-based anti-Marcos Movement for a Free Philippines, Raul Manglapus, has said: the bases have come 'to symbolise decades of stifling American interference in the Philippines' internal affairs'.⁴ More specifically, hostility has been generated by America's reluctance, notwithstanding some concessions in 1956, to grant the Philippines jurisdiction in civil matters on the bases,⁵ and by its refusal to grant the Philippines an effective say in the operation of the bases. The Bohlen-Serrano agreement of 1959 recognised the right of the Philippines to be consulted on the use of the bases in the event of US military involvement in Asia and to give prior consent for the construction of missile sites other than for mutual defense, and in 1979 the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) was given nominal control over the bases, but these concessions are generally considered to have been more political than substantive.

Secondly, and linked to the question of sovereignty, opponents of the US presence have objected that the bases provide an infrastructure for US intelligence and counter-insurgency operations in the Philippines, which is augmented by the Military Assistance Agreement (MAA), which regulates, *inter alia*, the purchase of military equipment and the operations of the Joint US Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG). Those on the Left remember the role played by JUSMAG's Col. Lansdale in putting down the Huk rebellion and point to the support which Marcos received through the MAA for his campaign against the Left and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The continuing relevance of this was underlined by US assistant secretary for State Gaston Sigur in discussing the relationship between civilian and military authorities in an anti-insurgency

³ Quoted in *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 5 April 1988.

⁴ Quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1988.

⁵ According to Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity*, pp.251-252, between 1947 and 1980 48 Filipinos were killed on or near the bases in incidents involving US personnel, yet no US serviceman was tried in a Philippines court.

strategy, before a US Senate subcommittee in April 1986:

... our facilities at Subic and Clark ... provide a secure foundation which makes possible the pursuit of our larger political and economic interests in this key part of the globe.⁶

More recently, there has been widespread concern among progressive Filipinos about alleged US involvement in counter-insurgency measures in the Philippines, including low intensity operations and support for 'vigilante' groups, while no less a person than Foreign Secretary Manglapus has suggested that US military advisers were involved in the abortive military coup of Colonel Honasan in August 1987.⁷

Thirdly, critics of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) argue that, in the words of the late Senator Benigno Aquino, '... the American bases, once conceived in defense of our security, have over time and events become the bases of our profound insecurity'⁸, making the Philippines a target in the event of big power conflict. In recent months even the conservative Vice President Laurel appears to have come around to this view.⁹

Fourthly, local farmers' groups and others have complained of the extent of the land and sea area covered by the bases, much of which has remained unused (at least up till 1979 when the total area of Clark and Subic was reduced from almost 68,000 ha to less than 11,000) or has been degraded by use as a bombing or gunnery range. One cultural minority group has been totally displaced in the process of developing the bases.

Fifthly, a number of groups, from within the church, the women's movement, and elsewhere, point to the adverse social side-effects of the bases: prostitution, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs,

6 Quoted in D.B. Shirmer and S.R. Shalom (eds), *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance*, (South End Press, Boston, 1987), p.394.

7 Far Eastern Economic Review, 3 December 1987.

8 Quoted in Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity*, p.12.

9 See R.J. May, 'Anti-Nuclear Moves in the Philippines', *Peace Research Centre Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 3, December 1987, p.5.

blackmarketing and petty crime. According to a National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) study in 1982 8470 hospitality girls in Olongapo and Angeles City were treated for sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and 4980 abandoned or neglected children came before the Ministry of Social Service and Development.¹⁰ And in 1986 it was reported that thirteen hospitality girls in Olongapo and Angeles City had tested positive for AIDS.¹¹ In the broad sweep of global politics, prostitution, STD and drugs may seem relatively insignificant compared with questions of regional security, but the importance of such issues in the context of Philippine politics - especially the less radical elements of Philippine politics - should not be underestimated.

These grievances were summarized in 1984 in a statement by the Anti-Bases Coalition of the Philippines:

The bases impair our national sovereignty and independence, deprive our people of the full use and control of our national patrimony, support US intervention in our internal affairs, serve as staging grounds for gunboat diplomacy and interventions in the internal affairs of other states. They strengthen authoritarian rule ... promote militarization of our country, and lead to the spread of prostitution and other social vices, and the degradation of our native values. They serve as magnets of nuclear attack.¹²

The Anti-Bases Coalition, organized by former senators Lorenzo Tañada and Jose Diokno, was the major voice against the bases before 1986. It brought together nationalist politicians, mass organizations, cause-oriented groups, trade union and peasant organizations, religious institutions, and ecological and anti-nuclear movements across a broad political spectrum. Among those who supported an anti-bases manifesto was Cory Aquino. Since 1986 the call for abrogation of the MBA has been led by such umbrella organizations as the Campaign for a Sovereign Philippines, the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition, and the National Organisation

10 Cited in Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity*, p.254.

11 *Health Alert* 32, 15 August 1986.

12 Quoted in Simbulan, *The Bases of Our Insecurity*, p.280.

Against Nuclear Power and Weapons (NO Nukes). With a growing post-People-Power nationalism, and increasing concern - especially among church and women's groups - about the adverse social effects of the bases, the anti-bases movement now represents an even wider spectrum of opinion. As one commentator has observed: 'one can today in the Philippines take a strong stand against the bases and remain ideologically non-committed, centrist or even anti-communist'.¹³

As against these objections, the American presence generates substantial income and employment. US sources put the figure of direct US military expenditure at \$US350 million per year¹⁴ and of direct employment of Filipinos on the bases at end 1985 at over 42,000, making the bases the country's second largest employer after the Philippines government.¹⁵ A 1982 Rand Corporation study¹⁶ estimated the impact of US spending on the bases at almost 4 per cent of the Philippines GDP. Indirect employment and income are harder to measure, but the population of Angeles City is now about 270,000

13 Armando Malay, 'The Insurgency and the U.S. Bases in the Philippines', (paper presented to conference on Military Bases in Southeast Asia, organized by Information and Resource Center, Singapore, 1987).

14 At the time of the 1983 MBA review the US promised to make a 'best effort' to secure Congressional agreement to a payment of \$US900 million over the five years 1985-89, comprising \$125 million in Military Assistance grants, \$300 million in Foreign Military Sales Credits, and \$475 million in Economic Support Fund grants. (ESF grants are disbursed on a project-by-project basis, administered jointly by the Philippines government and USAID, and are mostly for projects in areas adjacent to the bases.) In fact, the Philippines has received more than \$US1,000 million.

15 *Asia-Pacific Defense Forum*, Vol. II, No. 3, 1986/87. Also see Richard Gordon, 'Philippine Military Bases: Economic and Social Implications', (paper presented to conference on Military Bases in Southeast Asia, organized by Information and Resource Center, Singapore, 1987). (Gordon is former mayor of Olongapo City.)

16 Cited in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 August 1987.

and up to 80 per cent of its businesses are said to be base-related.¹⁷ 'Hospitality girls' in Olongapo and Angeles City alone constitute a workforce of around 16,000. 'After-hours spending' by Americans on the bases has been estimated at \$US100 million per year.¹⁸ On economic grounds, retention of the bases has thus been supported by some of the more pragmatic politicians and business interests, national and local (in several recent pro-bases demonstrations hospitality girls from Olongapo and Angeles City have had a high profile). Nevertheless, local groups such as the Central Luzon Alliance for a Sovereign Philippines (CLASP) have questioned the extent of the bases' contribution to the local economy, workers groups have complained about terms of employment on the bases, and proposals for alternative uses of the bases facilities, should the US withdraw, have been drawn up.¹⁹

It is also argued that the existence of the bases represents a substantial saving on defense expenditure for the Philippines government; a recent AFP study estimated the benefits of this at about \$US68 million per year.²⁰ This has attracted support from the military establishment - though in August 1988 Defense Secretary and former AFP chief-of-staff General Ramos was reported as saying that the bases must eventually be phased out.²¹

There is also, of course, a deep reservoir of pro-US sentiment in the Philippines. Philippine attitudes to the US are, however, ambivalent and recent opinion surveys suggest that popular support for the retention of the bases beyond 1991 has been declining. In a June 1986 public opinion survey undertaken by Social Weather Stations and the Ateneo de Manila University, to the proposition that 'The US military bases should stay in the Philippines', only 50 per cent of the sample agreed; 19 per cent disagreed, and 26 per cent were undecided.²²

17 *Asia Wall Street Journal*, 5 April 1988.

18 *Australian*, 19 November 1987.

19 For example, see Gordon, 'Philippine Military Bases: Economic and Social Implications'; and Garcia and Nemenzo, *The Sovereign Quest*.

20 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 April 1988.

21 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1988.

22 *Public Opinion Report; June 1986*, (Social Weather Stations and

Following the February 1986 revolution nationalism seemed to be on the ascendancy. A proposal to the Constitutional Committee (ConCom), passed by the Committee on Preamble and National Territory and calling for a ban on foreign military bases, troops or facilities, and nuclear weapons, was, however, defeated by 29 votes to 15. Instead provision was made in Article II Section 8 of the constitution, that

The Philippines, consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory

and Article VII Section 21 provides:

No treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the Members of the Senate.

In July 1988 the Philippines Justice Department ruled that the responsibility for deciding what is the 'national interest' lay with the president.

In January 1987 there were allegations that President Aquino, while visiting the US, had attempted to discourage the ConCom from adopting an anti-bases position. Ironically, these criticisms of the president came not from left-wing nationalists but from the right,²³ and had more to do with frustrated personal political ambitions than with larger issues of policy.

With the MBA coming up for review in April 1988, Art II (8) of the Constitution clearly needed elaboration. During 1987-88 three separate bills were introduced into the Senate and another three into the House for this purpose. On April 25 the Senate received back from its national defense and security, and foreign relations select committees a composite bill for a *Freedom From Nuclear Weapons Act*. The bill, sponsored by Senator Wigberto Tanada sought to:

- prohibit storage of nuclear weapons - defined as 'any device or weapon or any of its parts or components' - in Philippine territory, 'including the existing military

Atenco de Manila University, Quezon City, 1986).

