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## Editor's Introduction

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## Editor's Introduction

In discussing the complex and deeply flawed practice of democracy and politics in the Philippines, the articles in this issue look back and look forward, and in the process yield fresh insights. There is an exploration of hope as well as of the unexpected.

Nakano Satoshi's original work seeks to explain why Gabriel L. Kaplan, a New York Republican politician who became an agent of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was rather successful in attaining U.S. goals in the Philippines. Kaplan helped ensure Ramon Magsaysay's election to the presidency in 1953. As Nakano suggests, Kaplan's familiarity with "progressive" strategies in New York and with electoral fraud there enabled him to organize a movement that propelled Magsaysay's candidacy, and to safeguard the ballot and foil electoral fraud by the party in power. Nakano alerts us to the ironies of the colonial relationship, and points to the comparable and intertwined histories of Philippine and U.S. elections.

That there is a high level of support by Muslim Filipinos for the presence of U.S. troops in southern Mindanao is an enigma that Patricio N. Abinales seeks to explain. Instead of the tired argument about colonial mentality, Abinales finds the answer in a common sentiment shared historically by Muslims who regard Americans as their protector against "Filipinos." It is a view little understood from the power center that is Manila; otherwise it would have acted in the direction of, say, an inclusive narrative of Philippine history. Muslim powerholders also view U.S. military presence as a means to boost their own power bases, thus calling attention to the localization of Philippine politics as well as the U.S.-led campaign against militant Islam.

Building on his previous writings on the subject, Grant Goodman narrates the Commonwealth period as a time of intense Japanese

diplomatic efforts to influence and win the support of leading Filipino political figures. Japan is portrayed as astutely seeking to protect its interests with no thought of conquest, to the discomfort of Americans. In the end, Goodman portrays the United States as the “loser,” with Filipinos as the “winners”—a conclusion that may not sit well with other observers.

Antonio F. Moreno, S.J., analyzes the participation of the Catholic Church in the public sphere, using the Diocese of Bacolod as an exemplar of its role in building peace and democracy in the period after 1986. Father Moreno avoids a portrayal of the church as monolithic, and indeed highlights the internal conflicts and tensions within the church in Negros. Given the links with the Vatican, he is also concerned about the nature of church engagement with civil society. Despite problems and the failure of the peace process, the local church is shown as succeeding in forming a “constituency of peace” composed of ordinary individuals who demonstrate the ideals of “engaged citizenship.” Parallels with Latin America are drawn, but the article also attempts to explain why the Catholic Church has not gone into “political retrenchment” as some national churches in the Americas have experienced.

In the struggle for peace, the 26 December 1989 declaration of Sitio Cantomanyog in Negros Occidental as a zone of peace is a milestone. Despite diocesan influence, the document speaks of ordinary people’s desire to banish armed violence in their community. It was the day after Christmas. While many around the country might still have been merrymaking, the people of Cantomanyog were caught in a different plight. Their assertion of peace deserves to be memorialized; hence, it is published here. The document was taken from Father Moreno’s Ph.D. thesis, with our own translation into English.

How would Kaplan have reacted to such a declaration of peace? This question is prompted by Nakano’s proposition that Kaplan might have used the CIA as a cover for his left-leaning politics. Even “community development” traces its lineage to Kaplan. In an analogous but different vein, many foreign priests have practiced engaged citizenship in Negros and countless other places. In the multiple, contradictory and often incoherent practices of democracy, the cosmopolitan and the universal are complexly entwined with the national and the local.