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Quezon, Osmeña and Roxas and the American Military Presence in the Philippines

BONIFACIO S. SALAMANCA

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The second president of the Philippine Commonwealth, Sergio Osmeña, Sr., considered the contemplated presence of United States military bases in the Philippines as having established a "special relationship" between the two countries.¹ His successor and last president of the Commonwealth—Manuel A. Roxas—even before his election as president, went so far as to say that the "existence of such bases" would not be a "limiting factor" in Philippine independence,² that is to say, there would be no impairment of Philippine sovereignty.

We should, of course, not marvel that Osmeña and Roxas held such now seemingly unpatriotic views. Together in 1933 they had obtained from the United States the Hare-Hawes-Cutting (HHC) Law, after years of hard campaigning, which provided for the retention by the United States of its military bases and naval reservations in the Philippines after the withdrawal of American sovereignty.³

What is strange, however, is the view, evidently still widely held, that Manuel L. Quezon, the first and undoubtedly the most dominant

Research for this paper in the United States in February-March 1988 was made possible by grants from the Asia Foundation, through the Philippine Council for Foreign Relations, and the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City.

1. Sergio Osmeña to Franklin D. Roosevelt, 10 April 1945 and Osmeña to Harry S. Truman, 8 November 1945. Papers of Harry S. Truman, President's Secretary's [Ann Whitman] File, Box 185, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, U.S.A.

2. Commander F. L. Worcester, "Memorandum to 7th Fleet Intelligence Officer," 21 April 1945, being the record of an interrogation of Roxas shortly after rejoining Gen. MacArthur's staff, and appended to Worcester's "special report" to High Commissioner McNutt on Roxas in 1946. See the American Consul-General (in Manila) to the Secretary of State, 24 January 1946, in Record Group 84 (Dept. of State, Post Records), Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland. Worcester was an assistant to McNutt in 1946.

3. Theodore Friend, *Between Two Empires: The Ordeal of the Philippines, 1929-1946* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965) and Bernardita Reyes Churchill, *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States, 1919-1934* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983).

of the triumvirate of Commonwealth presidents, did not favor the establishment of American military (including naval) bases in the Philippines after 1946. Carlos Quirino, a well-known biographer, journalist and historian, recently wrote: "Manuel L. Quezon . . . opposed the granting of military and naval bases to the United States when, as Senate President, he resisted the approval of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting bill."⁴ The Quezon mission to Washington of which Elpidio Quirino was a member, made efforts to obtain a "better" replacement for the doomed HHC bill.⁵ Carlos Quirino went on to inform his readers that:

President Manuel A. Roxas in 1947 approved the grant of American Bases in the Philippines, but his Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Elpidio Quirino, following the stance of Quezon, tried hard to reduce the number of places sought by the Americans . . . The Vice-President made sure that such lands were not owned, but only leased for a specific period.⁶

That Quezon's "stance" was not just one of "reducing" the number of American bases is unmistakably conveyed by the title of Quirino's piece: "Quezon vs. U.S. Bases."

This is clearly a very generous view of Quezon and Quirino, but hardly flattering to Roxas. There is no mention of Osmeña at all, despite documentary evidence which suggest that he played a key role—and, in retrospect, perhaps, a damaging one at that—in the evolution of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) when he was briefly the president of the Philippine Commonwealth-in-Exile.

The main purpose of this article is to document the metamorphosis in Quezon's stance towards American military bases in the Philippines. This was also the Philippine Commonwealth's stance, since in more ways than one what Quezon said or did was also the Commonwealth view.⁷ This metamorphosis was subsequently reflected in the policies of his successors in the documents and discussions they entered into and held with American leaders. This article is an inquiry, albeit a brief one, into the Commonwealth origins of the Military Bases Agreement of 1947.

As in most endeavors to revisit the background of a document whose history over the past forty years has had more than its share

4. Carlos Quirino, "Quezon vs. U.S. Bases," *Sunday Inquirer Magazine*, 14 August 1988, p. 15.

5. This episode is brilliantly retold in Friend, *Between Two Empires*.

6. Quirino, "Quezon vs. U.S. Bases," p. 15. Emphases added.

7. Quezon's near-absolute dominance of policy-making during the Commonwealth Period is refreshingly treated at length in Aruna Gopinath, *Manuel L. Quezon: The Tutelary Democrat* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987).

of controversy involving the leading personalities and intellectuals in and outside government during that period there must be, unavoidably, a correction of views or conclusions, some highly attractive and perhaps even valid at the time of their espousal, but now untenable in light of new information that has become available to scholars.