23 See, for example, *Canberra Times*, 28 January 1987.

facilities of the United States';

- prohibit the transit, stationing and servicing of nuclear-armed, nuclear powered and nuclear-capable ships, submarines, overland transporters and aircraft;
- establish a monitoring commission to ensure these provisions are enforced and to deny entry to any vessel or craft that refuses or resists verification.

In June 1988, notwithstanding a request from the president that it reconsider a total ban on nuclear weapons in order to keep options open on the bases, the Senate approved the bill by a vote of 19 to 3.

The House bills, having passed through the select committee on international relations, are still with the House's national defense and security committee, which has yet to schedule hearings on it; chairman of this committee is conservative Tarlac congressman Jose Yap. Although House Speaker Mitra has voiced support for the bills, many observers doubt whether they will receive the same degree of support in the House as they received in the Senate. It has even been suggested that the Senate has indulged in a display of nationalism knowing that the overriding power of the House will ensure that the bill never becomes law.²⁴

To date President Aquino has refrained from providing leadership on the issue, repeatedly saying that she intends to keep options open until 1991. There has even been speculation that she might veto a strong anti-nuclear bill.²⁵

Meanwhile, negotiations over the 1988 MBA review began in April. Coincidentally, a 'parallel people's review', organized by the Campaign for a Sovereign Philippines, called for the termination of the bases agreement and the Mutual Defense Treaty, and in Manila anti-riot police clashed with some 3,000 demonstrators outside the US embassy. The negotiations stalled in July, were resumed in early August, and broke down again in mid August with the US negotiating team returning to Washington for further briefing. According to

²⁴ See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 May 1988.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

reports, Manglapus had demanded an annual 'rental' payment of \$US1.2 billion, a figure which US Secretary of State Schultz referred to as 'beyond our ability'.²⁶ The situation was not improved by the US government's apparent attempts to pressure the Philippines government by shelving proposals for a multilateral aid package and financial assistance for the Philippine's land reform program.

Finally, in October 1988 a new bases review memorandum was signed in Washington. Under the new agreement the Philippines accepted a US offer of \$US481 million per year in military and economic aid - about double what it received in 1987-88 but considerably less than it demanded - together with a promise of further assistance through the proposed multilateral aid package. The Philippines government also backed down on its demands for greater operational control of the bases, undertaking that no existing or proposed legislation would impede operations on the bases, including the entry of nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered ships. The government has been strongly criticized by anti-bases and anti-nuclear groups; as *Far Eastern Economic Review* reporters Nayan Chanda and Rodney Tasker commented (27 October 1988), 'What they thought was a new projection of Philippine concerns about sovereignty, nationalism and security has been revealed to have been nothing more than horse-trading'.

On the Left, there is continuing strong opposition to the bases. Following the shooting of three US servicemen by local NPA guerillas outside the Clark Air Base in October 1987, National Democratic Front (NDF) secretary general Satur Ocampo was reported as saying that unless the US stopped meddling in the Philippines it would 'pay a high price ... in terms of American lives and property'.²⁷ NPA threats against US servicemen and installations were repeated in mid 1988 and in July the AFP announced that captured documents revealed a plan by the NPA to kidnap US servicemen as hostages to be used in negotiating for the release of NPA cadres held by the government.

On the Right, attitudes to the bases appear to have been somewhat ambivalent. A generally conservative, pro-US orientation

²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1988.

²⁷ *Australian*, 19 November 1987; *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 5 April 1988.

has, since 1986, been tempered both by a feeling among Marcos loyalists that the US betrayed them in 1986 and by recognition of the growing force of anti-bases sentiment, especially among some of the traditionally more conservative political groups. Leading members of the recently-formed rightist coalition, Union for National Action (UNA), Enrile and Laurel, have both on occasion spoken out against the bases. On the other hand, the right-wing National Movement for Economic Reconstruction and Survival ('Nation Movers'), a grouping of conservative politicians which preceded the formation of UNA, declared itself for the retention of the bases after 1991.²⁸

Within the government, President Aquino is still seeking to keep her options open in 1991. Foreign Secretary Manglapus, on the other hand, has so far been uncompromising in his demands for increased compensation for the bases and some other major figures in the Aquino-led coalition - notably Liberal Party leader and Senate president Jovito Salonga, and BANDILA president Senator Butz Aquino - appear to be firmly opposed to the retention of bases. However, notwithstanding the passage through the Senate of the *Freedom From Nuclear Weapons Act*, it would seem that most Congressmen are more interested in questions about the level of compensation and operational control of the bases than in seeing their demise. What stand the government is likely to take in 1991 thus remains a fairly open question, and one on which people's opinions may be influenced by the state of the domestic political climate over the next two to three years. Should there be a shift towards repression or militarization of the government, popular sentiments against the bases may strengthen; but if 'democratic space' is maintained and some economic recovery takes place the salience of the bases is likely to decline and their continued presence to become more certain.

CHAPTER 4

ASEAN AND THE US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Leszek Buszynski

The American bases in the Philippines, strictly speaking the Philippine bases since sovereignty was transferred to the Philippines under the 1979 amendment to the bases agreement, have served the function of underpinning regional order. That function was initially regarded as a product of transitory need according to the consensus established during ASEAN's formation in August 1967. The Bangkok declaration of August 1967 which promulgated ASEAN's existence carried the claim that foreign bases would be temporary in the region upon the insistence of Indonesia. According to Indonesia and Malaysia, two countries which promoted the idea of regional autonomy as a basis for regionalism, the excesses of the Chinese cultural revolution dictated the temporary need for an American military presence. Both countries looked forward to a time when the region could be free of foreign military bases according to the ZOPFAN resolution of November 1971. In the context of the security environment which has evolved since the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, however, ASEAN's need for the American bases has been more than temporary.

The American bases in the Philippines offered psychological reassurance to the ASEAN countries as they adjusted to Vietnamese reunification, and the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea in 1978. That reassurance was based upon the expectation that United States forces in the Philippines would act to ward off the threat of external attack upon any of the ASEAN countries. Immediately after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, Thailand feared a Vietnamese cross-border strike; both Malaysia and Singapore similarly feared the consequences of a Vietnamese attack upon Thailand. The US military presence gave substance to the Manila Pact of 1954 under which the United States was committed to support Thailand, at a time when the region suspected that Vietnamese ambitions extended beyond Kampuchea. Moreover, the American military presence in the Philippines provided a means of balancing the Soviet position in Cam

Ranh Bay and use of Da Nang as from March 1979. Regional fears of the Soviet military presence in Vietnam were reduced somewhat by the assurance of the continuation of the American bases in the Philippines. So effectively did the American presence overshadow the Soviet position in Vietnam that by 1985-86 regional spokesmen in Indonesia and Malaysia began to deny that the Soviet Union constituted a threat to the region. By 1988, similar views appeared in the ASEAN country that was once a vituperative critic of the Soviet Union which was Singapore.

The major contribution of the American bases to regional security has been the elimination of external threat, which could have disrupted the movement towards regionalism during critical periods of ASEAN's existence. Moreover, ASEAN countries have been able to direct resources, which normally would have been consumed by a military capability intended to deter external attack, towards economic development and internal security. The economic burden would have been significantly greater for these countries if they had to cope with the dual task of maintaining security with respect to both internal and external threats. Aggravation of the internal economic situation in these countries would have contributed to a deterioration of internal security in any case, a prospect that ASEAN governments fear. Countries such as Indonesia or the Philippines have been spared the problem of acquiring defence capabilities sufficient to be able to protect their respective archipelagos. Neither country has the air or naval strength to protect itself and without the American military presence both would have been more vulnerable to external penetration. Defence spending as a percentage of GNP in the ASEAN region has been consistently lower over the period 1975-1983 than in most other third World regions, except Latin America. Despite the presence of the Kampuchean conflict ASEAN defence spending as a percentage of GNP was dwarfed by that of the Middle East, and was somewhat smaller than the figures for South Asia or Africa. Moreover, defence spending as a percentage of GNP amongst the ASEAN countries has been consistently lower over the period 1973-1983 than the average for the less developed countries, including or excluding the Middle East.¹

¹ David B.H. Denoon, 'Defence spending in ASEAN: An overview', in Chin Kin Wah (editor), *Defence Spending in*

Without the American military presence, defence spending would probably have increased to a greater extent than it did amongst the ASEAN countries after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. In this sense the United States presence allowed the regional states the flexibility to pursue non-aligned foreign policies without the need for extended security relationships with the West. By providing a source of countervailing power against Vietnam and the Soviet Union, the United States permitted countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia the opportunity to interpret ZOPFAN in terms of regional autonomy during the Kampuchean crisis. This may not be a contribution openly acknowledged by these countries but should be noted as a consequence of United States policy and not a matter of intention. From Singapore's perspective the United States presence has also protected the trade routes of the region ensuring that the republic could prosper by acting as a regional trading centre. Singapore has felt especially vulnerable in the regional setting as a predominantly Chinese state in a Malay area. Singapore's fear of communal strife in Malaysia and possible social upheaval in Indonesia, which could lead to a change of regime in both countries, results in a sense of dependence upon external great power support. For Singapore, the economic and security conditions for survival were ensured by the United States military presence, which reflects deep anxiety about its position as an independent state.

In terms of the dynamics of regional organization the United States commitment to the region as symbolized by the military presence has provided the foundation for the development of greater political cohesion by ASEAN. Without the assurance of United States support, Thailand's reaction to the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea could have taken another direction. Thailand turned to China in an alignment that was formalized by Prem Tinsulanonda's visit to Beijing in October 1980. This occurred, however, after Kriangsak Chamanan's visit to Washington in February 1979 and his visit to Moscow the following March, which was an indication of Thailand's immediate priorities. Thailand's ultimate security guarantor against Vietnam has been the United States which has enabled the Thai leadership to avoid an excessive dependence upon China as a consequence of the

Kampuchean issue. Without the assurance of United States support the Thai propensity to rely upon China to restrain Vietnam would have been intensified. The result would have been considerable tension within ASEAN between Thailand and Indonesia as well as Malaysia, and the consequent downgrading of the value of ASEAN for Thailand's security. Under such circumstances, the interest of the Indonesian military in an agreement with Vietnam to preserve it as a buffer against China would have been significantly stimulated. ASEAN, indeed, would have been an organization barely able to maintain the semblance of unity.

