

The Foreign Policy of President Ferdinand Marcos: From Traditionalism to Realism

Archie Resos

ABSTRACT

Since its attainment of independence in 1946, the Philippines has conducted its foreign policy in close alliance with the United States of America. This reflects the neocolonial status of the country whose foreign policy, according to Senator Claro M. Recto, has assumed a “mendicant” posture characterized by a patron-client relationship. Among the presidents of the Republic of the Philippines, Ferdinand E. Marcos had the longest term of office – 21 years, from 1965 until his eventual downfall through the EDSA People Power I Revolution in 1986. He played a decisive role in shaping Philippine diplomatic history to assume an independent posture, veering away from traditionalism to realism. Marcos went beyond traditional diplomacy solely characterized by diplomatic dependence on the United States as he vigorously pursued Asian regionalism and diplomatic relations with Third World countries, Middle Eastern countries and Socialist nations—all in pursuit of the country’s national interest.

Keywords: diplomacy, diplomatic history, foreign affairs, Philippine foreign relations, Ferdinand E. Marcos, Philippines, Philippine diplomacy, Philippines international relation.

President Ferdinand Edralin Marcos was the longest serving President of the Republic of the Philippines. Marcos, son of Mariano Marcos and Josefa Edralin was born in Sarrat, Ilocos Norte on September 11, 1917, (Nolledo, 1966: 1). During the American era, Mariano Marcos was an assemblyman in the National Assembly, while Josefa Edralin was a school teacher, (Celloza, 1998: 23).

In his inauguration at Luneta in 1965, he spelled his vision for the country, encapsulated in the phrase, “This nation will be great again!” Serving the country for twenty-one years, Ferdinand Marcos had the authority and responsibility to conduct foreign relations with other countries.

Ferdinand Marcos would influence the course of Philippine foreign policy more than any other president in our political history. Marcos knew that foreign policy should be congruent with the country’s interests: it is an extension of domestic policy. The foreign policy of Marcos exhibits the responses of the national government to the significant events then taking place in the world. The more sensitive and perceptive the national leader is, the more responsive are his foreign policy thrusts formulated to meet the challenges of the external world, (Domingo, 2007: iii).

Assuming a diplomatic course of traditionalism, the previous administrations from President Manuel Roxas to President Diosdado Macapagal pursued a stance of a strong attachment and dependence on the United States of America for political, economic and military aid. An advocate of a nationalistic foreign policy, Senator Claro M. Recto (1982) observed, our foreign policy was conducted from the very beginning and is being pursued on the erroneous assumption of our identity of American

and Filipino interest, or more correctly of the desirability, and even necessity, of subordinating our interests to those of America.

When Ferdinand Marcos assumed the presidency for the second term, he announced in his 1969 inaugural speech:

In international affairs, we shall be guided by the national interest and by the conscience of our society in response to the dilemma of man in the 20th century. The Filipino today lives in a world that is increasingly Asian, as well as African. Asian claims one-half of all humanity, and this half lives on a little over one-sixth of the earth's habitable surface, (Nolledo, 1966: 15).

Under the Marcos presidency, the Philippines charted a new diplomatic direction of realism. He crafted Philippine foreign policy to initiate strong political will to promote national interest vital for the survival of the nation amidst changing international and regional landscape. Thus, he succinctly said in his January 24, 1972, State of the Nation Address and spelled a clear path for Philippine foreign policy to trod:

The Philippines, in recognition of its compelling national interests and in response to the inevitable pressures of new world developments, necessarily has to modify its outlook and revise its policies in ways which make a more precise account of its interests in a radically altered world environment. Thus in the last twelve months we have begun a process of change unprecedented in our short history as a free country. Flexibility has been the touchstone of the merging foreign policy of the Philippines; the national interest its unchanging guide; and a hard and independent assessment of new international realities its new hallmark, (Marcos, 1972).