Is there merit in the first place, revisiting the Commonwealth background (1935-46) of the MBA, since a broad consensus now seems to have emerged, especially among academics,⁸ that the MBA has not been that beneficial to the Philippines? Is it worth one's effort and time?

I submit that it is if only to correct certain views, like those expressed by Prof. Quirino. I believe, more importantly, that a study of the MBA's origins is something that needs to be carefully examined as an aspect of the larger universe of Philippine-American relations. This is relevant, I think, regardless of the fate of the MBA. The exercise is something that historians, diplomatic historians in particular, delight in undertaking, especially when new documentary sources become available as in the present case.⁹

P R E S I D E N T Q U E Z O N ' S S T A N C E

At the risk of belaboring the point, let us restate Pres. Quezon's, and the Commonwealth's, original stance on the U.S. military bases. If we consider his position vis-a-vis the HHC Act as starting point, it was against all U.S. military and naval installations in the Philippines. Although perceptive students of Philippine politics have long since believed that the bases provision in the HHC Act was *not* the principal reason behind Quezon's vehement objection and the Philippine Legislature's,¹⁰ I will assume with Quezon's partisans that it was. Quezon, however, would shortly thereafter modify his original position on the matter.

8. An earlier version of this paper was read at the Conference on Philippine History and Culture, held under the auspices of the Jorge B. Vargas Foundation and Museum of the University of the Philippines, at the Conference Hall, Faculty Center, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City, on 22-24 August 1988.

9. The author spent almost two months of research in 1988 (February and March) at several American depositories in the course of which he gathered documents on the U.S. military facilities in the Philippines, some of which had to be declassified upon his request under the Freedom of Information Act.

10. This view appears in almost any book on Philippine politics and political history, among others, J. Ralston Hayden, *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), Friend, *Between Two Empires*, and my colleague Dr. Churchill's later work on *The Philippine Independence Missions to the United States 1919-1934*. See, also Gopinath, *Manuel L. Quezon*, especially chapter 1.

Quezon's original position is better comprehended by citing President Roosevelt's message to the U.S. Congress regarding a new Philippine independence law. He said:

As to the military bases, I recommend that this provision be eliminated from the [HHC] law and that these be relinquished simultaneously with the accomplishment of final Philippine independence.

As to the naval bases, I recommend that the [HHC] law be so amended as to provide for the ultimate settlement of this matter on terms satisfactory to our own Government and that of the Philippine islands.¹¹

Quezon, then senate president but soon to become president of the Philippine Commonwealth, predictably accepted the proposed changes, explaining in a letter to Senator Milliard Tydings on 22 March 1934, that

. . . the military reservations having been eliminated from the McDuffie-Tydings bill and the question of naval reservations being left to future negotiations between the Government of the United States and the Philippine republic, we feel that it really grants complete independence to the Philippine Islands, and, therefore, we could, as we did, give it our endorsement.¹²

Quezon's stance—and, to repeat, the Commonwealth's—was: no military, i.e., land, bases for the U.S. Army troops and the Army Air Corps (the U.S. Air Force was born as a distinct entity only in the late forties) in the Philippines; naval reservations, probably, but subject to negotiation, and only after recovery of Philippine independence, scheduled for 4 July 1946.

In the article previously cited, Professor Quirino insinuates that had Quezon lived to become the president of our Republic in 1946, which was the original scenario,¹³ the MBA could have been a much more favorable agreement for the Philippines. There might not even have been an agreement at all.

11. Quoted in the "The Negotiation of the United States-Philippines Military Bases Agreement of 1947." Department of State Research Project No. 319, February 1953, p. 8. Prepared by G. Wallace Chessman of the Division of Historical Policy Research, this work remained classified until 1983. In 1988, through the kind assistance of Mr. Charles Bernard Salmon, Jr., Head of the Office of Philippine Affairs of the Department of State, a xeroxed copy was provided the author by the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C. Hereafter cited simply as Chessman, "Negotiation," p. 11.

12. Quoted in Chessman, "Negotiation," p. 11.

13. This was contemplated when the Philippine Constitution was amended in 1940 to allow the president to have a four-year term, but with eligibility for reelection, instead of only a single term of six years.