What would be the effect upon ASEAN of an American withdrawal from the Philippines? There are those who have argued that a removal of the American bases would have few negative repercussions for ASEAN. On the contrary, an American withdrawal from the Philippines would provide an opportunity for ASEAN to realize the ZOPFAN ideal, if the withdrawal could be coordinated with a Soviet standoff from Cam Ranh Bay. Moreover, these optimists maintain that the United States role as a pillar of regional security in the way outlined above was important in the past but has since declined. The argument is that the ASEAN countries have developed economically since 1978 and are now better able to provide the basis for their own national resilience. Proponents of this view pin their hopes on a political solution to the Kampuchean issue which would avoid the prospect of a polarization of ASEAN based on a strengthened Thai relationship with China. Those who support this view look forward to a future when Southeast Asia will be free of great power rivalry, a development which they claim will enable a further strengthening of ASEAN political cohesion.

Those that hold this view tend to be found, but not exclusively, in Indonesia with its tradition of a non-aligned foreign policy. They do not represent the mainstream view of the American bases in that country, nor are their views supported by any of the ASEAN governments. There is too much uncertainty about the regional situation for ASEAN countries to allow themselves the luxury of being without the American bases. This is not to say that the ZOPFAN ideal has been totally discarded but that it has become accommodated to balance of power policies. Those countries that have acted as proponents for the ZOPFAN ideal, Malaysia and Indonesia, have regarded the American presence as a necessary counterbalance to

the Soviet Union and also China. For these reasons either ZOPFAN has been redefined to take into account the need to maintain a balance between the great powers in the region, or its implementation as a means to exclude great power rivalry from the region has been relegated to the distant future. The most widely accepted view throughout the region is that the withdrawal of the American bases would have some effect upon regional security, but there is disagreement as to what that effect would be.

Much would depend upon the way in which the American bases were removed from the Philippines. There is the possibility that the United States may remove its presence in the Philippines as part of general reduction of role in the Western Pacific. Continuing budgetary difficulties and the emphasis given to burden-sharing with allies may translate into attempts to induce the states of the region to assume greater responsibility for their own defence. In the context of an effort to reduce the American role, developments in the Philippines such as the communist insurgency may give the United States an incentive to withdraw forces from those bases. As part of a general reduction of role an American decision to withdraw from the Philippines would have a major impact upon ASEAN security. Not only would fears be directed towards Japan, which would take upon itself a greater security role under the notion of burden-sharing, but apprehension would be stimulated in relation to the intentions of the Soviet Union and China. The undermining of the regional balance of power in this way would constitute ASEAN's worst-case scenario.

The ASEAN countries, particularly Thailand and Singapore, fear the consequences of an American reduction in role to the point where the regional balance would be undermined. The idea that the United States is a declining power is one that has some appeal for Asian cultures which respond to the notion of cyclical historical development. Moreover, some within ASEAN tend to be puzzled as to how the idealistic and overly moralistic Americans could have developed and maintained such power in international relations, which is normally perceived as an environment where only shrewd and ruthless realists succeed. The notion of American decline accords with Asian survivalist conceptions of the way foreign policy should be conducted, based on Asian historical and cultural experience, and confirms the popular belief that the Americans are amateurs in foreign policy. Nonetheless, without an American presence in Southeast Asia

the Soviet Union would appear as a greater military threat and Vietnam may become more demanding over the Kampuchean issue. Chinese political pressure over the Spratly Islands may become intensified and the ASEAN countries would feel bereft of support against Chinese claims. Moreover, Japanese economic pressure upon ASEAN would be increased as the Japanese would utilize economic levers to wield influence over security issues, such as the defence of the sea lanes of communication. The prospect of a Japanese security role in Southeast Asia, to protect Japanese oil and trade routes, would become more likely in the event of an American withdrawal from the region.

It may be argued that a new balance of power would arise after an American withdrawal, as a consequence of the competitive interaction of these three great powers, the Soviet Union, China and Japan. ASEAN, however, would find little comfort in this situation and would find even less support for its demands over the Spratly Islands. For example, neither the Soviet Union nor Japan would risk conflict with China over the Spratly Islands and would probably concede China's case, to the detriment of ASEAN. Without the prospect of American support the inherent centrifugal tendencies within ASEAN would probably reassert themselves. Thailand would move closer towards China while Indonesia and Malaysia may use the Soviet presence in an effort to counterbalance China. The result would be deteriorating political cohesion within ASEAN and a natural division between the mainland and maritime sections of the organization based upon perceptions of the likely role of China. Under such conditions ASEAN may fall apart as the region is divided into overlapping spheres of influence by these great powers.

Despite the widely-held belief in America's decline, ASEAN countries find the above scenario an unlikely one while there is the accompanying conviction that the United States would retain a role in the Western Pacific. The withdrawal of the American bases under pressure of events in the Philippines without a reduction of an American role in the Western Pacific is a second possibility. The Philippine government may continue to press for increased "just" compensation or "rent" in negotiations leading up to a treaty which would govern the bases after 1991, and which is required by Article 18 Section 25 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Other issues may become entangled with the Philippine desire to assert independence

and to demonstrate the country's sovereignty, in which case ratification of any future treaty by the Philippine Senate may become problematical.

Philippine representatives have been claiming during the negotiations with the United States that the bases serve American global strategy more than they promote Philippine security, which illustrates the extent to which Philippine and American security perspectives have diverged.² That divergence in itself is an incentive for the Philippines to increase demands in negotiations with the United States. The country's security perspectives have changed since the late 1940s and 1950s when the United States alliance was considered essential for the defence of the country. The international situation has similarly been transformed, since the fears of the cold war and of a revanchist Japan drove the Philippines into an alliance with the United States. The transformed security environment gives the Philippine government the confidence to raise other demands, such as consultative rights in relation to American utilization of the bases and restrictions upon their previously unhampered use. Moreover, Philippine defence minister Fidel Ramos has demanded access to all areas of the bases including the cryptographic areas, which have been off-limits to the Philippine base commanders appointed as a result of the 1979 amendment to the bases agreement.³ Such issues may escalate in importance for a government bent on defining its autonomy and giving vent to frustrated nationalism. The likely response of the United States would be to scale down the military presence in the Philippines as a way of eliminating vulnerability to Philippine bargaining pressure.

American withdrawal under pressure of the kind illustrated above would have a different impact upon ASEAN, provided the United States was convinced of the need to maintain its position within the regional power balance and despite internal pressures to reduce the defence burden. Maintenance of a regional role would be a product of American concern for the security of the sea lanes of communication and the oil routes to Japan and Northeast Asia in general. Moreover, American interests in the Persian Gulf and Indian

2 See Raul Manglapus's comments in the *Straits Times*, 28 June 1988.

3 *Manila Bulletin*, 26 April 1988.

Ocean require that force capabilities in those regions be reinforced in times of crisis from bases in the Western Pacific. Whether those bases are maintained in the Philippines or their forces dispersed to other locations, free access to the Indian Ocean from the Pacific is a strategic priority. The strategic role of Southeast Asia and ASEAN is a basic reason as to why the United States will attempt to preserve its commitments to the region. The question is, of course, whether a dispersal or relocation of facilities from the Philippines will provide the United States with equivalent means of maintaining its position in the region, or whether that position will be irretrievably affected.

In view of the American strategic interest in the region ASEAN interests may be reassured somewhat by an American effort to disperse facilities to compensate for the positional loss of the Philippines. There may be no direct equivalent to Subic bay and relocation of the naval base to Guam, some 1,500 nautical miles East of Subic, would only be a partial solution. A naval base at Guam would support operations in Northeast Asia but would be too remote from Southeast Asia or the Indian Ocean for a rapid response to crisis.⁴ Moreover, Guam harbour is too shallow to accommodate aircraft carriers. Squadrons from Clark Field may be relocated in Pulau and Tinian (1,000-1,200 nautical miles east of Philippines) as well as Guam but the distance from theatres of operations in Southeast Asia militates against the effectiveness of this option. The other relocation options considered by the United States include Japan, South Korea and Australia, which are similarly too distant from Southeast Asia to be considered effective choices.

Relocation options outside the region may not be reassuring for ASEAN in view of the distances involved but there are other ways of maintaining a presence in the region in support of ASEAN. George Shultz in Jakarta on 11 July 1988 stressed that the US would continue to maintain a presence in the region and that the United States had other options if compelled to leave the Philippines.⁵ Some of the squadrons of F-4Gs currently in the Philippines may be relocated to

⁴ Evelyn Colbert, *The United States and the Philippine Bases*, (Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., 1987), p.13.

⁵ *US Information Service (USIS)*, 11 July 1988.

ASEAN countries willing to accommodate them. Singapore and Thailand may play host to an American Air Force presence of a squadron each in view of the importance of the United States for their security. Additional units may be rotated to airfields in these two states and air/ground exercises involving these countries with United States forces may be increased. The problem of maintaining a naval presence may be partially resolved by regular tours of naval units throughout the region with major ports of call at Thailand and Singapore. The United States may schedule matters so that American naval units will always be in the region at any one time in order to demonstrate a commitment to the region. In this situation ASEAN anxieties in regard to the role of the United States after a possible withdrawal from the Philippines would be diminished.

Amongst the ASEAN countries attitudes towards the American bases have changed over time and opinions are still in the process of evolution. In general there were mixed reactions to the people's revolution of February 1986 which brought down Marcos. There was a degree of relief that the man who had contributed so much to domestic instability in the Philippines was overthrown. There were also misgivings that the revolution brought to power Mrs. Aquino and her supporters who had in December 1984 signed a program intended to unify the anti-Marcos opposition. One of the salient features of that program was the demand that American bases be withdrawn, which was not lost on ASEAN neighbours of the Philippines. Moreover, there was concern within ASEAN over the course of the insurgency in the Philippines. The then deputy Army Chief of Staff in Thailand, Chaovalit Yongchaiyuth on 11 July 1985 claimed that the insurgency in the Philippines was a special problem for ASEAN and Thailand, he added that it could result in strategic changes in the Pacific if the communists came to power.⁶ Mrs. Aquino's visit to Jakarta in August 1986 was an occasion when Sukarno lectured her on the dangers of tolerating communism. Mrs. Aquino, however, was not discouraged and later on 27 November negotiated a 60 day ceasefire agreement with the communists which went into effect on 10 December 1986. The Communist Party demanded the removal of the US bases during the negotiations and although this demand was brushed aside, the episode illustrated the political impact

6 *Bangkok Post*, 12 July 1985.

that the insurgency might have in the future.