Indeed, Philippine foreign policy requires constant readjustment based on the changing global and regional trends. Various challenges that confronted the Marcos administration require constant reviews of ideas, actions and performance of the Chief Diplomat. The first legal mandate of the Filipino president as Chief Diplomat is contained in the 1935 Philippine Constitution and has been restated in subsequent Philippine Constitution such as that of 1973 and 1987. President Marcos said,

to be a realist is to accept the fact that it is to serve her own self-interest and to safeguard her security as a nation and her position as a world leader, and only incidentally for our protection, that America has built up her imposing military and diplomatic establishments in our country, and it is only in that sense that the words "common defense," "mutual security," and "partnership," must be understood, (Constantino, 1965: 69-70).

Marcos would justify Senator Claro M. Recto's views on foreign policy on the following points: 1) special relations with the United States; 2) solidarity with Asian states; 3) the US bases as magnet of attacks; 4) the need for self-reliance; 5) the need for a strong and credible state; 6) neutrality and non-alignment. Vindicating the foreign policy views of Recto, President Marcos in 1972 crafted and pursued his vision for an independent foreign policy. These included: 1) realism in Philippine-United States relations; 2) regionalism; 3) non-alignment; and 4.) development of self-reliance, (Domingo, 1993: 94-95).

Studies have been conducted regarding Philippine foreign policy under President Ferdinand Marcos. Dr. Richard John Kessler has argued that while the Philippine foreign policy has been dominated by the need to sustain the Philippine-American “special relations,” this has not always been contrary to the pursuit of Philippine national interest, that the Philippine policy makers, notably President Marcos, has had greater freedom to act, and that there was an improvement in the Philippine foreign policy’s articulation during President Marcos’ time.

On the other hand, Ambassador Benjamin B. Domingo has shown how President Marcos utilized the instrumentalities of foreign policy and diplomacy as tools of effective governance to preserve and promote the national interest of the country. According to him:

President Marcos understood clearly that foreign policy is only an extension of domestic policy and that foreign policy without regard to national interest is baseless. He was the first Philippine President to use the instrumentalities of foreign policy and diplomacy to resolve both domestic and foreign issues and problems. (Domingo, 1983: ii)

In view of the above considerations, this paper will attempt to explain the foreign policy of the country under President Ferdinand E. Marcos and how he steered it away from its traditional thrust to chart a realistic pursuit by vigorously establishing Asian regionalism and diplomatic relations with Third World countries, Middle Eastern countries and Socialist nations—all in pursuit of the country’s national interest.

In analyzing the foreign policy of President Ferdinand Marcos, the theory on diplomatic realism vis-à-vis “mendicant patriarchy” shall be used in the study. Realism in diplomacy is the promotion of the interest of nations that enter into diplomatic relations. It destroys the myth that national interests are identical. The much-quoted Bismarckian phrase, “There are no national friends, only national interests,” gives substance to what realism is.

A staunch critic of the country’s diplomacy, the nationalist Senator Claro M. Recto has clearly pointed out:

To be a realist is to subscribe to the proposition that in a world where the nation state system still prevails, every state takes care of its own national interests, and it is the responsibility of the government to determine what those interests are, especially those of lasting nature, and to adopt and carry out the necessary policies towards safeguarding them, sacrificing if necessary the more transitory interests, as for instance, temporary trade advantages, in the same way that the good strategist forgoes a battle to win the war. (Constantino, 1965: 69)

The incipient political relationship of the US and the Philippines was invested with a patron-client relationship and is best characterized with Anthony Woodiwiss’ phrase, “mendicant patriarchy.” “Patriarchy” refers to a “familialist discourse that, regardless of the institutional context, both assumes the naturalness of inequalities in the social relations between people and justifies these by reference to the respect due to a benevolent father or father figure who exercises a joint right,” while “mendicant,” meaning “begging,” denotes the debased form of patriarchal practice that has become the established mode of exercising power within the society. (Woodiwiss, 1998: 102) Obviously, the Philippines is the mendicant, and the U.S., the patriarch.

