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On the Special Filipino-American Relationships: Philippine-American Relations

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The purposes of a volume like this are clearly both scholarly and opinion-molding, and it must be judged accordingly. On a scholarly level, Diaz-Trechuelo's article excepted, there is not much new. Symposia usually lack cohesiveness, but this one particularly so. It reflects accurately the state of scholarship in the Philippines on this subject. It is a depressing commentary on Sino-Philippine relations after all those centuries (and on the hopes of the editor for "more understanding") that none of the Filipino contributors reads Chinese. Chinese scholars must be dug up—not just to give "the Chinese viewpoint", but to present the Chinese sources. Language-learning is one of the first steps toward empathy and without it all the goodwill in the world accomplishes little. Where the Chinese are concerned, Filipinos, alas, have never been willing to take that first step.

Pro-Chinese opinions—or even open-minded views on the Chinese—are notoriously hard to maintain for long in public print in Manila, the more so for someone as mercurial as Attorney Felix. He promises a second volume to bring the story up to date. If such a volume appears let us hope the scholarly efforts of the Chinese and Filipino contributors are integrated, not arranged in parallel columns. Perhaps an American reviewer can best spot "tokenism" because Americans so regularly practice it in their minority relations. In any case, "tokenism", whether in books or in social relations, is no substitute for integration.

EDGAR WICKBERG

ON THE SPECIAL FILIPINO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIPS

PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN RELATIONS. Frank H. Golay, editor.
Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1966. 209 pp.

Philippine nationalism, though not a recent phenomenon, certainly erupted into more vigorous activity in the 1950's and the early 1960's. Two important developments in the country seem to account for this: the first is the people's intense and sometimes highly emotional search for a national identity, and the second, the emergence of a new generation of political leaders whose backgrounds are different from that of the statesmen of the past. Filipino preoccupation with a national identity may partly be explained by the desire of the new political leadership that the Philippines establish closer relationships with other countries in Asia. These leaders seem to feel that this objective could be most effectively achieved were the Philippines to demonstrate clearly

its independence from the United States economically as well as politically. The search for a national identity has manifested itself also in a historical and cultural revolution; a nationalistic perspective in the study of Philippine history seems to be emerging and Filipino cultural traditions, especially those pre-Spanish in origin, seem to be sought, revived and adapted to the contemporary needs and orientation of Philippine life.

The primary orientation of the new breed of Filipino political leaders seems to be towards nurturing nationalism in all aspects of Filipino life. Their principal target has been the American presence in the social, economic and political life of the country. It has been claimed that the United States by means of various economic arrangements imposed on the Philippines before and after World War II, has succeeded in preventing the Philippines from gaining genuine economic independence. Specifically, the preferential trade agreement between the United States and the Philippines, the parity agreement, and the present Laurel-Langley agreement have been cited as the principal economic irritants in Philippine-American relations.

Some members of Filipino nationalist groups even claim that the existing military arrangements between the Philippines and the United States give the government of this country a sense of false security and identify the military interest of the Philippines with that of the United States. These groups see in these arrangements an increased involvement of the Philippines in matters that are not clearly in her own national interest. Many of them fear that the Philippines may be drawn again into a war which clearly does not concern her.

The principal issue in the criticism of the American military presence in the Philippines is the peculiar nature of the agreements concerning the government of American military bases on Philippine territory. Though even the most avid anti-American Filipino nationalist would not question the need of these bases for the security of the Philippines, most seriously question what seems to be a surrender of Philippine control over the activities and personnel in these bases. It is claimed that the Philippine government continues to have very little control over what goes on in the military bases, a matter of grave significance especially in the face of increasing American involvement in the Vietnam war.