The difficulty in accepting any of these views springs from the wrong assumption that Quezon remained firm in his original position. The fact that the experience during the Second World War induced a drastic change in both Filipino and American attitudes towards future American military bases in the Philippines, is not given the emphasis which I think it deserves. As will be shown presently, such a change shaped the outlines of the MBA. Either Quirino the negotiator was ignorant of Quezon's changed attitude, or Quirino the biographer (of both Quezon and Quirino) chose to downplay the significance of the change in Quezon's stance.¹⁴

While still on Corregidor Island, during the Second World War, Quezon had already changed his mind on the issue of the bases which was the ostensible reason for his having vehemently opposed the HHC Act. Here is Pres. Osmeña's recollection of the metamorphosis, or at least its beginnings, as manifested in Quezon's reaction to Pres. Roosevelt's message of 28 December 1941, to the effect that the American people "will never forget what the people of the Philippine Islands are doing these days and will do in the days to come [and] that their freedom will be redeemed and protected." According to Osmeña:¹⁵

[Quezon said]: "This message is great and I subscribe to it." "But Mr. President," I said, "this American protection involves the existence of American bases in the Philippines. Do you favor them now?" "With the lesson of this war" he answered, "we cannot escape the necessity of accepting it."

Leaving Corregidor Island to avoid capture by the Japanese, Quezon's Party (which included Osmeña) went to Mindanao, then Australia, and eventually proceeded to the United States to establish the Commonwealth Government-in-Exile. They arrived in Washington, D.C. in May 1942.

Some eight months later, Japan announced that she would soon launch some countries in Southeast Asia under her occupation on the path to "independence." These would be countries who understood Japan's "true intentions," and who were "ready to collaborate" with her. These peoples would be launched on the path to "independence"

14. In addition to his biographies of Quezon, Ramon Magsaysay and others, Quirino has recently published *Apo Lakay: The Biography of President Elpidio Quirino of the Philippines* (Makati, Metro Manila: Total Book World, 1987.)

15. Sergio Osmeña, "Quezon and the American Military Bases in the Philippines," *Philippine Free Press*, 20 August 1960, as quoted in Joseph W. Dodd, *Criminal Jurisdiction under the United States-Philippine Military Bases Agreement: A Study in Conjurisdictional Law* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 24.

within the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Premier Tojo announced in January 1943 that the Philippines had earned the right to be independent following Burma.¹⁶ President Quezon forthwith drafted a letter to Pres. Roosevelt, in which he stressed the need for the proclamation of Philippine independence and the recognition of the Philippine Republic by the Japanese, the rehabilitation and development of the Philippine economy, and the guarantee of the future military security, political integrity and economic progress of the Philippines.¹⁷

"It would be both wise and proper," he implored Pres. Roosevelt, "to proclaim Philippine independence now rather than wait until 1946."¹⁸ Quezon, according to Harrison, subsequently articulated his views:

He recommends the passage of a joint resolution by [the U.S.] Congress advancing the date for independence to April 9th (the anniversary of the fall of Bataan) or the 4th of July, 1943.

. . . In exchange for a guarantee of military security the Philippines will offer the United States:

"The use under a generous lease of strategic air and naval bases which will act as the center of America's power for peace in the Far East. . . ."¹⁹

Although, again according to Harrison, Quezon never sent the letter,²⁰ its contents clearly reveal Quezon's thinking on future U.S. military bases in an independent Philippines.

Not long after, on 27 April 1943 President Quezon had a one-hour conversation with State Undersecretary Sumner Welles. As Harrison has noted in his diary, Quezon informed Welles that he intended to retire on 31 December 1943, but that he would like to do so "in the knowledge that he had completed his program for the Philippines." What he wanted, among others, was:

(1) That the United States accept *airfields and naval bases* in his country (Welles stated that the Army and Navy were in favour of that); that the Filipinos furnish the ground forces for the airfields, and pay their own men insofar as they were able.²¹

16. The work to consult on this is Willard Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953).

17. Francis Burton Harrison, *Origins of the Philippine Republic: Extracts from the Diaries and Records of Francis Burton Harrison*. Edited and Annotated by Michael P. Onorato. Data Paper No. 95, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1974, p. 206.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, p. 219. Emphases added.

On 10 October 1943, as the hour for the proclamation of Philippine independence under Japan's auspices approached, Quezon had a closed-door meeting at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington where the Quezons were staying and which was actually the seat of the Commonwealth-in-Exile, with key members of the American government. Among them were Secretary of War Stimson, Presidential Adviser Samuel Rosenman, Senator Tydings, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and his Undersecretary, Abe Fortas. Also present was Vice-President Osmeña. They discussed the joint resolution advancing the date of Philippine independence, as Quezon had suggested, as well as the accompanying message that Pres. Roosevelt intended to send to the U.S. Congress.

At one point, Rosenman asked: "What about the military reservations?"