Greater Independence from the United States

After the Philippine independence was granted on July 4, 1946, the United States intervention could be clearly seen in the course of post-war Philippine political history preventing thus the country to exercise its sovereignty to promote its national interests. In fact, a continuing crisis existed because of rampant poverty, unemployment and corruption. Filipinos became theoretically free but they cannot appreciate this freedom because of their growling stomachs.

After World War II, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union intensified as each continued to spread its ideology to other nations. It has to be recalled that in his last speech, President Roxas reiterated a subservient Filipino foreign policy to the US:

But if war should come, if God in his supreme wisdom shall will it that the scourge of war again visit the bewildered peoples of this earth, I am certain of one thing – probably the only thing that which I can be certain – and it is this, that in case of a new war waged by the aggressor against the forces of freedom and liberty, Americans and Filipino soldiers will again fight side by side in the same trenches or in the air in defense of justice, of freedom and the other principles which we both love and cherished. (Zaide, 1990: 224-225).

In contrast, President Marcos proposed a divergent policy when he delivered his speech at the University of the Philippines Alumni Association where he said,

Our foreign policy, which once for the most part was entrusted or suited to the interest and outlook of another nation, has matured into a far-seeing appreciation and geopolitical and global realities, a closer identification of national realities and priorities, and an affirmation of sovereignty, independence and self-reliance, (Marcos, 1976)

It was a wise foreign policy direction to stave off the possible position of the Republic becoming a direct enemy of the Soviet Union, People's Republic of China, and the other members of the Communist world.

Greater Philippine Control over the US Military Bases

After World War II, the United States' political and economic influence continued to surge in the Asia-Pacific region. American economic aid was vital at the time to bring about a more stable republic. Thus, the first treaties and agreements concluded by the newly established Philippine Republic pointed pro-American thrust. These included: 1) the Treaty of General Relations with the United States (July 4, 1946); 2) the Military Bases Agreement (March 14, 1947); 3) the Military Assistance Agreement (March 21, 1947); and 4) the Mutual Defense Treaty (August 30, 1951), (Zaide, 1994: 35).

The US Senate Joint Resolution authorized the retention of military bases in the Philippines, and in April 1945 the Navy Department submitted a list of sites where it felt that "perpetual rights" to establish and maintain bases should be acquired by the United States, (Golay, 1997: 476). The Military Bases Agreement was very pivotal to maintain balance in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Prior to the Marcos Administration, the international environment determined the foreign policy of the Philippines as its global, regional and bilateral relations would always revolve around the context

of the bloc alignment in the Cold War. Though the preamble of the Military Bases Agreement stressed the concept of mutuality, it was in effect generally beneficial to the United States. The sovereignty of the Philippines was disregarded.

The military bases in the Philippines apparently became enclaves where Philippine sovereignty was accepted in theory but not in fact. Notwithstanding, President Marcos sought to realign the foreign policy of the Philippines to that which would serve the nation's interest. Marcos (1976) said:

We are reviewing and reassessing not only the military bases agreements which, if you will remember are the Military Assistance Pact and the Mutual Defense Pact. On these negotiations is promised the full realization of our sovereign status, as well as the readjustment of our perspectives on one of the oldest friendships we have with any nation of the world.

With this foreign policy initiative, President Marcos resolved to review RP-US relations on the basis of diminished sovereign rights of the Philippines; non-conformity with the principles of equity and justice; insufficient and limited US military aid to the Philippines; American ambivalence about its commitments; and non-guarantee of American protection of the Philippines against any eventuality of massive invasion from abroad.

In this sense, President Marcos concluded in a joint communique with then US President Gerard Ford on the latter's state visit on December 7, 1975: "We agreed that negotiations on the subject of United States use of Philippine military bases should be conducted in the clear recognition of Philippine sovereignty," (Castro, 1985: 133).

President Marcos would therefore realign Philippine foreign policy to foster reliance on the Philippines' resources for its own security.

Move To End the Laurel-Langley Agreement in 1974

As early as the Quirino Administration in 1949, a proposal was initiated by the Philippines to revive the trade agreement of 1946. During the Magsaysay administration, the Philippine government asked US Ambassador Raymond Spruance to extend the period of free trade by another 18 months after July 3, 1954 because the imposition of the duties would seriously impair the recovery of the Philippine economy.

