

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Philippine Bases, edited by Greene

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Philippine Studies vol. 39, no. 2 (1991): 248–249

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

Book Reviews

THE PHILIPPINE BASES: NEGOTIATING FOR THE FUTURE.
Edited by Fred Greene. New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1988. 158
pages.

In the light of the bilateral negotiations now going on in Manila regarding the future of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines, Greene's book is a useful collection of articles which can clarify some of the major issues in the negotiations. The book came out of a 1988 conference in Bodega Bay, California, with participants invited by the Philippine Council for Foreign Relations in New York. The conference was organized by the Asia Foundation Center for Asian Pacific Affairs in San Francisco which works with other American and Asian organizations "to promote communication and strengthen understanding between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific."

The book is subtitled *American and Philippine Perspectives*, but it reflects more of the former as its three major articles are contributed by American "experts" on the military bases issue. Half of the book is devoted to Fred Greene's comprehensive essay on issues in the base negotiations. A Yale Ph.D., Greene served as consultant to the US National Security Council and Director of the Office of East Asian and Pacific Research in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

The second article, "US Facilities in the Philippines," by Alva M. Bowen, Jr. presents various alternative military basing arrangements in other parts of the region. Bowen is a retired US Navy Captain who served thirty years in the service and twelve years at the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Congressional Research Service in Washington D.C.

The third article, "The Military Bases and Postwar US-Philippine Relations," by William Berry, Jr. discusses the bases issue in the context of Philippine-American relations. Berry wrote his doctoral dissertation on the bases in Cornell. He was on the faculty of the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Currently he is with the National War College in Washington D.C. He has written extensively on U.S. security policies in Asia, among others.

The "Philippine perspectives" are interspersed in the *Conference Record* section of the book which summarizes the proceedings of the two-day confer-

ence. Unlike the three articles cited above, the views expressed by the Filipino participants are scattered in various parts of the *Conference Record*, making for disjointed reading of the "Philippine perspectives." It would have been more instructive to include a longer piece articulating the Philippine views in coherent form. Since there were bound to be differences in the thinking of the participants on the concepts of sovereignty, security, compensation, and other aspects of the bases problem, the conference organizers should have seen fit to commission a full-length paper by a Filipino scholar, just as they asked the two "acknowledged experts" on the Philippines—Bowen and Berry—to write on the military importance and history of the bases.

Greene's lengthy discussion of issues in the negotiations has major flaws. He starts out by saying that "foreign bases are seldom popular in any country, especially among the political elites sensitive to issues of nationalism and sovereignty" (p. 6). To the contrary, the Filipino political elites over time have been strongly in favor of the establishment, presence and continuance of the American bases on Philippine soil, in spite of growing nationalist sentiment against the U.S. facilities. The Filipino elites have never been known as advocates of Philippine nationalism and sovereignty. Greene's explanation of Philippine nationalism repeats Evelyn Colbert's trite and tired observation that while "ultranationalist and leftist critics" were small in number, "they were vehement in their opposition keeping pressure on the government to make extensive demands" (p. 10). Colbert served as a career diplomat at the US State Department for many years. Greene further notes that anti-American feeling runs more deeply among the young in state colleges and universities "attended by children of the well-to-do elites." The reader gets the impression Greene thinks only the elites and their children are capable of nationalist ideas. It is obvious that the author has no understanding of Philippine nationalism and its complex ramifications.

On the question of Philippine national security, Greene shows similar superficial and uninformed views. "In contrast to the 1950s when there may have been a danger of invasion," he recounts, "they [Filipinos] believe that internal insurgency presents the fundamental challenge to security. They give the impression that their insular *orientation* is so pronounced that they simply have not examined security questions at the regional or global level" (pp. 28-29, emphasis supplied). This implies that Filipinos are not sophisticated enough to transcend their narrow national concerns. There is something wrong with Greene's ability to understand Filipino thinking. It is not the Filipinos' "insular orientation" that makes them view internal security problems as more serious than possible external aggression. It is part of their definition of the Filipino national interest based on knowledge of and experience with the Philippine insurgency situation. This is a judgment Americans must respect. However, they keep obfuscating the issue by insisting that the American presence also protects the "broader security interests," including "its sea lanes and other lines of communication in all directions." To support this contention, Greene mentions that "some Southeast Asian and Japanese experts" think it is time for Filipinos "to consider how important the bases are to the stability of

Southeast Asia, to the entire western Pacific, and therefore to the security of the Philippines as well" (p. 30).

Lecturing Filipinos and reminding them of what is good for them is precisely the kind of colonial mentality that should be avoided as the two nations negotiate the future of the bases. Greene is either unaware of, or insensitive to, the changes that have occurred on the Philippine scene. There is a new generation of Filipinos with a sense of values very different from their elders. They realize that the bases just perpetuate the unequal Philippine-American relationship that has spanned nearly a century. At the same time, they are amenable to a relationship that does not reinforce the advantages of the stronger partner and the exploitation of the weaker one.

Berry's piece, which should have been the lead article, considering it deals with the larger context of Philippine-American relations, is a much better and more sensitive presentation of a delicate issue. First, it correctly notes that as the 1950s ended, "certain changes were evident within the Philippines" increasingly questioning the "special relationship" with the Americans and the Filipinos' subordinate position in that equation. Second, Berry appropriately points out that a new Filipino pride has developed after the 1986 "people power revolution," making Filipinos feel good about themselves for overthrowing an unpopular regime and installing a popular presidency in its stead. This profound national pride must be appreciated, Berry asserts. It will be in the U.S. interest for its negotiators to understand the history of the various issues involved. They must also recognize the differences in "threat perception" and should be "familiar with the expectations the Philippine leaders and public have about the value of the bases to their country, and to the region at this particular time in their history" (p. 152). Berry has a much deeper insight than Greene in analyzing the problem at hand.

Bowen's article is almost totally a factual presentation of the numerous facilities at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay and alternatives to current basing arrangements. It is helpful in exploring the cost and political feasibility considerations of moving the bases elsewhere in the region if this were to be the judgement of US leaders following negotiations with their Filipino counterparts.

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THE URBAN FILIPINO WORKER IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING SOCIETY. By Amaryllis Tiglaos Torres. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1988. 135 pages.

In *The Urban Filipino Worker in an Industrializing Society*, Dr. Amaryllis Torres analyzes the structural shift from agriculture to manufacturing that most developing economies are experiencing. She does her analysis, however, from a psychological perspective. Her focus is on the individual semiskilled worker