

# The Bare Facts of U.S. Imperialism

**IMPERIALISM**, the exploitation of man by man, the subjugation of the weak by the tyranny and lust of the mighty, is the oldest, vilest and most diabolical enemy of mankind. It has been the unflinching perpetrator of millions of deaths, destruction and the humiliation of national honor of exploited states.

History is replete with its odious tales. The Jews of ancient times writhed under the yoke of Egyptian imperialism; the people of India under the British; and the rest of the world under the rule of Alexander the Great, of Julius Caesar and of Napoleon Bonaparte. The infamy of imperialism reached its culminating point in the last two world wars as imperialist powers fought over markets and sources of raw materials in order to amass super-profits for a handful of monopolies in imperialist countries.

## U. S. Imperialism – A World Wide Menace

The world today is not exactly divided between the ideological camps of Democracy and Communism – two ideologies which, theoretically, aim for the progress of man, though differing in approach – but between the few ultra-powerful and ultra-rich countries on one hand, and the underdeveloped and struggling on the other. In between them is the demarcation line called exploitation.

Today, the United States of America is riding high on the crest of imperialism. Throughout the world its claws stretch-out to possess everything and rule everyone. Its avarice and lust for glory and power are clearly manifested by its treacherous activities in the past decade.

Several years ago, it attempted to topple down the regime of Fidel Castro in the infamous Bay of Pigs affair. Apparently, the treachery was designed to stop the Russians from “smuggling” missiles into Cuba. However, if you delve deeper into the matter, you will find out that the primary motive was to gain control once more of the Cuban economy which is a great source of sugar. This control, it may be noted, was shaken-off when Fidel Castro liberated Cuba from the dictatorship of the American puppet named Batista.

A few years after, it instigated a coup d’etat in Indonesia and successfully deposed Sukarno whose governmental policies were hostile to its imperialistic interests. In his place, it installed a puppet president who kowtows to all its wishes. Now, the American imperialist can dictate the Indonesian government without fear of any obstacle on matters affecting its rubber

industry.

At the same time, while he was ruing governments in Indonesia, Bolivia, St. Domingo and other countries, the American imperialist rained napalm bombs – Johnson’s baby powder – sprayed defoliants, butchered thousands of innocent civilians, razed houses to the ground in the poor and defenseless villages of Vietnam – all in the name of peace and democracy. The intelligent man can only curse at such execrable hypocrisy. As every right-thinking man knows, the American imperialist is in Vietnam because he sees too well how militarily strategic Vietnam is for his missiles that could keep his rivals, Communist China and Soviet Russia, at bay. The American infamy in Vietnam is not to safeguard the Free World or preserve peace but to expand its military campaign of world domination. As Voltaire once said, there is no aggressor who does not come in the name of justice or peace.

To preserve its hegemony in developing nations, the United States employs the subtlest and deadliest neo-colonial tactics. Through them, it has managed to fleece underdeveloped countries by draining-out from them sky-high profits from comparatively small investments and usurious interests charged on loans to private banks and government credits; buy raw materials at its own price and sell its finished goods to these countries at exorbitant prices by manipulating world prices through its undisputed control of the world market; establish base and deploy its military might in these exploited countries to protect its economic interests; force neo-colonies to accept unequal treaties and make them tools of its military ambitions; and, suppress movements advocating freedom and real independence by buying the oligarchs of the country, installing political puppets, and sending our infiltrators and saboteurs from its Invisibile Government, the CIA, who are experts in counter-revolution. The American imperialist is using every means at its disposal to subjugate developing countries and make them adopt reactionary policies calculated to counteract progress and social development.

The Philippines, one of the countries trying to develop itself economically, politically, culturally, and socially, is a victim of all these imperialistic atrocities of the United States.

## Historical Background of U.S. Imperialism in the Philippines

When did American imperialism in the Philippines begin?

During the outbreak of the Filipino Revolution against Spain at the close of the 19th century, an American fleet commanded by Commodore Dewey "accidentally and innocently" cruised the waters of Manila Bay. Informed of the revolution, the Commodore contacted Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo who was then the top man of the revolution, and conveyed to him his willingness to support the Philippine cause. Gen. Aguinaldo, seeing the great advantage it could give to the Filipinos in their struggle, accepted the "aid" of the diplomatic American without questioning the reason behind it. Because of such negligence or naivete on the part of Gen. Aguinaldo, the American imperialist managed to worm his way into Philippine soil.

