

■ Speech delivered at the commencement exercises of the University of Nueva Caceres, Naga City, on April 16, 1966.

ARE FILIPINOS ANTI-AMERICAN?

Perhaps the most controversial issue now facing the Filipino people and our government is whether or not we should send troops to South Vietnam.

Many countries have already sent aid to South Vietnam, but in none of them has there been as much debate and discussion as in the Philippines. Both in and out of Congress, in the newspapers and over the radio and television the pros and cons of the matter are being ventilated. It is only here that it can be said that the sending of troops or any other form of aid to South Vietnam will be the result of democratic processes.

Aid to US

There has been a lot of opposition to the administration's recommendation to send an engineer-battalion with adequate security to South Vietnam. Much of this opposition is rooted in a belief that it is really the

United States and not South Vietnam that is interested in our government sending this kind of aid.

The influence of this thinking has gone to the extent of making some opponents of the proposal call those who favor it as "puppets" of the United States. It is felt that we are being used by the United States to improve the image of the Johnson administration at home and abroad by making it appear that the Vietnam struggle is not an American adventure but an Asian-supported war.

Deteriorating relations

What is the basis of this subconscious resistance, amounting even to antipathy, towards the United States?

The Philippines and the Filipinos have been the best friends of the United States in this part of the world. The relationship of the two countries has for a long time been characterized as "spe-

cial." There can be no doubt, however, that in recent years there has been a growing deterioration of this special relationship.

On Jan. 12, 1959, over seven years ago, Mr. Albino Z. SyCip, one of our most respected Filipino civic leaders and bankers, in the introduction to an article entitled "US Aid and Philippines Claims," stated:

"The marked deterioration in Philippine-American relations has become widely recognized this year.

"Friends in both countries as well as elsewhere are rightly concerned that this ominous situation may have serious consequences in Asia and other regions.

"It is tragic to see the situation worsen — apparently without the parties concerned realizing the full implications of deteriorating relations between the two countries."

The *New York Times*, in an editorial on Jan. 11, 1959, sounded the following warning:

"The mills of the Gods and of foreign aid may grind slowly, but there are times when it would be advanta-

geous to us and our friends to speed their process.

"We cannot afford to sacrifice because of simple inertia or even the suspicion of indifference, any part of the massive reservoir of goodwill that we have been able to build up."

That was in 1959, but the situation has not materially changed since then. As a matter of fact, the "massive reservoir of goodwill" towards the United States seems to be drying up, not only in the Philippines but in many parts of the world as well.

Worldwide decay

As early as 1962 and even much earlier, Canada, the next-door neighbor of the United States, became suspicious of American investments in that country. The nationalist fears of the Canadians had been aroused by the massiveness of such investment, and sanctions were sought to limit or control the further entry of American capital. To this time, economic anti-Americanism still exists in a thinly-disguised form in Canada.

In Europe, France has assumed an anti-American economic and political posture.

Among other things, she has dissociated herself from the American position in Vietnam and her stand in current discussions on world monetary reform has caused repercussions that for a time tended to weaken the United States dollar. She has also decided to pull out of NATO.

In Central America, the Dominican Republic still smarts from American "intervention." In Africa, members of the Organization of African Unity strongly resent the treatment of Negroes in the United States.

If we turn to Asia, we have Japan, a major beneficiary of United States aid, which harbors large groups that are strongly and articulately anti-American. Among them are the Japanese Socialist Party, and the Soka Gakkai, a militant nationalistic Buddhist sect which is rapidly increasing in numbers and in activity in politics.

To cap it all, in South Vietnam where the United States is spending millions of dollars and shedding the blood of American fighting men for the Vietnamese, these

same Vietnamese and not the Viet Cong are rioting against the United States today.

US aid to RP

In the Philippines, the growing resentment of some people against the United States must appear as ingratitude of the Filipinos to those who do not see the complete picture of Filipino-American relations in recent years. They cannot understand the antipathy of many Filipinos in the face of American help that has been extended to them.

This failure to understand, however, is due to misconceptions on the nature and extent of so-called American aid. The Philippines may have received some money from the United States, but not all of this is "aid."