In any case, ASEAN attitudes towards the American bases were tested by the Raul Manglapus initiative of October 1967. The reactions of the ASEAN countries to the Manglapus initiative were largely comparable to what was known about their official positions, with some unexpected variations. While still a Senator, Manglapus called for a collective ASEAN statement in support of the bases on 5 October 1987 in Singapore. The Senator's intention was to have the issue placed on the agenda of the third ASEAN summit then scheduled for Manila in December 1987. Considering that Manglapus had been hostile towards the American bases during his period of exile in the United States this change of attitude required some explanation. The ASEAN view was that Manglapus was consistent in his attitude towards the American bases and wanted to show the Americans that ASEAN would not endorse the bases collectively. The demonstration of ASEAN inability to approve of the US bases was intended to be a bargaining ploy to induce the Americans to increase economic aid to the Philippines, in compensation for the stigma of hosting the bases. This view credits Manglapus with an unusual manipulative ability and the foresight to know that ASEAN would not be able to forge a consensus over the issue. The Philippine view credits Manglapus with no foresight or insight but with a good deal of opportunism. According to this view Manglapus simply gave way to the opportunity to create an impression at an international conference, to enhance his credentials on the international stage. Manglapus eventually found the views expressed at this conference in Singapore embarrassing when as Foreign Secretary he reverted to a position more critical of the American bases, which tends to support the Philippine interpretation of his behaviour.

Singapore's response to the Manglapus initiative was consonant with the expected behaviour of the smallest ASEAN member. Lee Kuan Yew was an outspoken supporter of the idea of collective ASEAN support for the American bases, though he was less concerned about the Soviet military presence in Cam Ranh Bay than he was about Japan. Singapore's Prime Minister thought it would be "disastrous" if the Japanese assumed a security role outside the context of the alliance relationship with the United States.⁷ Singapore's

⁷ *Straits Times*, 12 November 1987.

position was supported by Australia's Defence Minister Kim Beazley who in Bangkok called upon the ASEAN countries to express full support for the retention of the American bases.⁸ Beazley's concern, however, was directed towards the Soviet Union and Cam Ranh Bay which indicated a major difference between Australian and regional priorities. Nonetheless, the intention of both was to influence public opinion in the Philippines and to support the government against critics of the American bases. Lee Kuan Yew, however, well understood that a collective ASEAN statement over the American bases was unlikely given the position of Indonesia. His main audience was the United States as he wanted to place on record Singapore's interest in a continuing United States commitment to the region to show that Singapore, at least, was not indifferent to the fate of the American bases in the Philippines.

The anticipated opposition to the Manglapus initiative came from Indonesia. The then Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja insisted that the issue of the American bases was not the concern of ASEAN, but was a bilateral problem for Philippine-American relations. The Indonesian Foreign Ministry publicly adopted the formal view that ASEAN's position on the American bases had been expressed in the Bangkok declaration, that is, all foreign bases were temporary anyway.⁹ No matter how much the Indonesians privately sympathized with the position of the American bases as a pillar of regional security, they would not let private sympathy affect their public posture. The typically Javanese division between private feeling and public behaviour, a division shared by other East Asian cultures, prevented the Indonesian leadership from expressing public support for the initiative in a way which would contradict the orthodoxy of Indonesian non-alignment. Attempts by those of a Western cultural background to draw Indonesian private sympathy for the American bases into the public domain have met Indonesian denials. Indonesian opposition to the Manglapus initiative sealed its fate and prevented it from being raised at the 3rd ASEAN summit.

Suharto at that summit emphasized the need for ZOPFAN and the nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ), both which appeared in the summit communique. Mention of the American bases, however, did

⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 November 1987.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15 November 1987.

not appear in the final communique and it was denied that the issue was discussed by the Heads of Government. Reports circulated that the role of the American bases was raised in a confidential 28 page report drafted by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and submitted to the Heads of Government for discussion.¹⁰ A private meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government discussed the report which was essentially an overview of regional security, and which was eventually "leaked" to the *Manila Bulletin*.¹¹ The Indonesian distinction between private sentiment and public behaviour was extended to embrace the entire organization.

Thai and Malaysian reactions to the Manglapus initiative were not necessarily consonant with their known positions over the bases issue. Malaysian leaders had habitually stressed the ZOPFAN ideal and tended to avoid the issue of the American bases, a position that was promoted by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry. Nonetheless, support has been growing for the American bases from the military and the civilian strategists within Malaysia in a largely pragmatic context for foreign policy decision-making. Foreign policy involves fewer ideological values in Malaysia in comparison with Indonesia, nor is the distinction between private thought and public action so carefully upheld in Malaysia as amongst the Javanese. Prime Minister Mahathir in November 1987 indicated his support for the American bases declaring that they acted to balance the Soviet position in Cam Ranh Bay.¹² Mahathir, however, avoided commitment to the idea of an ASEAN statement over the bases which was a way of reconciling practical need with foreign policy orthodoxy. Thailand maintained a low posture over the issue and there was no announcement of support for Lee Kuan Yew's position. When Manglapus visited Bangkok in early November 1987, Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila stated that the role of the American bases should be discussed before the ASEAN summit.¹³ A Thai Foreign Ministry statement supported the retention of the bases as a countermeasure to the Soviet Union but otherwise there was no comment on the Manglapus initiative. Siddhi, however, did venture a further statement to the effect that ASEAN should study

10 *The Australian*, 19 December 1987.

11 *Manila Bulletin*, 17 December 1987.

12 *Asiaweek*, 20 November 1987.

13 *Bangkok Post*, 5 November 1987.

the matter before raising it at the 3rd ASEAN summit.¹⁴

The similarity of the Thai and Malaysian positions requires some explanation considering that Thailand's dependence upon American security support was markedly greater than Malaysia's. The Indonesians had already expressed their opposition to the Manglapus initiative by the time the Philippine Foreign Secretary visited Bangkok in early November. If there was a chance of obtaining a united ASEAN declaration over the American bases the Thai leadership would have supported the Manglapus initiative publicly. The Thais, however, had no intention of introducing another divisive element into ASEAN proceedings and felt compelled to defer to Indonesia over the matter. Moreover, Thailand's status as an American ally had been formalized in the Manila Pact of 1954 and the Thai leadership had a greater sense of confidence in the American commitment to their security than was the case with Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew went public over the issue before Indonesia expressed its opposition to the initiative, moreover, Singapore has no formal defence relationship with the United States and its need for American support is more intense than is the case with Thailand. In any case, Lee Kuan Yew eventually deferred to the Indonesian position before the third ASEAN summit and agreed that the bases issue was a bilateral one for the Philippines and the United States.

Since the Manglapus demarche there have been some adjustments of attitude amongst the ASEAN countries in response to a changing strategic environment. Concern over the future of the American bases amongst the most vulnerable ASEAN countries has been mitigated somewhat by the realization that the United States may resort to relocation options within the region in the event of a withdrawal. As long as the United States maintains a position of influence in the Western Pacific, and introduces a presence elsewhere in Southeast Asia besides the Philippines, ASEAN anxieties may indeed be ameliorated. Indonesian and also Malaysian interest in a continuing American military presence in the region has been heightened as a consequence of the China-Vietnam Spratly Islands clash on 14 March 1988. Malaysia has occupied three islands amongst the Spratlys which are claimed by the Chinese while Indonesia is sensitive to any move made by China in the region. It is highly

improbable that the Indonesians will alter their public position on the American bases, or will accept American facilities on their soil. The expansion of the existing defence relationship between Indonesia and the United States is likely and the number of bilateral ASEAN military exercises may increase. Moreover, there may be an attempt to expand defence cooperation amongst the ASEAN states but this, however, will prove to be a contentious issue.

Ultimately, the question posed in this paper is, would a United States withdrawal from the Philippines undermine regional security and ASEAN political cohesion? A second question is could ASEAN survive without the United States? The two questions demand different answers. This paper has tried to demonstrate that United States' support has been crucial for the evolution and development of ASEAN. Without the United States, some of the present members would have selected other alternatives besides regionalism for their own protection and it is doubtful whether ASEAN would have existed as we know it today. This paper has also attempted to show that the answer to the first question depends very much upon the future intentions of the United States. If the American leadership is determined to assert a role in the region and considers the relocation of some of the facilities amongst the ASEAN countries seriously, ASEAN may be insulated against the consequences of future great power rivalry in the Western Pacific. A United States, however, that disengages from the Philippines and reduces its role in the region on the basis of revised strategic priorities or economic difficulties would confront ASEAN members with new choices. In this case ASEAN would be placed upon the path of inevitable and ineluctable decline.

CHAPTER 5

US BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES: REDEPLOYMENT OPTIONS

David Hegarty*

Introduction

The mid-1988 deadlock in the US-Philippines bases renegotiations has apparently led the US to a serious consideration of redeployment options in the event that it no longer has access to Clark and Subic Bay. The US Pacific Command in Hawaii has reportedly been planning throughout the year for a dispersal of the functions performed by the Philippines bases to other parts of the Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific.¹ In September, Secretary of State Shultz, facing the prospect of a breakdown in negotiations and of longer-term pressure against an American presence in the Philippines, stated that: 'there are alternatives which we are now having to examine'.² Secretary for Defence, Carlucci, reportedly told the Philippines' negotiators that the US was prepared to close its bases unless the demands for rent and compensation (US\$1.2 billion) were reduced.³ According to the Pentagon, various base options had already been examined and had been found to be 'militarily and economically feasible'.⁴ While there are undoubtedly elements of posturing in these statements, there are also clear indications on the part of the US to contemplate moving out to fall-back positions.

An authoritative study prepared by Alva M. Bowen in 1986 for the US Congressional Research Service suggested that the US has three, not

* The author would like to thank Commander W.A.G. (Bill) Dovers, RAN, for his helpful comments on drafts of this chapter.

1 Michael Richardson, 'U.S. Weighs Plans to Relocate Its Bases in the Philippines', *International Herald Tribune*, 22 June 1988, p.1.