Quezon's answer, according to the recollection of an aide, is very revealing of Quezon's position:

If you yourselves include that provision, the independence of the Philippines will be like that of Manchukuo [i.e., a farce]. *Let me ask you to put it there.* I shall assume responsibility.²²

The meeting was followed by others, apparently at Quezon's request. This may be gleaned from a memorandum on 7 November 1943, by Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, for his colleagues in the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. A portion of it reads:

In these discussions, it has developed that *President Quezon is of the opinion, in which he is supported by the U.S. Officials, that the United States should now stipulate what bases will be required.*²³

Perhaps because of the more pressing business of prosecuting the war against Japan, nothing concrete could be undertaken in that direction at the time. It was not until early 1945 that tentative plans were available. The congressional resolution, however, authorizing the

22. Emphases added. Rosenman's question and Quezon's quick reply are from Benvenuto R. Diño, "Quezon's Greatest Triumph," *Philippine Free Press*, 15 August 1964, reprinted in *Quezon in Retrospect*, ed., Mauro Garcia and Juan F. Rivera (Manila: Philippine Historical Association, 1978), pp. 319-23. This is a commemorative volume of the PHA's *Historical Bulletin*, published on the occasion of the one-hundredth birth anniversary of Pres. Quezon. The above quotations are on p. 326 of this volume. A major in the Medical Corps of the Philippine Army, Diño was then attached to the Office of Pres. Quezon in Washington, D.C.

23. Memorandum for the Joint Chiefs of Staff [by E.J. King], 7 Nov. 1943, in U.S. National Archives, Record Group 218: Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Geographic File, 1942-45, CCS 686.9. Emphases added. Hereafter, this will simply be identified as NA, RG 218, and so forth.

president of the United States, "after negotiation with the President of the . . . Philippines" (Commonwealth or Republic), to "withhold or to acquire and to retain such [military and naval] bases," which had the endorsement of Pres. Quezon and Vice-Pres. Osmeña, was finally enacted as Joint Resolution 93 and signed by President Roosevelt on 29 June 1944.²⁴

Thirty-three days later Quezon died.

PRESIDENT OSMEÑA'S STANCE

It remained for Pres. Osmeña to consummate a tentative, or preliminary, agreement with the president of the United States, pursuant to Joint Resolution 93. Contemporaneous documents recently made available suggest that Pres. Osmeña was more inclined towards the retention of U.S. military bases in the Philippines than Pres. Quezon. This is not surprising. After all, he and then speaker Roxas had patiently worked for and eventually brought home to the Philippines the HHC Act which provided for U.S. military bases, only to see it rejected by the Philippine Legislature under Quezon's leadership. At a press conference after Osmeña finally assumed the Philippine presidency,²⁵ in reply to a question regarding future U.S. military bases in the Philippines, he affirmed unqualifiedly that he favored their presence.²⁶

It was Osmeña's view, expressed in letters to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, perhaps in conversations too, that a "special relationship" between the Philippines and the United States had been created by the enactment of Joint Resolution 93, "providing for the establishment and maintenance of naval and other bases in the Islands for the protection of both the United States and the Philippines."²⁷ In his

24. 58 *Stat.* 625 (U.S.).

25. Osmeña was to have succeeded Quezon as President after 15 November 1943, pursuant to the Philippine Constitution, as amended in 1940. But, on account of Joint Resolution No. 95 of the U.S. Congress adopted on 10 November, 1943, Quezon and Osmeña were allowed to remain in their respective positions until the restoration of "constitutional processes and normal functions of government . . . in the Philippine Islands." See Vicente Albano Pacis, *President Sergio Osmeña: A Fully Documented Biography* (1st edition, Quezon City: Printed by Phoenix Press 1971), II, Chapter VIII. The quoted portion of Joint Resolution No. 95 is on p. 193.

26. *New York Times*, 11 August 1944, cited in William E. Berry, Jr., *U.S. Bases in the Philippines: The Evolution of the Special Relationship*. Westview Special Studies on East Asia (Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview Press, 1989), p. 14. I got my copy of this recent publication only on 28 June 1989. However, I had earlier read Col. Berry's original unpublished dissertation (Cornell University, 1981) available at the American Historical Collection, Makati.