While Aguinaldo and his men faced the guns of the Spaniards, the wily American commodore whom they believed was on their side, made treacherous agreements with their enemy on how to end the revolution in such manner that the Spaniards whose defeat was already certain would not lose their face before the eyes of the world. Thus, the mock battle of Manila Bay took place without the Filipinos being aware at all that it was so. Manila "fell" and the Spaniards surrendered to the Americans and not to the Filipinos who had made indescribable sacrifices for that end. The Spaniards indeed, saved their face and the world did not know that they were defeated by the backward "Indios." They had the United States to thank for that.

The terms of capitulation were drawn, as agreed, between the Spaniards and the Americans alone. No Filipino was present.

In the Treaty of Paris, the Spaniards ceded the Philippines to the United States for the sum of twenty million dollars, the right to export commodities to the Philippines for a period of ten years on the same terms as those of the United States (!) and the right to maintain some of their landholdings in the Philippines. This was the price the United States paid to buy the Philippines from Spain.

The Treaty of Paris remained ineffective until the American senate ratified it. A majority were against its ratification. The eruption of Filipino-American hostilities in February 4, 1899 turned the tide to the favor of its proponents. They took advantage of the situation by spreading the propaganda that the Filipinos fired the first shot. Its effect was great. The treaty was finally ratified. The American imperialists who were behind the propaganda won and the Philippines became a territory of the United States.

Everything indicates that the Americans never wanted to help the Filipinos gain their independence from Spain, because if it were the contrary the American treacherous agreements with Spain and the successive reinforcements the Americans sent to the Philippines should never have been made.

The Americans came to the Philippines as an enemy disguised as a friend.

The Filipino revolutionaries were suspicious of the activities of the Americans. Aguinaldo, Ricarte, Pio del Pilar and others shared that fear that the "visitors" were out to fool the Filipinos. Unfortunately, due to their revolutionary activities, they were unable to take precautionary measures against the threat posed by the Americans. The Americans took advantage of this and the general confusion prevailing in the country. Slowly, but surely, they entrenched themselves in the Philippines soil. Soon, they completely dominated the country. Aguinaldo and the rest of the patriots realized this too late. The war they waged later against the scheming colonialists became anticlimactic, and futile from the very beginning. Aguinaldo was captured, the Filipinos lost and the Americans won.

With American sovereignty firmly established in the Philippines, the Americans started indoctrinating and brainwashing the ignorant and backward bulk of the Filipino population. They gave the Filipinos education which was calculated to glorify the Americans before their eyes. The Filipino nationalists tried to counteract the insidious effect of this American activity, by means of the press and public assemblies. The colonialists undermined this by curtailing the fundamental rights of the Filipinos. As if this were not enough, the Americans deported Filipino leaders to Guam like Apolinario Mabini, Artemio Ricarte, Pio del Pilar and others. Thus, American imperialism in the Philippines became unchallenged and deeply entrenched in the country.

#### Free Trade

The Philippines in their tight grip, the American colonizers initiated free trade between the Philippines and the United States. The Philippine Assembly, realizing the harm it could do to the economy of the country, vigorously objected to its establishment. But American pressure was too great for them and they succumbed.

Free trade apparently was advantageous to the Filipinos. It stepped up production, and the volume and value of Philippines trade. Consequently, it increased the national income making possible the construction of roads, bridges, schools and the "upliftment" of the standard of living of the Filipinos.

However, these were only superficial comforts. While the Americans gave the Filipinos a peso, they drained-out of the country hundreds and thousands of pesos in return as a result of free trade. The overwhelming disadvantage produced by free trade can be summarized as follows:

1. It made the Philippines depend on the U.S. for its imports and exports.

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2. It made the Philippine economy agricultural and prevented the growth of industrialization.

3. It encouraged the concentration of production to a few agricultural products like sugar, coconut products, tobacco products and hemp to the neglect of other products.

4. It made the Filipino American-oriented in their preference for goods, thus gravely undermining the development of Philippine industrialization.

The result of all this was a colonial economy which fettered the progress of the Philippines. The Philippines became a mere supplier of raw materials and the dumping ground of American finished products.

Free trade between a well-developed country and a greatly underdeveloped one is a very unfair form of economic relationship. It is tantamount to a highly-organized business enterprise competing with a small "sari-sari" store. This was exactly the situation that prevailed between the Philippines and the United States with the establishment of free trade. The U.S. was very much aware of the adverse effects of free trade to an underdeveloped country when the other party is economically advanced. American experience with British imperialism had taught it this lesson. Thus, after it gained independence from England, the first thing it did was to refuse free trade with the English. What the British failed to impose on the Americans, the Americans succeeded with ease on the inexperienced Filipinos.

