



PUBLISHED BY THE COMMON-
WEALTH OF THE PHILIPPINES
1617 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N. W.,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Volume III, Number 1

March 15, 1943

The Philippine Government: From Manila to Washington

"One of the most epic series of desperate adventures ever undergone by a nation's civilian leader in the history of war." That was the description aptly given by General Douglas MacArthur of the perilous journey made by President Manuel L. Quezon from Japanese-besieged Manila to Washington, via Corregidor, the Visayan Islands, Mindanao and Australia.

"We travelled on the sea, under the sea and over the sea," President Quezon once summarized. Again and again there was imminent danger in running the Japanese blockade. The President, who was strongly reluctant to leave Manila, bore the grave responsibility of his family and his staff. This, coupled with the poor state of his health at the time, increased the hardships of the trip. Only his iron will to live to see the day of the redemption of the Philippines enabled him to reach Washington to continue the fight for the liberation of his country.

At the outbreak of the Pacific war President Quezon was in Baguio recuperating from a recurrence of an old illness. At 8:00 A.M., December 8, 1941, Japanese bombs were dropping on the United States Army Camp, John Hay, only a half mile from the President's residence.

He immediately motored the 160 miles to Manila to take charge of the Filipino resistance against the Japanese—a resistance which is still going on. In suburban Mariquina President Quezon presided at meetings of his Cabinet two or three times every 24-hour day and was in constant communication with MacArthur. The Commonwealth Government was doing everything possible to help the army of Filipinos and Americans under General MacArthur.

Hard Decision

After the Japanese had succeeded in landing at several places in Northern Luzon, and when it became evident that they could not be stopped from closing in on Manila, MacArthur and the President discussed the question of declaring Manila an open city. MacArthur told the President that he was transferring his headquarters to Corregidor and wanted the Chief Executive to go with him. He insisted that it was his duty to prevent the President's capture by the Japanese and he could only do that by having him in Corregidor. President Quezon objected. He thought it was his duty to remain with the civilian population. He even advanced a counter proposal—to leave Manila and go to

some unoccupied province. The Cabinet, however, by unanimous decision, endorsed MacArthur's suggestion.

All the members wanted to leave with him, but there was not enough space in the jam-packed fortress. Only he, his family, Vice President Osmeña, Chief Justice Santos, Major-General Valdes, who had been designated Secretary of National Defense, and some members of the Executive Staff, could make the trip.

On December 24 President Quezon was notified by General MacArthur that the hour of departure had come. Even then, there was no despair. There was still the hope that help would soon come from the United States and the invader would be driven away in a few months. While President Quezon and his party were on their way to board the *S. S. Mayon*, which was waiting for them in the Bay, Manila harbor was having its worst bombing of the war. The boat's departure was held up for an hour because the chief engineer could not be located. When the party finally boarded the boat, they found High Commissioner Sayre and his party there.

President Quezon's health had worsened, but in the Corregidor tunnel he spent his long days in conferences with General MacArthur and the members of his Cabinet on the progress of the invasion and of the resistance gallantly put up by the combined American and Filipino forces. He acted daily on the incoming reports from unoccupied areas.

Inauguration at Corregidor

On Rizal Day, December 30, 1941, President Quezon and Vice President Osmeña began their second term. The simple but impressive ceremonies on Corregidor were witnessed by the United States High Commissioner and his family, General MacArthur and his family, Army officers and nurses. The President devoted his inauguration address to reiterating his faith in eventual United Nations victory, promising that his people would fight with the United States until the end and encouraging the Filipinos in their defiance of Nipponese fury.

That same day President Quezon declined an invitation from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to come to Washington. At that time he could have easily made the trip from the Philippines to Australia and then to the United States on a surface craft, as Singapore and Java were still holding and Japanese planes and ships were

not in control of that area. But he still had much to do. The heroic stands at Bataan and Corregidor were to come.

By the middle of February the lack of rice and food-stuffs had become acute. For weeks the men had been without sufficient food. General MacArthur, President Quezon and the Cabinet met and conferred. It was decided that the President could be of more help by going to the unoccupied provinces to organize some plan of bringing in food for the soldiers at Bataan and Corregidor and to keep up the morale of the civilian population.

In accordance with this decision and with the approval of President Roosevelt, President Quezon's party prepared to leave for the Visayan Islands. At dusk on February 20, an American submarine slipped through mine fields and anchored at Corregidor.