27. Osmeña to Roosevelt and Truman, 10 April 1945 and 8 November 1945, respectively. See Note 1, above. The quotation is from Osmeña to Roosevelt, but is reiterated, almost *verbatim* in Osmeña's letter to Truman, which was attached to the president's secretary's "Memo re: Meeting with Pres. Osmeña, April 17, 1945."

meeting with Secretary of State Edward Stettinius on 21 April 1945, Osmeña reportedly assured the latter that there would be no difficulty over the issue of U.S. military bases and "that the Filipinos were quite willing for the bases to be established and were prepared to work out plans for the mutual benefit of the Philippines and the United States in this regard" ²⁸

Finally, on 14 May 1945, during his second meeting with Pres. Truman, Pres. Osmeña signed with him the "Preliminary Statement of General Principles Pertaining to the United States Military and Naval Base System in the Philippines To be Used as a Basis for Detailed Discussions and Staff Studies."²⁹ Prepared by the U.S. War Department, with the later concurrence of the U.S. Navy Department, it contained ten principles and an Army-prepared annex (the Navy's was later added) of proposed bases or sites in the Philippines. (See Appendix).

Returning to the Philippines later in the month, Pres. Osmeña announced that insofar as American military bases were concerned, "he was ready to go to the people" to obtain their endorsement of his position in favor of their retention.³⁰ He did not have to go that far, however, since a vote by the people's representatives would suffice. This vote occurred on 28 July 1945, in the form of Joint Resolution No. 4 of the Congress of the Philippines at its first post-World War II session. Through the Joint Resolution, the Philippine Congress expressed its adherence "to the policy and intent" of Joint Resolution No. 93 of the United States Congress, which had the concurrence of "the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines then established in Washington." It then resolved:

That in order to speedily effectuate the policy declared by the Congress of the United States and approved by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, the President of the Philippines is authorized to negotiate with the President of the United States the establishment of the aforesaid bases. . . . ³¹

28. See the memorandum of conversations prepared by Frank P. Lockhart, Chief of the Division of the Philippines, Department of State, 21 April 1945, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945*, Vol. VI: *The British Commonwealth and the Far East* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 1159. Hereafter, cited simply as FRUS. See also Secretary Stettinius's memorandum for President Truman on the same talks dated 22 April 1945, in which he said that Osmeña had "definitely and specifically stated to me that whatever suggestions we wished to make relative to United States postwar bases would be agreeable to him." Truman Papers, President's Secretary's File, Box 185, Folder 1.

29. FRUS: 1945, VI, 1209.

30. Chessman, "Negotiation," p. 22, citing a restricted despatch [from Manila] dated 25 May 1945.

31. The text of Joint Resolution No.4 may be found in 41 *Official Gazette* (Philippines), 349.

The resolution could not have been more pleasing to Pres. Osmeña, who immediately took steps to implement it by appointing Judge Francisco Delgado, former Resident Commissioner to Washington and a future member of the Philippine War Damage Commission, as his special representative.³² In August, Judge Delgado started making inquiries at the U.S. Department of State as to whether the U.S. government "is now in a position to undertake negotiations looking to the drawing up of a definitive agreement on the subject of American military and naval bases to be retained in the Philippines after independence."³³

P R E S I D E N T R O X A S ' S S T A N C E

President Osmeña, however, was denied the opportunity (or was spared the ordeal) of concluding the "definitive agreement" on the bases, because he lost in the presidential elections of April 1946. The "definitive agreement" was achieved by his successor, Manuel A. Roxas, who was just as receptive as his predecessors to the idea of U.S. military bases. An early indication of this inclination was what he is reported to have told an American intelligence officer in April 1945. He had said that he had no objections to American air and naval bases, even if on a permanent basis, provided that the United States "did not maintain large land forces in the Philippines in the postwar period." He also did not think that the "existence of such bases [would be] a limiting factor in [Philippine] independence."³⁴ More openly, he told the American people, on the occasion of his visit in May 1946, before he formally assumed the office of president:

We will welcome the existence of your naval, air and Army bases on such of our soil as is mutually agreeable for the common protection of the United States and the Philippines, and will cooperate in the defense and security of those bases insofar as it is within our power to do so³⁵

32. Judge Delgado was the sole Filipino member of the three-man Philippine War Damage Commission (1947-51). He was subsequently elected Senator. See my "The Negotiation and Disposition of the Philippine War Damage Claims: A Study in Philippine-American Diplomacy, 1951-1972," in *Reappraising an Empire: New Perspectives on Philippine-American History*, ed. Peter W. Stanley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), chapter X.

33. Secretary of State (Byrnes) to Secretary of the Navy (Forrestal), 4 September 1945, *FRUS: 1945*, VI, 1199. Cf. Berry, *U.S. Bases*, pp. 19-20.