2 'U.S. May be priced out of Philippines bases', *The Denver Post*, 17 September 1988, p.H02.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

mutually exclusive, redeployment options available if the bases were closed.⁵ In brief these are:

- redeployment to existing US bases in Japan, Guam and Hawaii
- redeployment to an expanded base structure in Micronesia
- redeployment to new bases in countries around the South China Sea.

Comments made by senior American officials in recent months suggest that a further option can be added: dispersal of functions and facilities to the above bases as well as to selected Southeast Asian countries, most probably Singapore and Thailand.

The major assumption underlying these options is the continuance of US forward deployed defence policy in the Western Pacific. Deputy assistant secretary of defence, Karl D. Jackson, has recently reaffirmed that the US will continue to maintain a forward deployed military presence in the region.⁶

The Philippines bases have long been regarded as a vital element in America's Asia-Pacific strategy.⁷ Important functions which they perform include:

⁵ Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases: U.S. Redeployment Options*, (Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, Congressional Research Service, U.S. Library of Congress, 20 February 1986), pp.62. This section draws on Bowen's discussion of redeployment options. See also Alva M. Bowen (Jr), 'U.S. Facilities in the Philippines', in Fred Greene (ed.), *The Philippines Bases: Negotiating for the Future*, (Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1988), pp.105-129.

⁶ US Information Service (USIS), East Asia and Pacific, *Wireless File*, 168, 31 August 1988, p.9.

⁷ Admiral Robert L.J. Long, *Statement to United States-Philippines Relations and the New Base and Aid Agreement*, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-eighth Congress, First Session, 17, 23 and 28 June 1983, pp.2-12; and Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, pp.3-12.

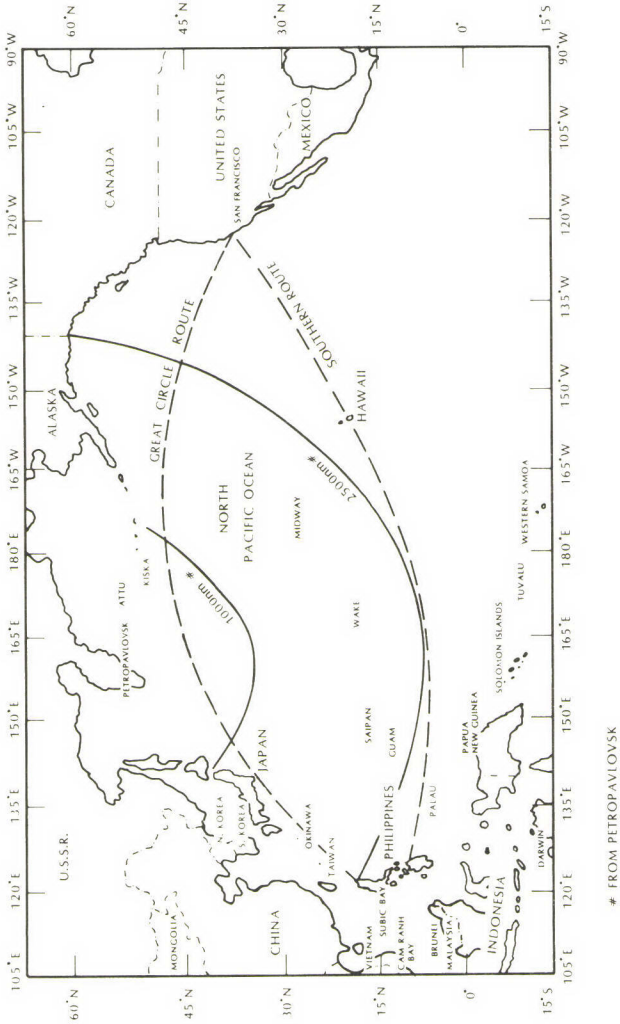
- the provision of a continuous air and naval presence in the Western Pacific
- the capacity to extend US military power into the Indian Ocean
- the provision of comprehensive support for all operating forces in the Western Pacific (including communications, logistics, maintenance and training) and the storage of major war reserve materiel
- the support of US operations in Southeast Asia (including power projection when deemed necessary, protection of the trans-Pacific and Western Pacific sea lanes, and, in wartime, the suppression of Soviet aircraft and submarines and the cutting of Soviet supply lines to Vietnam)
- the support of operations in Northeast Asia (including defence of sea-lanes, providing a 'stepping stone' for the long US-Asia southern route if the 'great circle' route is unsafe, and providing a back-up structure removed from the Northeast Asian combat zone). (See Figure 1.)
- the support of operations in the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf (including keeping sea lanes open and airlift to Diego Garcia and denying Soviet supply lines to the Gulf via the Pacific in times of conflict).

Bowen, along with other writers, concludes that because of their favourable location and inexpensive work-force, the bases cannot easily be duplicated elsewhere. Despite the many drawbacks, however, redeployment is possible. The functions performed by the bases can be relocated, but at considerable financial cost and at varying losses in operational efficiency.

Option 1: Redeployment to Existing US Bases in Japan, Guam and Hawaii

The relocation of Subic's fleet maintenance capacity to Yokosuka, Japan, plus the transfer of some maintenance to Pearl Harbour, is feasible, as is

FIGURE 1
GREAT CIRCLE AND SOUTHERN ROUTES - US WEST COAST TO EAST ASIA



Source: Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, p.11.

the relocation of Clark's tactical fighter wing and tactical airlift wing (perhaps to Guam). But air base expansion at Guam would be necessary, and the relevance of the type of force for the mission required would need to be reconsidered; for example, the shift of the fighter wing to Guam would remove it from its areas of both primary and secondary missions.

Geographic relocation would complicate the US's ability to carry out its functions in the three main operational areas, particularly in Southeast Asia. Because Japan and Guam are further than the Philippines from Southeast Asia, force requirements to perform the same tasks in that area would be higher. Time on station of naval and air forces operating 1,500 to 2,000 miles further from bases would be reduced by 15-20 per cent. (See Table I.)

TABLE I

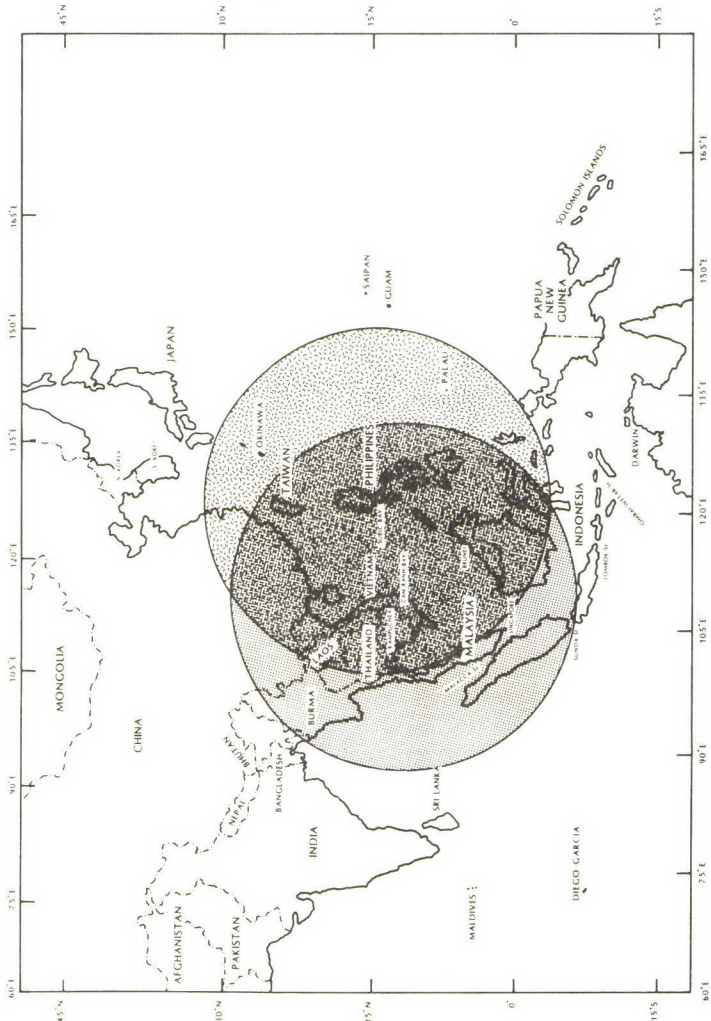
Distance Base-operating area nautical miles	Roundtrip transit time 15 knots days	On Station days, 60-day cycle (assumes 10 days at base) days	On Station time as a percentage total cycle time	No. carrier task groups required for two on station
1000	5.5	44.6	74	3
2000	11.1	38.9	61	3
3000	16.6	33.4	56	4
4000	22.2	27.8	46	5
5000	29.6	20.4	34	6

This table shows that increasing distance from the base to operating area increases force requirements because on-station time decreases as a percentage of total cycle time.

Source: Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, p.17.