Thus, in 1954, the US and the Philippine Congress agreed to renegotiate the revision to the 1946 Trade Agreement. Senator Jose Laurel led the Philippine delegation or the Philippine Economic Mission, while James Langley headed the United States panel. The Laurel-Langley Agreement contained this salient provision:

The President of the United States of America and the President of the Republic of the Philippines, mindful of the close economic ties between the people of the United States and the people of the Philippines during many years of intimate political relations and desiring to enter into an agreement in keeping with their long friendship, which will be mutually beneficial to the two people's and will strengthen the economy of the Philippines so as to enable the Republic to contribute more effectively to the peace and prosperity of the free world. (Laurel-Langley Report, 1974).

The United States was not amenable to the abrogation but only to the revision of specific provisions that curtailed Philippine sovereignty. In replacement of the 1946 Trade Agreement, the provision for a five percent annual increase in tariff from 1954 to 1974 was proposed with a selective free trade for 15 years starting 1956. The United States did not agree to raise the existing quotas on Philippine export crops. Instead, it transformed the absolute quotas on cigars, tobacco, coconut oil and buttons into duty-free quotas so that the amounts in excess of the quotas could enter the United States subject to U.S. customs duties. To the mind of Senator Recto, "but a more important fact that makes a mockery of "mutuality" is that whereas the United States has surplus capital that it wants to export and invest, the Philippines has no such surplus capital," (Constantino, 1969: 223). Furthermore Recto pointed out that the provisions of the Laurel-Langley Agreement would perpetuate the status of the Philippines as an economic satellite.

Even after the end of the Laurel-Langley Agreement, the Philippines continued to reap foreign investments. On August 3, 1974, the Sixth World Chinese Banking Amity Conference and the Fourth World Chinese Tourism Amity Conference were enticed to invest in the Philippines for the government was then instituting reforms, the most basic being the land reform program which broke up feudal land holdings, (Bulletin Today, August 3, 1974: 18).

The end of the Laurel-Langley agreement also signaled stronger trade agreements with other nations of the world. On October 5, 1974, Sir Christopher Soames, Vice President and Commissioner for the external affairs of the European Economic Community talked with President Marcos on their need for wider trade relations with the Philippines, (Bulletin Today, October 5, 1974: 1).

The following day, the Soviet Union welcomed a trade treaty with the Philippines that would pave the way for direct trade between the two countries. The People's Republic of China expressed willingness to receive and consider Philippine offers to sell copper concentrates. PRC also showed interest in buying raw sugar in bags in substantial quantities as well as other products.

President Ferdinand Marcos' Emphasis on Asian Regionalism

President Marcos was an adherent of regional cooperation, which fosters solidarity among neighboring countries through common interest, common problems and aspirations. The groundwork for the formation of this regional organization was laid by the President Marcos (1968):

The principles of self-help, applied on a wider scale, also underlies the effectiveness of regional cooperation. At a conference held in Bangkok last August, a new regional organization – the Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) – was established through the joint efforts of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Its charter, the ASEAN declaration, expresses the desire of the member countries, "to establish a firm foundation for common action to promote regional cooperation in Southeast Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership, and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region."

President Marcos had a clear vision of the Philippines' role in Asia. He pointed out that the Philippine foreign policy should be firmly rooted in Asia; that the Communist ideology continued to press upon Asia; that self-help must develop along the lines of regional cooperation; and that survival in Asia depended on unity of its people.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Narciso Ramos signed the Bangkok Declaration for the formation of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) on August 8, 1967. The Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), which was created through the efforts of President Carlos Garcia and Prime Minister Tunjku Abdul Rahman in 1959 and MAPHILINDO (Malay, Philippines and Indonesia), which was launched in 1962 were both predecessors of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation.