### Seventy Years After

More than seventy years have elapsed since the Philippines fell into the clutches of American imperialism. Presently, we find the Philippines still clinging to the skirts of the United States. Its economy instead of growing became stunted as a result of neo-colonial policies enforced in the Philippines during those years. Indubitably, American imperialism in the Philippines today is as deeply and seemingly irremediably rooted as ever.

The further entrenchment of American imperialism in the Philippines today is traceable to later developments. Supposedly granted political independence in 1946, the Americans rammed into the throats of the Filipinos unequal treaties calculated to maintain the continued presence of US military bases of its own designs, preserve the privileges of US investments, manage Philippine economy along the lines drawn by US policy-makers, and make the Philippines remain forever a source of cheap, raw materials and a sure market of American goods. Their country ravaged, not only by the Japanese invaders but much more so by the American "liberators" who bombed every inch of the Philippines to "liberate" it, the Filipino leaders, in their desire to rebuild their country from the ashes, were forced to accept these unequal and exploitative treaties. Once again, the American imperialist successfully took advantage of the Filipinos in their moments of confusion and difficulties.

### Proofs of U. S. Imperialism

The imposition of such treaties as the Military Base Agreement, the Military Assistance program, the Bell-trade Agreement and the Parity Agreement was the apogee of American imperialism — the treaties its masterpieces of exploitation and duplicity. Take for instance the L-L Agreement. The agreement stipulates mutual right of the Americans and the

Filipinos to exploit under similar terms the natural resources of the country, of each. At first glance, it appears fair enough.

A closer look, however, would reveal that it smacks of imperialistic dissimulation for the following reasons: (1) there are more than fifty states in the United States, each of which has its own economic policies. To indulge in business in any part of the United States, the Philippines has to make separate deals with the state involved. Think of all the difficulties the Philippines would meet! Whereas for the United States, it is very much easier to transact business in the Philippines because it is a one-state country; (2) Filipino investments can never compete profitably and equally with those giant corporations in the U.S.; and, (3) There are no more natural resources in the United States which the Filipino can exploit. Everything had been exploited by the Americans themselves. In fact, the exhaustion of U.S. natural resources is precisely the reason why the American imperialist is all over the world exploiting underdeveloped or developing countries like ours.

As a result of these treaties, American investors at present are having a lot of fun milking the Philippine economy. During the period of 1963-70, they siphoned out of the country \$128 million from investments which totalled \$41 million only. This means that for every dollar they spent in the Philippines they received in return three dollars. From 1962 to 1969 P2.1 billion were taken out of the country as invisible disbursements or \$316.69 million annually. These disbursements reached the peak of \$990 million in 1966 which exceeded the total export of that year!

Indeed, there is no doubt that the Americans control the Philippine economy. Eighty seven percent of the petroleum industry is American controlled. Of the four oil refineries in the country, three are owned by Americans. The production of fire is absolutely controlled by American capital. Our mining industries are dominated by 15 American corporations. The

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or some other available profession.

The fact that we have so many drop-outs during the four years of college illustrates the actuality of role confusion. The existence of so many college trained unemployed emphasizes the tragedy of failure to achieve a clear cut role and the energy to arrive there. Notice how many professionals even do not practise their trade. Our governor is a doctor. I know a banker downtown who is a psychologist. Many a lawyer is working as a casual, I am told.

Here in the Philippines we have an added confusing element in the present struggle to establish an identity in the nation itself. The question about a genuine Filipino is asked again and again. Is it any wonder then that we have so much confusion as the modern Filipino youth attempts to sort out his or her future from these pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. The fact that so many succeed is indeed encouraging. Youth has that plasticity which allows itself to fit in so much better than the adults of later life. The idealism of youth goes a long way to make up for what is lacking in the ordinary choice of a role. His willingness to start again if one proves too unrealistic allows him to climb even Mount Everest if necessary. When he cannot find the role, he makes the one he is doing fit his present needs.

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largest non-life insurance companies in the Philippines are owned by 17 American companies. The first City Bank of New York and the Bank of America, two of the biggest four banks in the country, are completely owned by American capitalists. The American Procter and Gamble and Colgate-Palmolive dominate the local soap and cosmetic industries. Many more can be cited. The list surely is more than enough to prove how much the U. S. capitalists control our country's economy.

It might be footnoted that while the Filipino and Chinese business establishments are numerically greater than the American businesses, these Filipino and Chinese enterprises are mere distributors, packagers, assemblers, bottlers, and licensed makers of American products.

### American neo-colonial tactics

American imperialism has maintained its neo-colonial domination of the Philippines through cultural, educational, economic, political and other means. Culturally, the Americans bring into the Philippines cultural programs designed to insure the continuing Americanization of our country. Educationally, the Americans send study programs intended to promote "agricultural development" in the country. Thus, at the U.P. Cornell University has worked hand in hand with the College of Agriculture. Economically, the Americans pamper the feudal lords so that they would produce more products for the American factories.