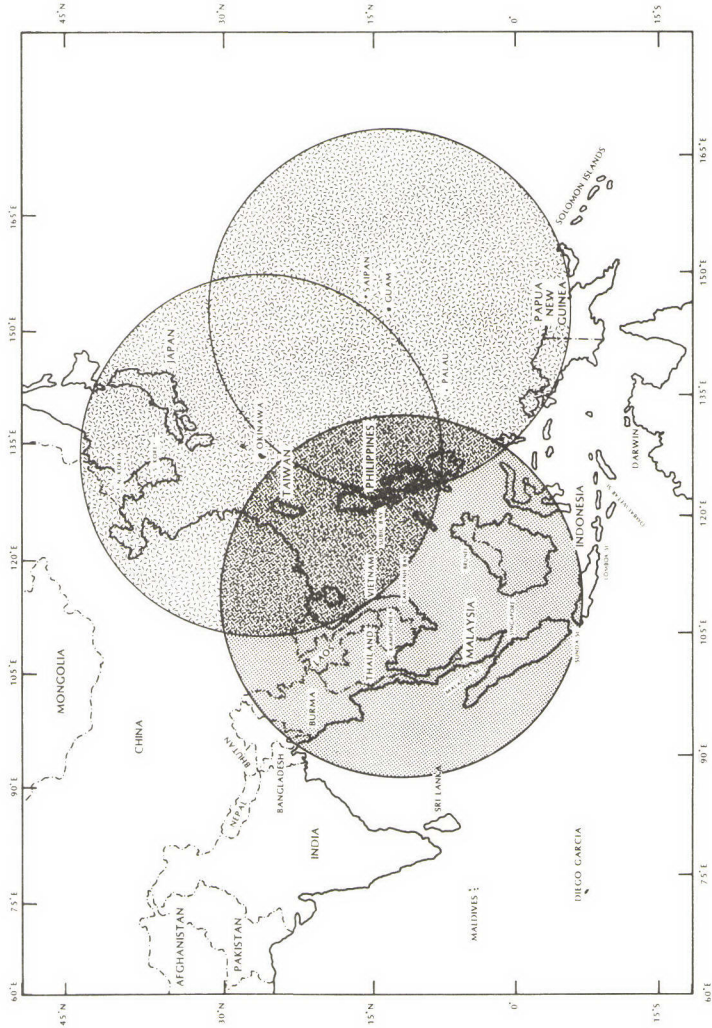
Similarly, as Figures 2 and 3 show, the region of overlap where equal capability forces (of the US and the Soviet Union) could operate on more-or-less equal terms moves northwards when US forces relocate to Guam and Okinawa. Such relocation could provide a more favourable operating area for Soviet forces in the vicinity of the key straits of Southeast Asia. A move away from Clark to other air bases would seriously reduce airlift payloads to Diego Garcia and require a 'stepping stone' *en route*.

FIGURE 2
OVERLAP OF EQUAL RADIUS OPERATING ZONES CENTRED ON
SUBIC AND CAM RANH BAYS
(1200 nm circles)



Source: Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, p.9.

FIGURE 3
OVERLAP OF EQUAL RADIUS OPERATING ZONES CENTRED AT CAM RANH BAY, GUAM AND OKINAWA



Source: Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, p.19.

Bowen estimates that Option 1 would require, in peacetime, one or two additional carrier battle groups to perform the tasks previously carried out from the bases. In wartime, the requirement would be three or four additional battle groups. If the Soviet Union gained access to the bases and retained Vietnam, then five or six groups could be required. According to Bowen, appropriations of \$60 billion (plus) would be necessary to finance such a force increase. Construction costs for Option 1 would not be prohibitive, although operations and maintenance costs would be high. The major domestic (i.e. within the US) political problems likely to arise would be those over appropriations for force expansion. International problems are likely to arise specifically over Japan's caveats on nuclear weapons.

Option 2: Redeployment to an Expanded US Base Structure in Micronesia

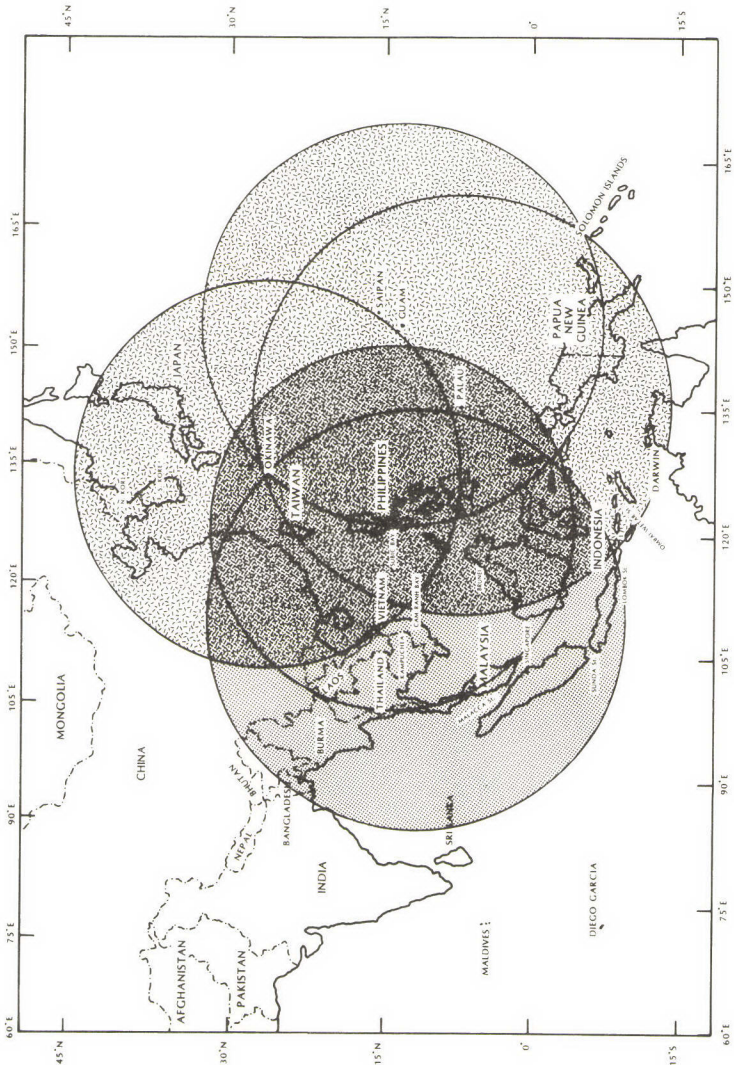
This option coincides with what has been described by US officials in the past as 'the secondary arc of defence' which in the fall-back process links Guam, Saipan, Tinian and Palau. The existing Naval and Air Force bases at Guam would have to be enlarged and the base structure would then be expanded to Saipan and Tinian in the Northern Marianas. In addition this option would require a new naval facility, including an air station, to be developed on Palau.

This development would alleviate base overcrowding and, as Figure 4 shows, would enable US forces to contest sea and air routes through the Indonesian Straits and east of the Philippines more effectively than would Option 1 redeployments. But construction costs would be high, Guam harbour would require dredging to accommodate carriers and labour would have to be imported.

Support of the major functions outlined earlier could still be carried out and a smaller force increase than that required by Option 1 would mean lower costs. In 1983 Admiral Long, then the Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Fleet, estimated that 'about \$2-3 billion would be required to construct facilities at alternate locations', but that additional ships and aircraft would be required.⁸

⁸ Admiral Robert L.J. Long, 'Statement ...', p.16.

FIGURE 4
OVERLAP OF EQUAL RADIUS OPERATING ZONES CENTRED AT CAM RANH AND SUBIC BAYS AND AT GUAM, OKINAWA AND PALAU



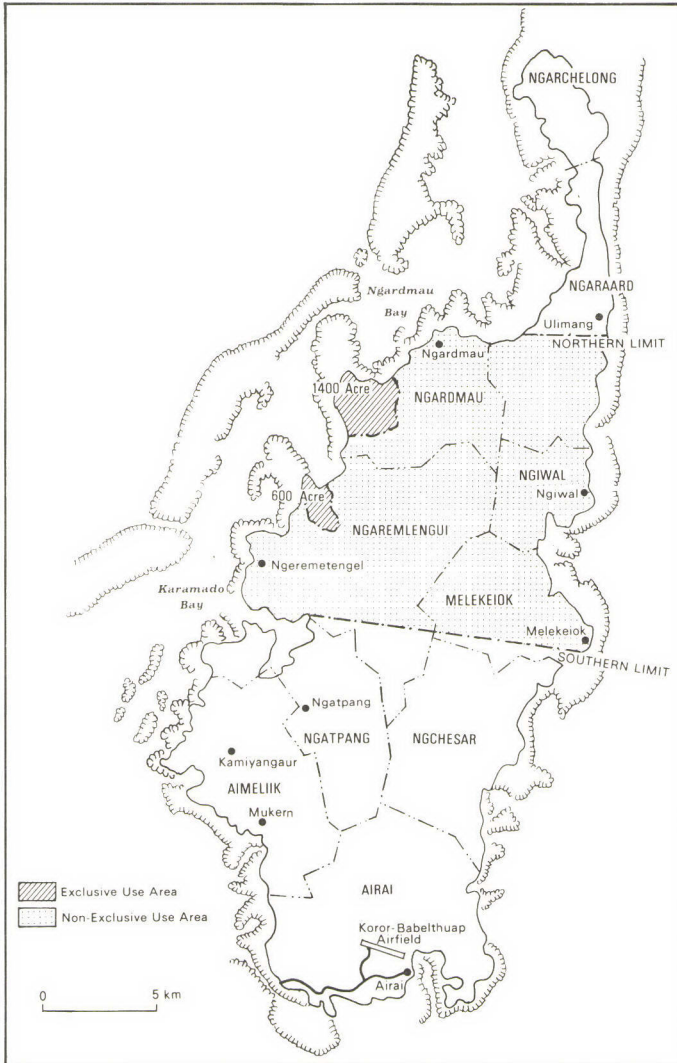
Source: Alva M. Bowen, *Philippine Bases*, p.27.

The prominence given to Palau in Option 2 - presumably because of its geographical location and the fact that it has a harbour capable of accommodating a carrier group - is interesting. Factionalised domestic politics, anti-nuclear sentiment and possibly anti-base feeling which have delayed the adoption of the Compact of Free Association would seem to make the construction of a large US base in Palau politically unacceptable, at least in the short term. Under the Compact of Free Association, the mechanism by which the US is terminating its strategic trusteeship over the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the US remains responsible for the defence of Palau. The US has reserved rights to considerable land and defence related assets for military training and 'contingency' purposes, but according to a senior State Department official the US has no plans for a base.⁹ (See Figure 5.) Further the US has agreed, under subsidiary arrangements to the Compact, not to 'use, test, store or dispose of' nuclear or other specified weapons in Palau. Studies in progress at RAND and elsewhere apparently indicate that Palau is a long way down the list of options. Clearly, however, the US puts a strategic value on access to Palau. Certainly the US wants to deny access to adversaries. The Soviet Union, for its part, recognising the strategic relevance of Palau and seeking to complicate American diplomacy in the Pacific islands, has sought to make an issue of the Compact agreement and its defence provisions in debates at the United Nations.

Under the Compact agreements the US also remains responsible for the defence of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands. Despite the substantial US missile testing facilities on Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands, neither of these new states has been mentioned publicly as a fall-back option. Distance and small size counts against their utility for basing purposes.