34. See Worcester's report (1945), note 2, above.

35. Quoted in Berry, *U.S. Bases*, pp. 14-15. Col. Berry earlier contributed a shorter study on "The Military Bases and Postwar U.S.-Philippine Relations," to *The Philippine Bases: Negotiating for the Future; American & Philippine Perspectives*, ed. Fred Greene (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988), pp. 130-35. Part Two of this volume

Meanwhile, the U.S. government had been preparing the drafts of agreements which it hoped to conclude with the Philippine government, hopefully, even prior to Philippine independence on 4 July 1946. One of these was the draft of the military bases agreement. The U.S. armed services had begun work on the task as early as 1943. By the spring of 1946, they had a preliminary draft. Apparently, a number of people, including High Commissioner McNutt and president-elect Roxas, were privy to some of its contents, especially on the number of base areas desired by the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy, even before it was officially shown to Roxas in Washington, D.C. This may be seen from a top-secret cable of General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower from Manila shortly before Roxas, accompanied by McNutt, went on an urgent mission to the United States in May 1946. The pertinent portion of Eisenhower's cable read:

I have been approached in an urgent manner by both the President Elect and the High Commissioner concerning the establishment of Military bases in the Philippines. . . . Without going into matter thoroughly it seems that both Army and Navy requirements as reported to me here [in Manila] are on high side.³⁶

A year earlier, General MacArthur had expressed the same opinion. In addition, he had cabled then Chief of Staff General Marshall: "No major installations should be made in any of the principal metropolitan cities or communities of the Philippines."³⁷ In any case, on 10 May 1946, the U.S. government showed President-elect Roxas and his advisers (Quirino was not there) the draft of the MBA during a meeting at the State Department with American officials. This 10 May 1946 draft already stated in the preamble that the United States wished to lease the bases for ninety-nine years. This term was later incorporated in the final text of the MBA.³⁸

is the "Conference Record" of a two-day meeting of Philippine and American study teams or groups on the military bases or facilities, held at Bodega Bay, California, on 15-16 February 1988. The present author was a member of the Philippine study group.

36. Eisenhower to (Gen. Thomas Troy) Handy, 7 May 1946, in NA, RG 218, JCS, COS 1946, 333.1 Pacific Trip. Cf. Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr., *Dissolving the Colonial Bond: American Ambassadors to the Philippines, 1946-1984* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), p. 24, 388, n.20.

37. Gen. MacArthur was commenting on the tentative list of base sites prepared by the War Department (or Army) prior to the Osmeña-Truman meeting of 14 May 1945. See his cable (14 May 1945) to the War Department. For his view that no major bases be near urban centers, see his top-secret cable to General George C. Marshall on 26 April 1945. Both of these cables are in NA, RG 218, Geographic File 686.9 Sec.1.

38. Chessman, "Negotiation," Appendix A, is a highly informative juxtaposition or collation of the several drafts and Philippine reactions thereto, including the final text of the MBA.

According to a State Department record of the meeting with the State Department:

The reaction of the Philippine representatives to the first American draft was generally favorable. *But President-elect Roxas made two important objections. First he asked that the number of base areas included in Annex A be reduced. In this connection he mentioned specifically Nichols Field . . . and the Mariveles area. . . . Secondly Roxas objected to the jurisdiction article because in its scope it exceeded similar grants made by independent countries to the United States.*³⁹

The Philippine representatives countered with a redraft of the first American draft on 14 May 1946, exactly one year after the Osmeña-Truman Agreement, reflecting the Roxas desiderata and observations, especially with respect to jurisdiction. This Philippine redraft, it is well to keep in mind, did not have the benefit of Quirino's thinking, according to documents I have consulted.

The representatives of the American government in the talks which were still informal prepared a redraft on 16 May, and still another on 14 June, this time with a great reduction in the number of areas. The 14 June draft incorporated some of the earlier observations and suggestions of Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur.⁴⁰ Both had served in the Philippines before, and were thus more familiar with Filipino sensitivities than the cold-blooded and pragmatic officers of the U.S. Army and Navy on the drafting panels. Note that Quirino had not yet entered the scene as our chief negotiator.