ASEAN was created as an economic, social and cultural cooperation within the region of Southeast Asia. ASEAN could not avoid expressing itself on political matters in view of the determination of the founding members expressed in the Bangkok Declaration to promote regional peace and stability, (Ingles, 1982:9). The Philippines under President Marcos became a catalyst for making the Southeast Asian region a united and cohesive force in the world. Marcos (1977), said, "Our partnership in ASEAN has assured a more meaningful dimension. Our task is to see to it that the dimensions of cooperation should keep on constantly enlarging. We would all like to see ASEAN become a dynamic, responsive and above all, an effective force for bringing about the transformation of Southeast Asia into a region of peace, stability and progress."

The abovestatement of President Marcos was an obvious diplomatic maneuver to return to the Asian scene. As a strong regional bloc, ASEAN has dramatically improved the economic, social and cultural landscape of Southeast Asia. Consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and Thailand, this regional bloc is a force to reckon with in the global milieu. ASEAN has not only 6 percent of world population but also is the storehouse of world natural resources, (Domingo, 1983: 282).

Growth and development were the primary concerns of ASEAN in forging collective ties among member nations. As President Marcos (1978) stressed, that it may take a long time for ASEAN to attain the political sophistication of the European Economic Community. It must perforce maintain its integrity as an apolitical organization devoted to the goals of economic growth, social progress and cultural development.

To achieve these ends, regional stability needed to be resolved. Several incidents could affect the integrity of ASEAN and this would include the Indonesian *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia, the dissolution of the Malaya federation, and the Philippine claim to Sabah. ASEAN is a viable regional cooperation to solve these problems.

Gearing Towards the Third World: Philippine Diplomatic Relations with Less Developed Countries

President Marcos's agenda to open a broader spectrum of diplomatic relations with other countries of the world included opening bilateral relations with Third World countries. Most of these countries are in Asia and were formerly colonized by Western powers. Rectohad said:

the stringent basis, therefore, for Asian solidarity is a common united stand, as our Asian policy statement asserted, against colonialism in any form, political or economic, from whatever source or direction, and by whomsoever imposed upon an Asian nation, and "Asia for the Asians" is the only principle they can understand because most of them are still suffering from the effects of the colonialism that first denied its blessings to them a couple of centuries ago. (Recto, 1955:10)

The Third World refers to an aggregate of the underdeveloped nations of the world. Third World has been connected to the world economic divisions as “periphery” countries in the world system that is dominated by the “core” countries, (Tomlinson, 2003: 307). These nations were also classified as “LDCs” or “less developed countries.”

The preliminary talk on Third World countries began informally at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia in 1955. Northern countries were usually aligned with the developed nations, while the southern counterparts were associated with the Third World. The North-South Dialogue began in 1975 at the 7th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly when the United States proposed conciliatory moves, (Domingo, 2007: 60). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held its first meeting in Switzerland and there emerged the Group of 77, consisting of developing countries; 121 countries would later form the “Third World” with the merging of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement.

However, prior to the 1970s the Philippines was not warmly welcomed by the Third World nations because of its close ties with a super power – the United States of America. Renato Constantino correctly pointed out: It is only lately that the Filipinos have from objective necessity started to identify with the Third World. Before this, we had very little empathy with the liberation movement. This is due to the fact that our exposure to world events emanated from Western media reports which interpret international developments in the light of American economic and strategic interests, (Constantino, 1977: 1).

This perception of the Third World would drastically change in the 1970s with prevailing international factors like the economic importance of Japan in the region, diplomatic relations of the United States with the People’s Republic of China, and the withdrawal of American forces in Vietnam paved the way for the Philippines to be less dependent to the United States.

On February 2, 1976, Manila, Philippines became the venue of the Third World Countries’ meeting. President Marcos proposed the creation of the Third World Economic System (TWES) out of the Group of 77. Thus, a collective reliance was established among the Third World Countries. The Group of 77 unanimously chose President Marcos as its spokesperson to present the Manila Declaration to the General Conference of UNCTAD IV in Nairobi, Kenya, (Ingles, 1982: 131).