In secrecy the Quezon party boarded the submarine, which immediately groped its way through the mined waters around Corregidor into the open sea. When dawn came, however, the submarine had to dive again. The submarine's interior became intolerably hot. To President Quezon this part of his odyssey was the most uncomfortable. He turned down impatiently any suggestion to continue the trip to Hawaii or Australia. Rather than stay an hour longer in a submerged submarine, he preferred to face the Japanese.

Submarine Trip Ended

At dawn on February 22, after 30-odd hours in the submarine, the Quezon party was at San Jose in Panay. From here President Quezon proceeded to Iloilo and conferred with local officials, including the provincial boards of Iloilo and Capiz, discussing with them plans for supplying Corregidor and continuing the resistance against the Japanese as long as possible. Two days later they moved from Iloilo to Negros Occidental. Meantime, attempts were made to send ships loaded with much needed food to the harried men of Bataan, but only one ship got through, the rest being sunk by the Japanese.

Vice President Osmeña and Major General Valdes then went to look Cebu over as a possible site for the Government. The appearance of an enemy cruiser summarily ended the project and the two officials returned to Negros. On their return it was decided that the seat of the Government should be transferred to Mindanao and, in order to find the best possible location, Colonel Soriano was sent to Mindanao with a letter to Maj. Gen. William F. Sharp, in command of the Visayan-Mindanao Force.

When Colonel Soriano came back, he had a letter from General MacArthur whom he had seen in Mindanao. The letter informed President Quezon that by order of President Roosevelt, he, the General, was going to Australia. He urged President Quezon to join him in Australia and from there to direct the forces that would reconquer the Philippines. He told him also that on a certain day two or three PT boats would come and get President Quezon in Negros. The President read the letter through once and, in characteristic fashion, made his decision on the spot.

The hazards of the proposed trip became apparent from the very beginning. Just before leaving, President Quezon received a telegram from General Wainwright report-

ing that Japanese destroyers were in the waters that the President was going to traverse. Nevertheless, the President went to the rendezvous to meet the officer in command of the PT boats and to tell him what General Wainwright had reported. He waited for more than two hours, and when they failed to appear he decided to return to his temporary residence, leaving Vice President Osmeña and General Valdes to wait for the boats.

Bulkeley Appears

When the PT boats arrived and the officers found that the President had gone, they drove furiously over a 20-mile stretch to overtake him. Lt. Bulkeley pulled up in front of the President's car. "We can make it tonight, sir, he said as he stepped toward the President in front of his car's headlight. "It would be harder and riskier if we tried to come back later for you. I strongly urge you to come now."

President Quezon raised his eyebrows and gave one long look at the speaker. "I'll go," said he.

Later in Washington he revealed that he was very much surprised to find Bulkeley so young. When he met him in Negros, Bulkeley had a long beard, but when he saw him again in Australia, the naval hero had shaven.

"You know, he looked just like a boy," the President told Washington correspondents. Half jokingly and half seriously he added: "If I had seen him like that on the night we were talking on the road near Bais, I wouldn't have set foot on his boat. But that night, with those fearless eyes and that black beard, he looked as keen and able as an old Spanish pirate."

It was 3:15 in the morning when Bulkeley ordered Ensign George Cox, skipper of the PT-41 to get under way, and soon the overloaded little boat was roaring seaward. Hardy members of the party gripped handrails on the narrow deck. President Quezon stayed in the wheelhouse, and Mrs. Quezon prayed in the chartroom.

PT Boat Incident

After two hours, when the trip's greatest peril was considered over, the boat staggered under a violent jolt from the open sea. It was decided to let go a couple of torpedoes. It was a most risky enterprise to fire them, for one bursting air flask would blow up the ship. The long tense moment ended when two courageous torpedomen finished their job perfectly. The boat was wheeled sharply to avoid the running torpedoes and continued the rest of the four-hour trip to Oroquieta, Mindanao, without a hitch, except for the unusual roughness.

Fifteen Navy men, armed to the teeth, leaped ashore as the boat touched the pier, and President Quezon came out of the open cockpit. He saw the men approach the village to clear it of any Japanese lurking there. The President was tired but his eyes were full of fire.

The President, wearing two light leather jackets but no shirt, riding breeches but no boots, and leather bedroom slippers but no socks, stepped ashore, followed by Mrs. Quezon, the Quezon children—Aurora, Zeneida, Manuel, Jr.—and the rest of the party. The big crowd which watched the landing failed to recognize their President, a fact which pleased the military and naval authorities

who were doing their best to keep his departure to Australia a secret.