Let me quote former US Ambassador Charles E. Bohlen in his speech before the Manila Lions Club on Feb. 12, 1958:

"In order to avoid any misconceptions, however, I wish to emphasize that with the exception of the ICA program and the Military Assistance Program, these dollar receipts I have listed do not properly come under

the heading of aid. For example, payments to Philippine veterans constitute an honorable fulfillment of an obligation which the United States assumed towards those Filipinos who fought in or with our Armed Forces during World War II. The \$50 million which enter the Philippine economy from the operation of the United States bases represent payment for value received in the form of services or goods."

In an AP report from New York dated March 23, 1966, which was published in the Manila Times of March 24. Mr. David T. Sternberg, an American who resided for 26 years in the Philippines, was quoted. The news item reads as follows:

"He (Sternberg) said in the early years of the Philippine-American relationship there were few complex problems. American assistance for Filipino needs and aspirations paid off in gratitude and friendship, upon which Americans draw to this day.

"The problem is, Sternberg said that we continue to draw upon it with too

little conscious effort to keep it replenished!

"The Filipino who has reached maturity since World War II has personally experienced little, if any of the benign American presence of early years, he noted."

It is unfortunate that Mr. Sternberg is just a private citizen who has seen American attitude change in the Philippines, and his sympathetic and understanding voice may be lost in the wilderness. What is now heard are pronouncements of officials who may not have the sympathy and understanding.

Facing problems

During the Philippine-American Assembly held in Davao, from Feb. 23 to 26 of this year, an assembly organized presumably because of fear for the future of Philippine-American relations, and attended by some 75 Filipinos and American leaders in the government and private sectors, no less than William Bundy, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, put the following on record:

"The United States believes that in our economic cooperation planning we should look into the future rather than reminisce or fret about the past. We are not, accordingly, disposed to reopen questions long since closed, and involving events of over twenty years ago, regarding which the United States — on both the executive and legislative sides of the government — feels in good conscience that it has fulfilled its obligations. On the other hand, we are quite prepared to look into the possibilities of a more equitable administration of benefits to Filipino veterans of the Second World War; and for this purpose a Joint Commission is soon to be created which will seek to make unified recommendations to the President of the United States for his endorsement to the United States Congress."

If this statement of Mr. Bundy is an expression of irreversible American policy, then may I say that it cannot contribute in any manner to soothe the ruffled RP-US relations. We cannot

just forget valid questions simply because the United States unilaterally declares them as closed.

Financial claims

In April, 1956, President Ramon Magsaysay presented an aide memoire to US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on Philippine financial claims against the United States of a military and non-military nature. President Magsaysay requested their early payment, stressing the significance of such settlement on Philippine-American relations at the same time pointing out how it would materially assist the Philippines in implementing its economic development program.

In 1950, the Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines, appointed by the President of the United States, known as the Bell mission, after completing its survey, made an extensive report which, contained, among others, the following recommendation:

"Any further financial aid from the United States to the Philippines should be preceded by a settlement of outstanding finan-

cial claims and the funding of maturing obligations. Such a definite settlement is necessary to place the financial relations between the government of the United States and the government of the Philippines on a basis in which it is recognized that obligations must be met promptly and and in full."

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"There are a number of financial claims between the two governments, some antedating the war, others growing out of the war. It is not desirable to have these unsettled claims hampering close financial collaboration between the two countries. A joint commission should be set up promptly to negotiate an agreement to cover the claims of each government against the other and to provide for a final settlement. The agreement should specifically state that no further financial claims will be made by either government against the other for any alleged obligations incurred prior to the date of the agreement."

This recommendation of an official US government mission is now more than 15 years old, and our claims have not yet been settled. Fifteen years ago, the creation of a joint commission was recommended to negotiate and agree on the final settlement of these claims. But the United States has dilly-dallied in the formation of this joint commission.

Instead, in 1959 some of our claims were unilaterally turned down by the United States, amounting to almost one billion pesos. It was only in 1964 that the US President, in a joint communique with the Philippine President, agreed to establish the joint commission, which the Bell Mission had recommended in 1950 (or 14 years back) to negotiate and settle our claims.

But until now, no such joint commission has been established, Mr. Bundy of the US state department promised in the Davao conference last February that such commission "is soon to be created". When will it be constituted? I understand our government is ready, but no concrete move towards

this direction has been taken in the United States.