At that time, there were 110 nations constituting the Third World Countries. Half of the global population comes from these nations. They produced 70% of industries’ raw materials but unfortunately only 7% of all industrial goods. These countries consumed 10% of all the goods in the world and the problems hounding them were multifaceted – political, economic and social.

From May 7 to June 1, 1979, the 5th UNCTAD was again held in Manila. Delegates from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the developing countries of the southern hemisphere forged cooperation and economic relations. This included three areas: a general system of trade preference, state trading organizations and multinational marketing enterprises, (Domingo, 2007: 61). Thus, the ECDC, or the Economic Cooperation among Development Countries, was established.

President Marcos called for the break-up of the continuous cycle of crises confronting the member countries in order to hasten the creation of a new international economic order. The solution of pragmatic accommodation on the major problems already cited could be used to ease the tension. Confrontation was not a viable option to resolve differences.

Marcos addressed the predicament of the Third World Countries thus:

This is our predicament in the Third World. If America and Russia shall fall to arms, which side shall we be on? In a continuing confrontation apart from war, what system, what ideology should we adopt? By the very arrangement of the world this is ultimately the choice being imposed on us, and we believe – and I believe – that the alternative is unacceptable. There has to be an alternative.

If one were to identify three characteristics of the desperate plight to which the world community has been brought – for indeed the affliction is common and contagious – they would be: first, inflation and recession; second, the economic, ideological and increasingly, military confrontation between the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union; and third, the other confrontation between the rich and the poor countries – the developed North and the underdeveloped South, (Marcos, 1979).

President Marcos saw a viable option to solve these pressing problems: the creation of a strong government capable of directing political and economic planning, an economy based on entrepreneurship, and a nationalist orientation of Third World countries. This diplomatic maneuver of President Marcos was a pioneering one. He steered Philippine foreign policy to greater expectations as he forged several diplomatic relations with the Third World countries.

Forging Closer Diplomatic Ties with Muslim Countries in the Middle East

The Asia for Asian advocacy of Senator Recto was clearly emphasized in his commencement address at the Manuel L. Quezon Educational Institution on April 10, 1954. He defended and clarified the statement of Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Leon Ma. Guerrero when he said, “many things shape the life of nations, and some of them have tended to separate us from the rest of Asia. Religion is one, Trade is another. A deep affection and trust in America is third. But more permanent, more powerful than all of these is our geographical position, our race, our love of freedom. These things bind us to our fellow Asians forever,” (Arcellana, 1990: 257).

This pronouncement was clearly seen in the case of the Philippines and the Muslim countries of the Middle East. During his second term, President Marcos was confronted with the twin problems of the rise of Muslim secessionist movement and the oil price hike. In proclaiming martial law, President Marcos cited the threats against the Republic namely the CPP-NPA, the rightist including the political opposition, and the Muslim separatists, (de Viana, 2011: 317).

In 1969, Domocao Alonto and Rashid Lucman formed the Ansar el Islam that was followed by the formation of the Moro National Liberation Front by Nur Misuari in June 1969, (de Viana, 2011: 315). The MNLF became a force to reckon with under the Marcos administration because of its affinity with the Muslim nations bombarding the Philippines with diplomatic campaigns to discredit the government in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The primary goal of the MNLF was to establish an independent Bangsa Moro Republic in southern Philippines. It threatened, at various stages, Philippine sovereignty and territorial integrity and drained the Philippine economy, (Che Man, 1990: 140). The MNLF was directing its diplomatic maneuvers to be recognized by both the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and individual

countries. Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia immediately extended humanitarian, moral and religious support to the MNLF.

President Marcos was cognizant of the support given by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the MNLF and the immediate effects of the secessionist movement in Mindanao. Marcos said:

during my recent visit to Saudi Arabia, I was given the assurance by most Islamic states through the Organization of Islamic Conference that the conference would maintain the territorial integrity of the Philippines, and that it had no intention of supporting the Moro National Liberation Front or any organization that seeks to partition the territory of the Philippine Republic. The late Saudi King Khaled Bin Abdul Aziz confirmed the Islamic Conference stand that any solution must be within the framework of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines, (Domingo, 2007: 103).