⁹ James D. Berg, *The Political Future of Palau and Nuclear Issues: Myth and Reality*, Director, Office of Freely Associated State Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Press Release issued through American Consulate General, Sydney, January 27, 1988, p.5. See also James D. Berg, 'Why US will not target Palau as military base', *The Australian*, March 15, 1988, p.6.

FIGURE 5
US RESERVED DEFENCE SITES ON
BABELTHUAP ISLAND, PALAU



Source: Documents on the Compact of Free Association, Defense Provisions, Annex B.

Option 3: New Bases on the South China Sea

Since some key US operations in the South China Sea area would be jeopardised by redeployment to sites under Options 1 and 2, alternative sites, such as Taiwan, the southern Chinese mainland, or Singapore, might relieve that disadvantage. New sites in this area would allow operational efficiency to be maintained although Singapore would have less secure lines of communication to the US, but base relocation and base rental costs would be higher than under Options 1 and 2. (Labour costs may be lower.) The major impediment, however, would be political. Most regional states would be reluctant to host a large US base, and even were they to do so the US would have to face the problems of dealing with a 'host nation'.

Preferred Option?

The preferred option for the US is not known. Official studies of fall-back positions have not been made public.¹⁰ Some posturing has gone on prior to and during the renegotiations with the Philippines government and recent statements have to be treated with some caution. But there appears to be a readiness in official US thinking to move out. Admiral David E. Jeremiah, Commander of the US Pacific Fleet, said recently that alternatives to Clark and Subic would be examined if President Aquino's price was too high 'I think we'd probably examine primarily those assets that are available already - places like Guam', the admiral said. He also referred to Japan and nations in Southeast Asia 'which have port facilities and the ability to provide some repair and some support' and could provide substitutes for U.S. bases "in a distributed way" (emphasis added).¹¹ Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense, Karl Jackson (cited

¹⁰ Robert G. Sutter, *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands: Issues for U.S. Policy*, (Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, Congressional Research Service, U.S. Library of Congress, Updated 13 July 1987), refers to studies in the Department of Defense; Alva M. Bowen (Jr.), 'U.S. Facilities in the Philippines', refers to a classified report by the US Department of Defense submitted to Congress in the spring of 1986 addressing potential redeployment sites and military construction programs (p.126-7).

¹¹ Sam Jameson, 'Admiral Says U.S. Might Move Bases in

earlier), has said that first on the list of fall-back positions under consideration were Guam, Saipan and Tinian.¹² Substantially reduced estimates of the costs of relocation have been released by the US administration. Defense Secretary Carlucci has told the Philippines Foreign Minister, Manglapus, that it would cost US\$2.5 billion to relocate the bases with annual operating costs of US\$590 million.¹³ Conservative commentators, perhaps reflecting the mood of the administration, have begun to question the strategic relevance of Clark and Subic Bay.¹⁴ Others are using the language of 'burden sharing', perhaps signalling Asian allies of the need for a collective security responsibility.

South Pacific Implications

If it comes to the point where the US loses access to its Philippines facilities and chooses the 'dispersal option' for redeployment, the implications for the ASEAN states and for Australia would be considerable (see Les Buszynski, Chapter 4, and Ross Babbage, Chapter 6) The strategic relevance of the South Pacific islands region would also increase, although not to the same extent.

The South Pacific contains a number of suitable deepwater harbours and a relatively inexpensive but largely unskilled workforce. But potential base sites in the South Pacific are too remote from likely theatres of operations. Their geo-strategic location makes them marginal to the basic thrust of US strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

The US, however, is likely to step up its naval and military visibility in the region. Currently the US has a small but regular 'flag-flying' ship visits program to most islands. Occasionally 'Seebees' have been employed in relief operations. The US is likely to seek greater access to and use of South Pacific ports, for example Fiji which offers scope for refuelling, resupply and 'R and R' It may seek further cooperation with

Philippines to Guam', *Los Angeles Times*, 10 April 1988, Part I, p.5. See also 'U.S. Prepared to Quit Philippines', *The Australian*, 11 April, 1988, p.4.

12 USIS, *Wireless File*, 168, 31 August 1988, p.9.

13 'U.S. Cool on Soviets' Naval Base Offer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1988, p.15.

14 See for example James Fallows, 'The Philippines - the Bases Dilemma', *The Atlantic*, (Vol.261, No.2), February 1988, pp.18-30.

France and increase naval calls at Tahiti and Noumea. The US may also upgrade port facilities in its territory of American Samoa.

Perhaps equally as likely is a revival of US interest in the naval facilities on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. During the latter stages of World War II Manus assumed considerable strategic importance in the allied offensive against Japan. In 1944 Seeadler Harbour provided anchorages for over 200 ships, 1 million or more troops were deployed through the island and reputedly Manus rivalled Pearl Harbour as a major naval base.¹⁵

Following PNG's independence, the Manus facilities were allowed to run down, but Australia, under its Defence Cooperation Program, has recently spent over \$1 million upgrading the (Lombrum) base. An Australian patrol boat is to be more or less permanently stationed there and more frequent visits by Australian, US and possibly Indonesian naval vessels are anticipated. The US is likely to continue to press the governments of PNG and Australia to maintain naval facilities there. Nevertheless, while of importance to PNG's and Australia's defence, Manus is still too far south to be a viable US base option.

In sum, while the US is likely to adopt a higher profile in the South Pacific in the event of it losing access to Clark and Subic Bay, it is unlikely to spend large amounts of money developing bases in islands regarded as too distant, or on territory over which it has no control or jurisdiction.

15

G. Herman Gill, *Royal Australian Navy, 1942-1945*, (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1968), pp.379-80.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

Ross Babbage

One of Australia's central interests in the Philippines-United States military bases negotiations is that the United States remain committed politically, economically and militarily in the northern approaches to Australia. A military withdrawal from the archipelago immediately adjacent to the Southeast Asian land mass would raise questions about the future United States military capacity and inclination to become involved in a range of contingencies in this region.

A withdrawal from the Philippines to Palau, Guam or to more distant locations would clearly take United States military capability further 'over the horizon'. In pure military terms it would make a substantial difference. Land-based tactical airpower would be taken well beyond unrefuelled range of Vietnam and the Malacca Straits. Even with extensive aerial tanker support, land-based tactical airpower could only operate in the heart of the region with reduced combat loads, shorter times on station and with much lower sortie rates. Aircraft carriers and other surface vessels would be an additional day's fast steaming from the heart of the region at Palau and two days away at Guam. Effective United States military capability in the region, and the timeliness with which it could be deployed, would fall. This decline in the absolute and relative military position of the United States would probably translate itself into a reduced United States military presence in Southeast Asia in peacetime, and probably a greater cautiousness in committing forces for operations there. These trends would be seen in Canberra as a net loss for Australian and general western security interests.

In a broader sense, Australia has a strong interest in the maintenance of amicable and cooperative relations between the United States and the Philippines. While it is important for Australia that the United States bases remain in the Philippines, Australia also has a very strong interest in the maintenance of a stable pro-western government in

Manila. This suggests that to the extent that the bases may be a stumbling block to the achievement of a strong, resilient and unified pro-western Philippine Republic, it may be in Australia's interests to encourage the United States to make substantial concessions. If Philippine accounts of the United States approach to base issues are to be even half believed it would seem that a thorough overhaul of United States respect for Philippine sovereign rights and law is long overdue.

While some may be tempted to believe that ejection of the US bases would improve the prospects for a strong, stable pro-western Philippine Republic, I suspect that the considered view in Canberra would be the reverse. Loss of the bases would not only remove a major pillar of the Philippine economy, it would also probably reduce the inclination of the next United States president and the Congress to appropriate disproportionately generous aid funds to Manila. In addition, a US withdrawal could deliver a severe psychological blow to the pro-western democratic forces within the Philippines.

A further dimension of Australian concern arising from a United States withdrawal involves Australia's strong national interest in the United States maintaining a clear margin of political and military superiority over the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia. A United States military withdrawal from the Philippines would affect this balance significantly.

I note here that there has been a tendency by some Australians in recent years to 'write off' the Soviet military presence at Cam Ranh Bay as the sort of capability that could speedily be demolished in any major war.¹ This type of thinking I consider inappropriate on two grounds.

First, I do not discount the possibility that Soviet ships and submarines would surge to sea in a period of warning prior to a major war and that the Soviet Bear, Badger and Flogger aircraft currently at Cam Ranh Bay would disperse under the protection of Vietnam's formidable air defence network. So while it may be possible for the United States to reduce most of Cam Ranh Bay to smouldering ashes in the first hours of a major war, this would not necessarily remove the threat posed by the forces currently stationed there.

¹ Some sense of this is provided in *The Defence of Australia 1987* (A White Paper presented to Parliament by the Minister for Defence, the Hon. Kim C. Beazley, MP, March 1987), paragraph 2.32.

A second point is that a United States withdrawal from the Philippines would almost certainly alter the perceptions of ASEAN and other local states concerning the regional US-Soviet balance and trends in the balance. A similar, and possibly even more serious, situation to that of the late 1970s could arise. The perception would probably be strong in ASEAN that the United States was a spent power withdrawing from the region. Against the background of the relative decline of United States economic and conventional military strength since the Second World War, withdrawal from the Philippine bases could be seen as part of a long-term continuum, necessitating a review of established policy stances. Some regional countries may perceive a stronger incentive to come to terms with Soviet and, to a lesser extent, Chinese influence in the region and this could generate movement on many diplomatic stances, and possibly even central regional issues, such as Kampuchea. Some of the ASEAN countries would probably feel more insecure and exposed, not only to Soviet pressure but also to military and political coercion from their immediate neighbours. In such circumstances they may feel compelled to expand substantially their national defence programs. In general, the type of policy reassessments and redirections that might flow from a United States withdrawal from the Philippines would probably not be favourable to western interests in the region and could be of considerable concern to Australian policy makers.

One possible, but less likely, turn of events would be for a United States under pressure in the Philippines to be able to negotiate with Moscow a mutual withdrawal from the region. Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev first raised this possibility in his 28 July 1986 Vladivostok speech and then repeated it with some emphasis in his Krasnoyarsk speech of 16 September 1988.² An arms control solution of this sort

² Gorbachev mentioned this matter in very ambiguous terms during his Vladivostok speech as follows:

And in general I should like to say that if the USA were to renounce a military presence, say in the Philippines, we should not be found wanting in a response.