But what is irritating to the Filipinos, is that the United States has unilaterally and by its own act alone rejected almost a billion pesos of our claims and now considers claims as forever closed.

We have other claims, for veterans benefits amounting to some three billion dollars and for other legal liabilities of the United States amounting to about half a billion pesos.

Prompt settlement

If these claims had been settled promptly as recommended by the Bell Mission, the funds proceeding from them could have been utilized to promote our economic development. But instead of immediately settling these claims and paying to us what is legally due us, the United States has preferred to make us look like beggars soliciting loans or aid from America.

And yet, this aid to a friend who stood by her during the war, is but a drop in the bucket compared to what has been given to

Japan, who was an enemy in the war.

Is it any wonder then that many Filipinos resent this "aid" that we get from the United States? Why does not the United States promptly settle our claims so that we can get what is really due us?

Prompt Settlement

If there is good faith to settle those claims promptly, the United States could come to a compromise settlement with the Philippines doing away with technicalities of evidence. Whatever the variance between the amount we claim and the amount the United States would acknowledge as due in our favor why can't we finish this long-pending problem by fixing a compromise amount that could be paid to us in full final settlement of all these claims?

A careful study of this agreement, entered into between the Philippines and the United States in 1947, will reveal the fact that it is more onerous than similar agreements of the United States with other countries. Under this treaty, there is a

greater surrender of sovereignty and freedom of action by the Philippines than by other countries with which the United States has similar agreements.

As a consequence, it was agreed in July, 1956, to hold formal negotiations for the revision of certain aspects of the agreement, among them being the exercise of Philippine sovereignty in the bases, the correlation of mutual defense arrangements, the modernization of the military base system, and the operation of the bases. The negotiations were commenced on Aug. 13, 1956, but were suddenly terminated on Dec. 5 of the same year, when the chairman of the American panel unilaterally announced his decision to declare an infinite recess, without even consulting the Philippine panel.

Informal talks were subsequently held, and these talks led to, among other things, the flying of the Philippine flag beginning in the morning of May 4, 1957 in place of honor alongside the American flag on bases operated by the United States in the Philippines. They also led

to the relinquishment to the Philippines of the Port of Manila Reservation, also known as Manila Air Station, including all permanent improvements thereon, and its deactivation as a United States air force installation.

Subsequent negotiations led to the relinquishment to the agreement from 1958 to 1960.

Among them was one which provided that the United States relinquish to the Philippines any and all rights to the use of 17 bases comprising 117,075 hectares which the United States did not need anymore. Another memorandum of agreement provided for consultation before bases operated by the United States in the Philippines could be used for combat operations other than those conducted in accordance with the Mutual Defense Treaty and the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, and before long-range missile sites could be established on said bases. Unfortunately, this agreement has all but been ignored by the United States.

This same Memorandum of Agreement reduced the duration of the 1947 Bases

Agreement from 99 to 25 years, subject to renewal. This period of 25 years will commence from "the date of signature of the formal documents giving effect to the agreement reached." A period of almost seven years has already elapsed without any formal agreement being signed!

Criminal jurisdiction

As a result of serious incidents at Clark air force base and at Subic naval base where American armed forces personnel had shot and killed Filipino citizens who had allegedly committed certain offenses, the question of jurisdiction over those offenses came into the limelight. Anti-American demonstrations erupted at this time in protest at the loss of Filipino lives.

Negotiations were therefore held to review and to revise not only the article on criminal jurisdiction but such other provisions as are sources of irritants in the relations between the two countries.

After a series of conferences the article on criminal jurisdiction was finally revised by an exchange of notes

on Aug. 10, 1965. This new arrangement was patterned after the NATO Status of Forces Formula. It provides for United States primary jurisdiction over American servicemen present in the Philippines in connection with the United States bases in the following cases:

1. Offenses arising from acts and commissions done in performance of official duty;

2. Offenses solely against the property or security of the United States; and

3. Offenses solely against the person or property of the United States.

The Philippines has primary jurisdiction in all other cases, including offenses committed in United States bases. Each country has exclusive jurisdiction regarding offenses punish under its own laws but not able under its own laws of the other country.