By the beginning of 1973, the Muslim movement had achieved some major military successes, controlling large areas in Mindanao, (Noble, May 1975: 459). The MNLF relentlessly attacked the capital of Sulu on February 7, 1974, which resulted in hundreds of lives lost, combatants and civilians alike. With an armed force estimated at 15,000, the Muslims controlled most of Basilan, Sulu and major parts of Lanao, Zamboanga, and Cotabato, (Kessler, 1985: 174). Marcos saw the urgency of abating the support of Libya to the MNLF. He instructed the First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos, to visit *Tripoli* on November 14, 1976 to confer with President Colonel Mu'ammad al-Gaddafi and to establish bilateral relations with his country. The mutual interests of both countries were discussed, including the secessionist objective of the MNLF. On November 17, 1976, the Philippine diplomatic relations with Libya were formally forged.

Trading partnership was lucrative between the Middle East and the Philippines. President Marcos knew that diplomatic relations with the oil rich countries were vital if the Philippines was to continue its path of industrialization. Saudi Arabia became the third largest partner of the Philippines, following the United States and Japan, from 1974 to 1981. From \$90.3 million in 1973, Philippine trade with Saudi Arabia reached \$823,341,000 in 1980 and \$1.01 billion in 1981. In 1978, Saudi Arabia supplied the Philippines with 19.74 barrels of oil. This increased to 23.15 million barrels in 1979, and increased further to 27.83 million barrels in 1980, (Wadi, 1983: 42). In 1980, the Philippines relied on Saudi Arabia for 38.8 percent of her total crude supply, (Ingles, 1980: 126).

Kuwait was the second biggest oil supplier to the Philippines after Saudi Arabia. She supplied 12.33 million barrels in 1978, 10 million in 1979 and 9.3 million in 1980, (Ingles, 1980: 126).

The United Arab Emirates increased its supply of oil to 2.6 million barrels in 1980. Prior to this, the United Arab Emirates' trade with the Philippines only amounted to \$90,635 in 1978 and \$38,865 in 1979. By the 1980s, the Philippines was granted \$17.9 million in loans by the government of the United Arab Emirates.

On the other hand, Iraq was the 14th largest trading partner of the Philippines. In 1980, Philippine-Iraq trade amounted to \$245.8 million, equivalent to 1.82% share of the total Philippine trade in the same year, the Philippines had a trade deficit of \$147.6 million, since Philippine exports amounted to only \$49.1 million while imports amounted to 196.7 million, (Wadi, 1998: 42-43).

Iran ranked as the country's 17th largest trading partner. Representing a 1.05% share in overall Philippine trade, a total of \$85.8 million was reached in 1978. However, the total trade between the two countries dropped to \$42.4 million in 1979. As a consequence of her oil imports from Iran, the Philippines suffered a cumulative trade deficit of \$130.1 million from 1977 to 1979.

President Marcos' diplomatic move to establish links with Middle East countries has proven to be significant to the Philippine economy. There were 18 diplomatic and consular posts in Africa and the Middle East.

With this diplomatic initiative, the Philippine government was able to establish ties with Muslim counties sympathetic to the MNLF, provide imports of oil necessary to uplift Philippine economy, reconstruct and develop Mindanao, and appoint qualified Muslims to strategic government and diplomatic posts to avert the secessionist sentiments of the Muslims in Mindanao.

Direction toward Developmental Diplomacy: Catalyst for Neutralism and Self-reliance

The first innovative approach done by President Marcos in 1969 was dubbed the "New Developmental Diplomacy. New Developmental Diplomacy was an assertion of Philippine identity; it embodied the ideals of the United Nations, and it was a call for less dependence upon the United States.

Undersecretary Manuel Collantes (1970) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said:

Philippine foreign policy under his leadership has begun to take into account the hard realities of international politics. It is a policy based on the domestic policy of securing peace, prosperity and well-being of the people. It is a policy that seeks to advance Philippine relations with other countries on the basis of national interest and of mutual respect and understanding, while at the same time avoiding dependence on anyone country.