The most effective of them, so far is control of the country through political means. The U.S. every election supports candidates whom it can make its puppets or its tools in perpetrating its imperialistic activities in the country. During a presidential election in the 1950's for instance, the U.S. openly supported a chosen presidential candidate. To ensure his victory, the U.S. did not only give him financial aid but also militia-assistance. During the election, the U.S. Seventh Fleet was in the waters of Manila Bay prepared to trigger off a military coup d'etat in the Philippines in case the candidates would lose the election. The candidate won, but did not live long enough to serve the Americans. American intervention in Philippine politics was repeated similarly in succeeding elections.

Thus, today we have a government that serves more the interests of the United States than the Philippines'. One proof of this is the infamous PHILCAG affair. Another, the latest, is the imposition of the floating rate. Devaluation is bad for the Philippine economy. Yet we devalued. Why? because it is good for the American interests. Before the devaluation, an American dollar could purchase only P4.00 worth of our goods and services. Now after the devaluation, the same dollar could purchase P6.00 worth of them.

Alejandro Lichauco, an economist and not a neo-colonial political science instructor, wrote in this article published in the Sept. 19 issue of the Free Press that "while devaluation favors overseas American business, it has wreaked havoc on our people and has made it more costly and difficult for Filipinos to industrialize." That's who our government serves the Americans and tortures our own people.

### Conclusion

Indeed, there is American imperialism in the Philippines.

Many of us tend to deny it because of the so-called American "aids" to our country. Actually, these aids are payments of the destruction the Americans brought to our country in the last global war. Furthermore, if we look deeper into the matter, these "aids" are given to step-up agricultural development and make the Philippines a perpetual supplier of raw materials to the United States. Thus, we have such "aids" from the "good" Americans like fertilizers, farm machineries, tractors and other farm equipment. What's very ironic here is that for these payments or "aids" we have given unequal treaties with the U.S., free trade, decontrol (as in the time of Pres. Macapagal), devaluation and other economic policies which are among the roots of our social disease and economic crisis today.

Philippine population is rapidly increasing. Every twenty seconds a Filipino is born to be fed. Unless the Philippines economy is improved, many Filipinos will die of malnutrition. In order to industrialize, we have to cauterize American imperialism in the Philippines.

## SIKOLIHYA NG . . . . .

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Ang ilang mga kapisano ng tabla, kaunting pandikit at mga pako ay hindi natin masasabing isang mesa na. Gayon din, ang lipon ng kabataan-babae at lalake-ay hindi isang lipunan. Kung kailangang mang may tunay na pamayanan, kinakailangang mayroon silang interes at pangangailangan kumon, pagitiwala at pag-uunawaan sa bawa't isa, pagtitipon at paghahati ng pook na kumon. Minsan, sa isang katha ni Morgan tungkol dito, sinabi niya na: "Sa isang tunay na pamayanan, ang mga gawain ay ipinaghati sa gayung uri ng tao. Ang ganitong pagkakaisa ay humahantong sa pinakamalalim na gamot ng sosyedad at mas malakas na pag-uugnay ng iba't-ibang uri ng personalidad."

Dapat isasa-isip na huwag sayangin ang panahon; datapwat ito'y gagamitin isang tulay upang maangkin ang kalusugan, moralidad at kakayahang isang tao.

### PAGTATAPOS

Kaya, ang pag-uunlad ng mga interes, pangarap at pagpapahalagang kakailanganin ng kabataan sa kanilang maligaya at may pagkakaisang-himig na pamumuhay sa isang demokratikong lipunan ay nangangailangan ng mas mahigpit pa sa mga takdang-aralin ng paaralan at mas mahigpit pa sa paniniwalang pampulitika at rehilyon. Ito'y nangangailangan ng pagkakaisa sa mga tao't lipunang nararapat.

Maraming mga taong nakalimot na lamang sa kanilang pagmimithi, mga magagandang asal at mga interes noong panahon ng kanilang kabataan. Sila'y mga bigo sa kanilang modernong paglaki ngayon. Bakit? Sapagka't sa ganitong bahagi ng buhay nila'y hindi nila masyadong maintindihan ang sarili nila; sila'y walang sikurididad at hindi pa lubusang hinog ang mga pag-iisip nila. Kung magawa lamang nating tingnan at nag-uawaing lubos ang mga kabutasan ito'y magkaroning tayo ng panawagan at pagitiwala sa kanilang kinabukasan. Ito'y kung . . . at kung lamang . .

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