Other problems

There are still some problems in connection with the military bases which provide irritants.

Among them are tax-exemptions on personally-owned motor vehicles and other per-

sonal effects enjoyed by American contractors and their employes who are American citizens, the continued disposal in the local market by the United States authorities of surplus property which are tax-free, hence competing with local traders and packaging industries; and the lack of agreement between the two countries governing the recruitment of Filipino labor for employment at United States military bases.

As a matter of fact, Filipino workers labor under handicaps in wage rates, retirement fringe benefits, overtime pay, job security and other related matters, not only in the Philippines but also in Okinawa, Guam, Wake, and the Marianas. Negotiations for this purpose have bogged down. This problem is potentially explosive considering that nationals of former enemy countries seem to be favored over Filipino workers.

Finally, the Philippines had to take the stand that nuclear-powered vessels are not covered by the Military Bases Agreement and that they may not be allowed entry into Philippine waters

except upon prior clearance by the Philippine Government. The United States, however, has continued to bring these vessels without prior clearance.

Major irritant

From all the different circumstances, events and situations that I have mentioned, it is clear that the major irritant that must subconsciously cause resentment in the mind of the average Filipino is the manner in which the United States has treated the Philippines. The United States does not seem to regard and to treat the Philippines as an equal sovereign nation.

Not only have we been discriminated against in relation to Americans themselves but even in comparison with other countries, including those who fought the United States during the war while we stood by her.

But worse than this, is that in her behavior towards us, she tends to create the image of a vassal for the Philippines and gives justification to others to call us an American puppet when we take a position identical to that

of the United States, even when that position has been taken on the basis of our own independent judgment.

For instance, why are those supporting of our engineer construction battalion to South Vietnam often labelled as "American puppets"? I submit this was caused by the visits to the Philippines of US Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, with the impression that they came to "convince" our President to send troops to South Vietnam.

The picture created was that we were being subjected to pressure by the United States. We had received the request for assistance directly from the government of South Vietnam. Why could not the United States have left us alone, without making it appear that she was influencing our decision?

Is it any wonder that many Filipinos react sharply and consider that the approval of the administration's Vietnam bill would be a surrender of our own independence and subservience to the United States?

Reorientation

We are not anti-Americans.

On the whole, our relations with the United States have produced beneficial effects for us, politically, economically, culturally, and even militarily. This is why there is still a vast reservoir of goodwill in the hearts of Filipinos towards the Americans.

But this reservoir of goodwill may dry up if not replenished, because the Filipino mind can see behind material benefits and know when he is being treated as a mere dependent. *And this affront to Philippine sovereignty and dignity, if not stopped, could really make us anti-American. If this happens, it would be by the fault of Americans themselves.*

A reorientation in Philippine-Americans relations is called for. American prestige and influence among developing countries and in the society of free nations could rise or fall according to the improvement or deterioration of these relations.

In many respects, the Philippines and the United States still need each other. But

the only stable foundation of their relationship must be equal sovereignty and mutual respect. Only on this basis

can mutual goodwill and friendship subsist and endure. — *By Senate President Arturo M. Tolentino.*

ANTIQUITY OF VILLAGE LIFE

Man lived in permanent settlements in the Middle East 5,000 years before Abraham, said an archeologist.

He said recent excavations indicate man resided in permanent settlements even while still existing by hunting and gathering wild crops.

The archeologist, Maurits van Loon of the University of Chicago, dug at Tell Mureybat, a large mound on the Euphrates river in Syria 200 miles from Damascus. He began his National Science Foundation — supported project in 1964 to salvage some of the ancient remains threatened by the Syrian government's plans for a 4 million dollar irrigation dam.

"The archaeological evidence examined to date in-

dicates that the village's inhabitants subsisted entirely on hunting and the harvesting on wild crops," Van Loon said.

"The remains indicate the ancient Euphrateans' first shelters were huts with clay floors and walls built over a frame of wood or reeds on stone foundations," he said.

"The rooms had no doorways, but between two pairs of rooms there were tiny peep-holes," he said. "The houses were entered through the roof."

Van Loon dated the village at about 9,500 years, or 4,500 years before the start of the bronze age and 6,300 before the iron age.