Ramesh Thakur and Carlyle A. Thayer (eds.), *The Soviet Union as an Asian Pacific Power: Implications of Gorbachev's 1986 Vladivostok Initiative*, (Macmillan Australia, South Melbourne, 1987), p.224.

would reduce the prospect for Soviet gain from an American withdrawal but would probably still generate an enhanced sense of insecurity in ASEAN because of what they would perceive as their increased exposure to local regional pressures. In circumstances such as these, Australia's security contribution and assurances could be of disproportionate value.

One further dimension of Australia's interests in the outcome of the negotiations is the impact on Australian domestic perceptions. The image of the United States as a declining power and one withdrawing from Southeast Asia could be expected to gain some currency in Australia and would probably stimulate many to raise anew doubts about the value and desirability of Australia's security connections with the United States. The response of the Australian public on this issue is, however, not entirely predictable. The public opinion poll evidence of recent years suggests that if a United States withdrawal from the Philippines makes Australians feel more vulnerable, they are likely to cling more tightly to ANZUS, and Australian public opinion supporting ANZUS could surge above its average of about 75 per cent.³ A general public cuddling up to the ANZUS security blanket could have important consequences for any Australian government consideration of hosting some United States facilities relocated from the Philippines.

Implication for Australian Near-Term Policy and Activity

There seem to be a number of Australian policy and activity initiatives worth considering now and as the negotiations proceed. Some

Gorbachev was much more forthright at Krasnoyarsk. If the United States agree to the elimination of military bases in the Philippines, the Soviet Union will be ready, by agreement with the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to give up the fleet's materiel and technical supply station in Cam Ranh Bay. M.S. Gorbachev, *On the Soviet Policies in the Asia Pacific Region*, (Official text from the speech in Krasnoyarsk on 16 September 1988), p.5.

³ This argument is elaborated in David Campbell, *Australian Public Opinion on National Security Issues*, (Working Paper No.I, Peace Research Centre, The Australian National University, April 1986), pp.22-23.

of these have already been considered and acted upon, but I will try to mention many of the possibilities regardless.

An obvious issue here is how best to express Australia's concerns in Manila. Normal diplomatic contacts and ministerial visits obviously have a role and have already been used. However, as the decision-making process on the bases issue is likely to involve important actors beyond the Philippine administration, in particular the Philippine Senate, a more far ranging and creative strategy may be required.

Australia also has a strong interest in making its views clear to the other ASEAN countries, both publicly and privately. This was obviously one of the objectives of Kim Beazley's visit to the region in November 1987. On the eve of the ASEAN summit meeting in Manila he was quoted as saying:

The Australian view is that we would be very disturbed if the American bases were to be removed from the Philippines. They are very useful from our point of view. We have the very strong view that these bases should remain.⁴

Australian views are undoubtedly being expressed clearly and in detail not only to appraise the ASEAN states of our interests, but also in the hope that some of the arguments Australia presents will be reflected in broader ASEAN discussions of the bases issue.

Another dimension of Australia's near-term approach could be to work to reassure the ASEANs about the west's continuing security interests in the region. Diplomacy would play an important role here but so could increased cooperative defence activity. It is notable in this context that in November 1987 Mr Beazley announced the semi-permanent deployment of an RAN frigate to Malaysia-Singapore and was at pains to emphasise that even after withdrawal of the last Mirage squadron from Butterworth, a P-3 Orion detachment, 120 aircraft support personnel and 130 soldiers would remain at the base.⁵ In addition F-111s and F-18s would operate there for about a third of each year (16 weeks) and in the

4 Bruce Loudon, 'Beazley Drums up Support for US Bases', *The Australian*, 19 November 1987, p.7.

5 Cameron Forbes 'Aseans Reassured by Pledge on Air Defence, says Beazley', *The Age*, 24 November 1987, p.7.

event of a contingency F-18s could deploy from Tindal to Butterworth in less than four hours.

An even more interesting element of this equation is the extent to which Beazley was prepared to go to underpin Australia's commitment to regional security. When asked at a press conference whether Australia's extensive military involvement in the region led to the risk of the country being caught up in events it would prefer to avoid, Mr Beazley reportedly said:

When you make a decision to get involved in the way in which we have - air defence problems, maritime problems - you take your lumps, basically.⁶

Mr Beazley appeared to be going out of his way to reassure the ASEANs, especially Malaysia and Singapore, and I suspect that this statement is the most forthcoming public expression by an Australian minister on this issue since at least the early 1970s.

A further near-term policy avenue for Australia could be to work more actively to facilitate the flow of economic assistance to Manila, as part of a broader strategy of encouraging favourable trends in the Philippines economic-security situation. The scope for substantial growth in Australia's direct aid may be limited given current economic circumstances, but Australia may be able to influence US congressional considerations, encourage sensitive and generous Japanese contributions and influence the approach of various multilateral and multi-national banks, agencies and corporations.

Implications for Australia of a United States Withdrawal from the Bases

In attempting to address the direct implications for Australia of a United States withdrawal it should be noted that a great deal would depend upon its details. There are many possible shades of gray here.

Would all the facilities go or only some? When would they go and where to? If they went, would the US retain staging access? If so, for what types of forces in what circumstances? If there were no staging access for

6 *Ibid.*

the US, would it be provided to others? What about access by the other ASEAN States, by Australia or even the Soviet Union? In the absence of answers to these and numerous other related questions it is very difficult to define in any but a general sense some of the implications for Australia.

One possibility is that the United States might seek to relocate selected facilities in Australia. It is most unlikely, in my view, that the United States would seek to base major fleet or air elements in Australia, basically because of its poor location, relatively high cost and (from the United States viewpoint) the country's doubtful long term political commitment to such cooperation. However, some training facilities and possibly specialist intelligence facilities that have particular environmental requirements could be very difficult to relocate elsewhere.

A more likely prospect would be for the United States to seek expanded access to Australian facilities for staging units to and from the Indian Ocean. The movement of US facilities to Micronesia or further north would necessitate reliable, high quality staging facilities on the route to the Indian Ocean. I suspect that these may not be readily available elsewhere in ASEAN on the scale required and Australia could be asked to assist.

A further complication of basing options in Micronesia, Taiwan, or dispersed elsewhere in ASEAN would be the shortage of land and air space for routine large scale exercises. Australia would offer many advantages for the US in this field.

More broadly, the weakened United States position in the region could encourage Washington to press Canberra to carry more of the regional security burden for the west and possibly to provide, on a more routine basis, operational support for US forces in the area.

Many serious policy issues could be raised in this context. It would be important to remember that while Australia does share many regional security interests with the United States, our perceptions do not always coincide, nor would we wish them to be seen to do so.

A major policy debate could develop in Australia about how deeply the country should be engaged in Southeast Asia to reinforce Australia's own and the general western interests. Some would argue that Australia's limited security resources should be focussed in the country's more immediate surrounds. Others would probably argue for a new form of 'forward defence' strategy committing the country very closely to the

external security of ASEAN. Points worth noting here are that Australia's budgetary and other security resources are already under strain and this suggests a continuing need to define security priorities very carefully.

I suspect that were US forces to leave the Philippines, Australia would adopt a more active approach in support of western interests in Southeast Asia but this would be carefully measured. On the defence side, there could be more visits by Australian military units, more combined exercises and possibly elements of Australia's defence cooperation program with some of the ASEAN countries could be revitalised.

Some Political and Strategic Sensitivities

In conclusion, it may be worth highlighting briefly a few sensitivities likely to emerge from Australian policy consideration of any relocation of the US bases in the Philippines.

First, there is an obvious need to work hard on Australia's relations with the ASEAN countries, but it is important to remember that Australia's political, economic and military influence in the region is quite different to that of thirty years ago. Australia's diplomatic approach will need to be modified with great sensitivity as the negotiations proceed and the mood in Manila, and more generally in the region, changes.

Second, there is a danger of policy makers losing a clear sense of national priorities and inducing overstretch. Australia does have strong strategic and political interests at stake in Southeast Asia but the nation's resources are finite. The security and political prospects for the South Pacific and PNG are likely to be at least as troubling for Australia in the 1990s. Policy priorities will need to be balanced carefully.

Third, there may be a tendency by some to wish to redesign the Australian Defence Force specifically to support broad western interests in Southeast Asia and further afield. My view on this is clear. The prime thrust in Defence Force design and development should continue to be the defence of Australia itself. Nevertheless, this does not prevent the government from using the defence units so created in forward theatres to support broad diplomatic and political objectives as may be judged expedient.

Fourth, a departure of US forces from the Philippines could provide new opportunities for increasing the United States strategic interests in Australia. International strategic issues would need to be weighed carefully against local political concerns in this area.

A final key area of sensitivity relates to the broader range of domestic political issues that could arise from a relocation of the US bases. Most obviously, there would be domestic concerns about hosting additional United States installations in Australia. Similar concerns could be expressed about increased US staging through Australian facilities and more active and routine Australian military support for US forces in the region. Further domestic sensitivities could arise from more active Australian political and military support for ASEAN regimes, some of which are viewed with distaste by significant segments of the Australian population.

The strategic and political consequences for Australia of the negotiations over the US bases in the Philippines are clearly substantial and important. Nevertheless the medium- to long- term net consequences for Australia need not be unfavourable. Australia's policy makers have the task ahead of them to ensure that this proves to be the case.

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The United States maintains in the Philippines its most significant military presence - in terms of bases, facilities, forces and capabilities - in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific region. The bases are designed to support US military operations not just in this region but also in Northeast Asia and throughout the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf region.

The Military Bases Agreement (MBA) between the United States and the Philippines expires in September 1991. There is a very real possibility that the Agreement will not be renewed and that the US will have to vacate the bases and dismantle the facilities.

This monograph is intended to provide a basis for informed discussion of issues involved in the presence of the US bases and facilities in the Philippines and their possible closure and relocation elsewhere in the region.

It includes discussions of the general political relationship between the United States and the Philippines; the current Philippine domestic political issues; the attitudes of the ASEAN countries; the various redeployment options available to the United States in the region; and the strategic and political implications of the bases issue for Australia.