This 14 June redraft was shown to Pres. Roxas (he had been sworn into office after his return from his May visit) on 15 June, with the hope that agreement on it could be concluded by 3 July or, at the latest, the following day. But despite Philippine objections, especially on the article on jurisdiction, the Americans remained adamant. A proposed compromise, a *modus operandi*, pending the conclusion of a final agreement, was equally unacceptable to Pres. Roxas. And so by the time the Commonwealth passed into history, there was still no

39. Chessman, "Negotiation," p. 35, citing highly classified documents at the time (1953). Emphases added. During the formal negotiations phase, Roxas was reported to have told the American panel headed by Ambassador McNutt, regarding the American insistence on retaining Ft. McKinley (now Ft. Bonifacio), and Nichols Field (now Villamor Air Base): "Gentlemen, you can have what you want. You can have as many as you like. Just keep away from populated centers." Quoted in Stephen Rosskamm Shalom, *The United States and the Philippines: A Study of Neocolonialism* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, Philippine Copyright, 1986), p. 63.

40. Chessman, "Negotiation," pp. 33 and 37.

MBA.⁴¹ Roxas and, no doubt, Quirino held on until 1947, in their herculean efforts to protect Philippine interests.

CONCLUSIONS

We may conclude this discussion of the MBA up to Philippine Independence with several observations.

First, there was a sea change in the Filipino leaders' earlier attitudes towards the presence of U.S. military bases in the Philippines after recovery of independence. This change had begun to take place even before the Commonwealth Government-in-Exile was set up. There is also ample evidence to substantiate the claim that Quezon himself set events in motion towards the Joint Resolution of the U.S. Congress, and personally suggested to American high officials that the U.S. could acquire military bases after the war, or at least was welcome to use them. There is no reason, therefore, to assume that the 1947 MBA would have been better for us had Quezon lived long enough to preside over, or undertake, its negotiation.

President Osmeña was out and out in favor of U.S. military presence in the Philippines, and it was he who signed the "Preliminary Statement" which became the basis of the early American studies and drafts of the MBA.

President Roxas, for all his considered opinion that the presence of American bases here was not an infringement of Philippine independence, so long as there were no sizable American land troops in the Philippines, played a much larger and, in retrospect, more significant role than is otherwise assumed, let alone admitted, in making the provisions of the American draft more advantageous to the Philippines than they originally were. He thus made them more politically acceptable and palatable. He definitely should not be singled out for posterity's opprobrium.

The claim that Vice-Pres. Quirino almost singlehandedly led the assault against the original American demands which presumably were almost totally unacceptable and had them modified so as to be closer to the Philippine position, is open to serious reservations. That he tried to stand up to McNutt, perhaps on cue, there can be no doubt,⁴² but that is not the same thing as being solely responsible for what was good in the MBA.

41. Chessman, p. 38.

42. According to President Quirino, "Roxas and I had a private understanding. In dealing with this ticklish question [e.g., of American extraterritorial rights] I was to hold firm while he remained the picture of sweet amiability to Mr. McNutt. Often the U.S. Ambassador would run to Roxas to complain. . . . Roxas would telephone every

Lastly, it seems that while the Philippine government was eager to initiate conversations leading toward a definitive agreement on the bases in 1946-47, it did not have a prepared draft of its own, and that our representatives were merely redrafting the American proposals.

This would seem to be, in retrospect, indicative of an unconscionable lack of planning by the Roxas administration for the original, and crucial, MBA negotiations. Or could it be that Pres. Roxas was unaware of the Osmeña-Truman "Preliminary Statement" of May 1945 which, to the U.S. War and Navy Secretaries, "adequately safeguards U.S. Military interests [in the Philippines] during this interim period,"⁴³ i.e., until reaching a "definitive agreement" with the Philippines? Roxas should have known that the ten principles were too sweeping and the suggested base areas too extensive. They were, in MacArthur's expert view, far in excess of what was necessary for the United States.⁴⁴

However, we should perhaps understand the environment of the times. The Philippine national leaders at the time were new to the techniques of diplomatic negotiations, and while they had the national interest at heart, they were negotiating from a position of utter weakness. The Philippines was economically prostrate and there was need to rebuild the shattered physical and social institutions of the country. This obviously could not be undertaken without American support and financial assistance.

so often, after a grievance session with the Ambassador, to warn not to mind too much his gestures of seeming surrender. *We were quite a team.*" "Memoirs of Elpidio Quirino," Vol. I, p. 293. Emphases added. This unpublished manuscript is with the Ayala Museum and Library, Makati, Metro Manila.

43. Joint Memorandum to the Secretary of State, 10 October 1945, in *FRUS: 1945*, VI.

In his 17 March 1947 message to the Senate, Congress of the Philippines, transmitting the text of Military Bases Agreement (Republic of the Philippines, *Congressional Record*, 1st Cong., 2nd Sess. (1947), Senate Vol. II, No. 17, p. 169), President Roxas said in part:

"In May 1946, when I was in the United States as President-elect, I held the first informal conferences with representatives of the United States . . . with regard to the implementation of our mutual defense commitments."