President Quezon spent March 19 in Jimenez and the next two days in Dansalan on the shore of Lake Lanao, 2,000 feet above sea level. During his stay in Mindanao he designated Brig. Gen. Manuel Roxas, who had asked to be allowed to remain in the Philippines, to act for the President in all the unoccupied areas.

On the night of March 22, President Quezon's party motored to Del Monte, a pineapple plantation from which they could easily reach the airfield. There they waited four days for the appearance of three Flying Fortresses from Australia.

At 10 o'clock on the night of March 26 the Quezon party motored to the airfield. The cars, lighted only by the moon, moved slowly.

Aboard Flying Fortress

The Quezon party were helped into their places in the planes. The Flying Fortresses rose into the air and the lights on the airfield were turned off. The President of the Philippines had seen the last of his native soil until the day of victory.

The planes arrived in northern Australia the next morning. President Quezon later said that he had never realized that that continent was so near the Philippines. The Quezon party breakfasted in Port Darwin. The eggs he had that morning were the best he had ever eaten, the President observed.

The Flying Fortresses resumed their trip to southern Australia, two of them reaching Alice Springs in the afternoon. The plane bearing Vice President Osmeña and Major Soriano was missing. President Quezon refused to go on with the trip until they were found, so he spent the night in a small hotel in Alice Springs.

The missing plane ran short of gas above the Australian desert. The pilot grounded the plane to await rescue. The plane's radio failed to work. After some tinkering with it, the crew succeeded the next morning in sending a flash before it went dead again. That afternoon a rescue plane appeared. The Flying Fortress obtained enough gas to make the 50 miles to Alice Springs.

Philippines Is One of United Nations

Representation of the Philippines in the Pacific War Council and its admission as one of the United Nations have brought our country virtual recognition as an independent nation.

In a historic ceremony in the White House on June 15, 1942, President Quezon affixed his signature to the Declaration of the United Nations. On the same day, in the same ceremony, Mexico also became one of the United Nations.

In an address in Baltimore a few days later Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles said of this event: "It signaled the entrance into the rights and obligations of that pact of the people of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, whose epic resistance against the invading hordes—whose loyalty to their American brothers—will never be forgotten by the people of the United States. No nation

The rest of the trip to Melbourne was velvet. President Quezon and his party were taken in a comfortable transport plane from the mid-desert town to Adelaide, where they boarded a train for Melbourne. General MacArthur was waiting for them at the station. President Quezon also met Governor General Gowrie of Australia and Prime Minister Curtin, who expressed the admiration of the Australians for the gallant fight that the Filipinos were putting up. They felt that the determined stand of the Filipinos was aiding Australia immeasurably by giving her more time to prepare her defenses.

President Quezon soon realized that he could do much more for the Philippines in Washington than in Melbourne, so he decided to accept the invitation of the President of the United States. His party boarded a San Francisco-bound American transport, a one-time transpacific liner, escorted by a cruiser always within a half-mile. The transport voyage was comparatively smooth and uneventful, although the ship had to zigzag much of the way.

At Work in Washington

"One beautiful morning I sighted San Francisco's Golden Gate, which I never expected to see again when I entered the tunnel of Corregidor," President Quezon said, upon his arrival in Washington.

In San Francisco President Quezon was met by Oscar Chapman, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, and representatives of the Army and Navy. Aboard a special train sent by order of President Roosevelt, the Quezon party arrived in Washington on May 13, 1942.

At the Union Station the Filipino leader was greeted by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of Interior Ickes, Justices of the Supreme Court, Senators and Congressmen, and former Philippine Governors General and High Commissioners. President Quezon and his family were invited to spend the night at the White House.

The next day when the Philippine and American flags were raised at the Philippine Commonwealth Building at 1617 Massachusetts Avenue the President of the Philippines was already at his desk. Malacañan Palace had been transferred to Washington for the duration.

has ever more fully earned its right to its independence."

President Quezon represents the Philippines in the potent Pacific War Council. This body, composed of representatives of certain United Nations countries, meets weekly in Washington, with President Roosevelt presiding. Other members are the Ambassadors of Great Britain, China, and the Netherlands, and the Ministers of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Formal recognition of the Philippines in the Pacific War Council and as one of the United Nations was among the first things President Quezon worked for after his arrival in the United States. On June 10 he wrote Secretary of State Cordell Hull:

"The people of the Philippines are whole-heartedly devoted to liberty and fully subscribe to the principles set