The rise of a group of new political leaders is a natural phenomenon in the Philippine political system. It is equally natural, because of their socio-economic backgrounds, that these leaders become more conscious of Philippine national interests. Generally speaking, the new generation of political leaders is composed of the so-called *new* Filipinos who come from the growing middle-class in the country. Their educational backgrounds are generally western and their social milieu,

largely urban. Furthermore, many of them have close associations with the new industries which are developing through the initiative of Filipino capital and managerial know-how. These associations make them outspoken supporters of government programs providing maximum protection to the new industries. American businessmen, more numerous than other foreign businessmen in the Philippines and protected by special rights as other foreign businessmen are not, naturally constitute a threat to them and, consequently, a target of their ire.

These are the thoughts one must consider when one sets out to evaluate this book on *Philippine-American Relations*. Edited by Professor Frank H. Golay of Cornell University, it is really a collection of papers presented by Filipino and American participants in the Philippine-American Assembly in Davao between February 23 and 28, 1966. The primary objective of the conference was to discuss the special relationship between the Philippines and the United States, and the political, social, economic and military issues which determine the nature of that relationship.

The articles may be divided under two separate headings treating two entirely different aspects of Philippine-American relations. The first few articles deal chiefly with the context of contemporary Philippines, the development of the special relationship between the Philippines and the United States, and the conditions which affect this special relationship. Dr McHale discusses the different changes that have occurred in Philippine society in general and the impact of these changes on Philippine-American relations. He maintains that the industrial development of the Philippines has not only resulted in the rapid expansion of the Filipino corporate sector but has also led to the legislation and the administration of certain economic policies that are meant to promote and protect it. While this development has succeeded in improving the general condition of the Filipino corporate sector, it has also succeeded in creating irritants to Filipino-American relations.

Professor Corpuz's article describes the new orientation of Philippine foreign policy, that of developing a more meaningful association with Asian countries. This new direction is certainly based on a more realistic assessment of the importance of Asia for the Philippines. Dr. Corpuz maintains that this new perspective in Philippine foreign policy would have a definite impact on the nature of the special relationship between the Philippines and the United States.

Ambassador Lopez's article describes the nature of the colonial relationship which existed between the Philippines and the United States for some fifty years. He gives a brief description of the various policies which the United States pursued in the Philippines. Among them Ambassador Lopez considers the American policy of extending

self-government and promoting universal education as the most effectively progressive ones, and the economic policies as the most colonialy-oriented and the most unprogressive because they failed to develop a balanced and diversified Philippine economy.

Under the second heading, we find articles dealing with the sources of conflict between the Philippines and the United States. The specific areas of conflict most extensively described by the authors are those pertaining to the military and economic agreements between the two countries. Professor Golay gives a very accurate description of the setting of Philippine economic nationalism, and Mr. Legarda and Roberto Y. Garcia describe the traditional economic patterns which have existed between the Philippines and the United States, beginning with the preferential trade system of the past and going on to the Laurel-Langley agreement of the present.

Professor Taylor describes the mutual security arrangements between the Philippines and the United States. Unfortunately, the emphasis of his article is more on the description of the existing arrangement itself and less on the problems occasioned by the present Philippine-American military agreement. The presence of military bases in the country and the resulting impact on the economy and society in the Philippines is a growing source of irritation between the two countries. The limited amount of military aid being given to the Philippines, usually evaluated by the present Filipino leadership in comparison with aid extended to South Korea and Formosa, is another cause for criticism of American foreign aid policy.

The most interesting and challenging article in the entire book is the last one written by Professor Wurfel. It deals with the problems of decolonization in the Philippines. Here, Professor Wurfel tries to analyze the problem of Philippine-American relations. What is particularly significant is Professor Wurfel's use of Philippine social science data to provide a more meaningful explanation of existing Philippine-American relationship. He tries to explain the problems in this relationship within the context of Filipino values and culture—that of *utang na loob* and the influence of smooth inter-personal relations which generally condition Filipino political behavior.

The book's major contribution lies in that it discusses the problems of Philippine-American relations in an academic and rational way. It is a very valuable source material for people who are interested in knowing the sources of conflict between the Philippines and the United States and what the direction of relationships between these two countries will most likely take in the future.

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