Collantes called it "diplomacy for development." The Philippine foreign policy trajectory would then follow the path of economics rather than ideological orientation with its relations with various countries. The Marcos administration's significant accomplishments included the intensified Philippine participation in ASEAN affairs, and an active search for new friends and markets among the Communist nations of Eastern Europe, more frequent consultation with Third World nations on problems of mutual concerns, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in June 1975 and with the Soviet Union in June 1976, (New York Times, June 10, 1975: 3).

For the first time in Philippine history, the traditional posture of aligning our foreign policy with that of the US and its democratic allies was redirected to accommodate economic and trade relations with the Eastern Socialist countries of Europe, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the People's Republic of China, and even some Middle Eastern countries all envisioned for the promotion of the country's rational socio-economic interest.

As a concrete manifestation of the "developmental diplomacy," the Philippines opened diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China on June 9, 1975 and with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on June 2, 1976.

Diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia and Romania were established in 1972. This was followed in 1973 by the normalization of relations with the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the People's Republic of

Mongolia... In 1976, the Philippines opened herself to ties with Algeria, Cuba, Libya and the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam. By 1982, ranking officials of the socialist countries had become regular state visitors or callers in Manila, (Marcos, 1983).

In his pursue of “development diplomacy” Marcos also emphasized the importance of self-determination and self-reliance. In 1976, the concept of national priorities and geopolitical realities would be indicated in Marcos’ foreign policy agenda:

The first and the most fundamental of these, stressed the supremacy of national interest in the conduct of foreign affairs. Second, we stressed the need for flexibility and pragmatism in our diplomacy to encompass not merely our hopes for peace and security, but our very aspirations to development. And third, we stressed the need for contacts with all nations desiring our friendship on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit, (Marcos, 1976).

President Marcos thus ushered in an era of self-determination and self-reliance by removing the ideological barrier for the promotion of the county’s national interest. The primary issue at that time was the increase in food production and the development of the economy. Politics and ideology did not hinder the thrust of the nation toward self-reliance.

Conclusion

President Marcos’ directed Philippine foreign policy to be less dependent on the United States. This was to avoid the ire of the United States’ ideological antagonists, namely, the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China and other Socialist countries. The president knew that American bases could serve as a magnet of attack from Communist countries as Recto earlier pointed out. Thus the Philippines’ greater control of the US military bases became one of the priorities of the Marcos administration.

The Laurel-Langley Agreement, which provided the preferential treatment for American and Philippine trade was not renewed or renegotiated during the incumbency of President Marcos. However, President Marcos was a visionary leader. He would eventually tap these Communist nations to serve the economic interest of the Philippines.

The president envisioned a united regional organization in Southeast Asia that would merit the respect and tolerance of communist countries and forge ties with the democratic nations of the region. The formation of ASEAN could also serve as a venue to initiate peace and bring long-lasting solutions to such problems as the Vietnam War and the fall of Cambodia and Laos into Communist hands.

To provide voice for the Third World countries, Marcos also led the less developed countries to solve problems of poverty and inequality. The president knew that Communism thrives among poverty-stricken sectors of society, and leading the Third World countries to voice their sentiments would be a wise move to avert their possible falling under the influence of Communism.

Marcos inked closer diplomatic pacts with Muslim countries in the Middle East, an unprecedented move among Philippine presidents because our country is predominantly a Christian nation. He felt that diplomatic ties with the oil-rich Muslim countries would avert the effects of the oil crisis and pacify the secessionist Muslims in southern Mindanao.

President Marcos then opened diplomatic ties with Eastern European Socialist Bloc (i.e. Romania and Yugoslavia in 1972 and Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1973), the USSR in 1975 and People's Republic of China in 1976. The President prioritized the national interest of the country over our ideological orientation.

The diplomatic maneuvering of President Marcos enhanced neutralism among the various countries of the world. It also encouraged self-reliance among Filipinos and confidence that they can craft their foreign policy independent of external influence.

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