"There was a record, a fact of which I had not been aware, a statement of principles signed on May 14, 1945 by both President Osmeña and President Truman. . . ." Emphases added.

44. Cable to the War Department, 14 May 1945. See note 37, above.

APPENDIX

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES PERTAINING TO
THE U.S. MILITARY BASE SYSTEM IN THE PHILIPPINES TO BE USED AS A
BASIS FOR DETAILED DISCUSSIONS AND STAFF STUDIES*
SIGNED 14 MAY 1945

1. The principle is agreed that the fullest and closest military cooperation will be observed between the U.S. and the Philippine Government and the military plans of the U.S. and the Philippine Government for the Philippine area will be closely integrated in order to ensure the full and mutual protection of the U.S. and the Philippines.
2. The military forces of the U.S. will be accorded free access to, and movement between, ports, U.S. bases, and U.S. installations in the Philippines, by land, sea, and air.
3. Military and Naval aircraft of the U.S. will be allowed to operate without restriction into and from U.S. bases and over surrounding territory. U.S. military forces will be allowed to enter and depart from the Philippines, including territorial waters, at will.
4. The U.S. will have the right to import free of duty, materiel, equipment, and supplies requisite to the improvement, maintenance, operation, and defense of U.S. military bases.
5. The U.S. will have the right to maintain such personnel as may be requisite for the operations and defense of bases and facilities..
6. Pending development of the detailed plan, the U.S. will retain all sites which were held by the U.S. Army as military reservations on 7 December 1941 and will be accorded rights to sites in the localities shown on the attached Appendix [i.e., ANNEX—BSS]
7. The U.S. will have the right to retain, or to exchange for sites listed in paragraph 6 above, those sites wherein are located bases, installations, or facilities which have been or may be developed in the course of the present war, to acquire additional sites in the vicinity of U.S. naval bases, and to acquire such sites in the future as may be required by changes in the means and methods of warfare, including the development of new weapons. The U.S. will have the right to acquire sites and install, maintain and operate thereon, the required communication and navigation facilities and radar installations.
8. The U.S. will retain U.S. military cemeteries and sites of historical significance to the U.S. in the Philippines.
9. Consideration will be given to the Filipino participation in certain U.S. bases and vice versa as indicated by the military situation.
10. No nation other than the U.S. or the Philippines is to be permitted to establish or make use of any bases in the Philippines without the prior agreement of both the U.S. and Philippine Governments.

*"The Secretary of War (Stimson) to President Truman, Washington, 11 May 1945," *FRUS*: 1945, VI, 1208-1209.

[Annex (A)]

AREAS IN THE PHILIPPINES IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES MAY DESIRE THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH BASES, AS SUBMITTED BY THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

<u>Designation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Location</u>
DEL CARMEN	Luzon	SAN JOSE	Mindoro
TARLAC	Luzon	SURIGAO	Mindanao
SAN MARCELINO	Luzon	DEL MONTE	Mindanao
		(Cagayan)	
LAOAG	Luzon	DALUAGAN	Mindanao
		(Impasugong)	
TUGUEGARAO	Luzon	DIPOLOG	Mindanao
SAN MIGUEL BAY	Luzon	DAVAO	Mindanao
APARRI	Luzon	SARANGANI ISLAND	Mindanao
POLILLO	Luzon	TAWI-TAWI	Sulu Arch.
SORSOGON	Luzon	SIMINUL ISLAND	Sulu Arch.
PUERTO PRINCESA	Palawan	LEYTE GULF	Leyte-Samar
BALABAC ISLAND	Palawan	GUIMARAS STRAIT	Panay-Negros
CORON BAY	Palawan	MACTAN	Cebu

(Annex B)

AREAS IN THE PHILIPPINES IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES MAY DESIRE THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH BASES, AS SUBMITTED BY THE NAVY DEPARTMENT**

Tutu Bay (Jolo)
 Tawi Tawi
 Balabac Island
 Leyte-Samar (Leyte Gulf area)
 Guimaras Strait—Iloilo Strait area
 Mactan Island (Off Cebu)
 Coron Bay
 Subic Bay Luzon
 Sarangani Island (Mindanao)
 Sorsogon (Luzon)
 San Miguel Bay (Luzon)
 Polillo (Luzon)
 Aparri (Luzon)
 Puerto Princesa (Palawan)

**From "The Secretary of the Navy (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State, Washington, 30 April 1945, FRUS: 1945, VI, p. 1205.