BUILDING FROM WITHIN:

INDIGENOUS NATION-BUILDING AND STATE-MAKING

DURING THE FILIPINO THIRD REPUBLIC, 1946-1957

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at multiple expressions of indigenous agency in Filipino nation-state building from the attainment of Filipino independence in 1946 under the Third Republic. The study begins with postwar reconstruction under the Roxas administration, through the crisis and challenge years of the Quirino years, and the emergence of the strongman of the people, Ramon Magsaysay. Under whom, Filipino nation-making reached its peak years. The study concludes in 1957 with the untimely end of the Magsaysay administration, but with the emergence of a united Filipino people where citizens from all sectors came to be involved. This study argues that Filipinos possessed a natural aversion to communism, which the Third Republic used to consolidate Filipino support, and which prevented the Huks from taking over. Sources of Filipino unity included consolidating all ethnicities. Other sources were overcoming challenges, such as the Huk rebellion and integrating Chinese-Filipinos, Tagalog, and revisions in the educational curriculum. There were many debates surrounding Filipino sovereignty over US bases in the islands. Filipinos participated in regional organizations, such as SEATO and the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference. Major issues involved corruption, security, bridging the urban and the rural, and economic development. Also, many scholars have often overlooked the multiple, diverse Filipino perspectives that lay underneath traditional Cold War superpower-centric narratives. This study disproves the notion that Filipino nationalism can only be studied through the artificial lens of class, which is an oversimplification. The purpose of this study is to show that Filipinos worked together

and built a unified Filipino nation-state that is multicultural, multiracial, and hostile to collectivists.

This study uses official government documents, personal papers, memoirs, diaries and newspapers from the Filipino and American archives. These sources contain the involvement of state and non-state actors who contribute to the complex mosaic of Filipino nation-state making. These sources reflect the presence and diversity of Filipino perspectives that point to sources of Filipino unity. The study concludes with the Third Republic, as the ultimate expression of Filipino indigenous agency, having consolidated the ethnic and linguistic groups in the islands, appealing to shared Filipino visions, values and interests.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother and to my father, to Filipinos, to the academic community, and to future generations, that people will always look out for another, as mankind breaks new frontiers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: MYTHS AND ILLUSIONS OR, WHY FILIPINOS ARE NOT AMERICA'S ASIANS

"To see Asia though Asian eyes and Africa through African eyes-that is the prime requisite for American policy toward Asia and Africa. You cannot assume that a policy which works satisfactorily in Europe will work equally well in Asia and in Africa."[1] The Filipino diplomat Carlos P. Romulo issued his criticism of American policy towards developing countries in the wake of the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference in 1955. Filipinos during the Cold War oftentimes had been viewed and treated in popular and academic circles as puppets of the United States. For many outsiders, Filipinos were but an appendage in the worldwide anti-communist crusade. It was as if American anti-communism and forms of power obscured Filipino agency. The idea that Filipinos had their own agency was often not present in academic and popular literature due to long-held assumptions that centuries of Spanish and American colonialism had transformed Filipinos into Westernized Asians. In truth, Filipinos needed to view the Philippines through Filipino eyes to see the active and rich indigenous agency that existed underneath traditional narratives and perspectives. This study examines the ways in which ideas of race and ethnicity interacted with Filipino nation-state building and Filipino identity.

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[1] Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 46.

This work on "nation-making" argues along the lines of Global South scholar Odd Arne Westad's *Global Cold War*, Christopher Goscha and Christopher Ostermann's edition *Connecting Histories*, as well as Vijay Prashad's *Darker Nations*, in locating Filipino agency within the broader histories of the darker peoples, who struggled against colonialism and communism. These works pioneered a new turn towards indigenous perspectives and narratives of formerly colonized peoples such as Filipinos. Many scholars would define state-building in terms of the national government and its affiliated organs using various instruments of power to pursue a collective national objective. State-building, here meaning the construction of institutions that take over or create existing institutions, or at the very least appropriate functions that existed locally. This study would look at state-building in terms of how Manila pursued a project of consolidating Filipinos and worked to build bridges to unite Filipinos and to encourage a common identity. State-building involved the branches of government, the organs of state and political leaders (at the national, provincial and barrio level), who worked together with other elements such as the Constabulary/ military, newspapermen and the wider society. State and nation-building (or "nation-state building") was part of an ongoing quest to define Filipino identity and how the streams of interacting Filipino nationalisms, both elite and non-elite, came together to unite the nation. This act of uniting the nation was undertaken by the state, but also entailed the active participation of Filipinos of various backgrounds. Nation-making was therefore inherently participatory. Manifestations of citizens' participation involved the use of freedom of

speech, freedom of assembly, and the participation in presidential and legislative elections that gave citizens a stake in the Filipino national project.

Many scholars have criticized the idea of state-building. Some left-wing scholars, such as Renato Constantino and Stephen Shalom, argued that the use of "state power" to achieve nation-building ends was used solely to "bolster" the power of the elites. On the other hand, nation-building as a term was meant to be more inclusive and involved not only the state but all Filipinos involved in working for common goals and with a vision of a prosperous multicultural and multiracial new nation. This study therefore approaches nation-building through a collective effort not only by the state to bring Filipinos together but for Filipinos to voluntarily participate in the national project as stakeholders. Another term that could be used, "nation-making," involved collective efforts to unify the people. Nation-making took place simultaneously in in the big cities and in the small rural villages. Nation-making could also serve to divide, as various interest groups tried to co-opt one another, vie for dominance, or maintain their entrenched positions in society. These were especially true with Third Republic efforts to integrate the Huks, the Chinese, the indigenous, and the non-elite Filipino majority in the rural communities.

The state served as the major expression of indigenous agency. The Manuel Roxas, (1946-1948) Elpidio Quirino, (1948-1953) and Ramon Magsaysay (1953-1957) administrations consolidated Filipino nation-building and were guided by articulated state ideologies that many scholars have overlooked. This study follows the lead of Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso's *State and Society in the Philippines*. Abinales

and Amoroso's work assumed that the state interacted with society, and played a critical role in shaping the development of the nation-state.[2] But Abinales and Amoroso limited their examination of the indigenous to the state. This study goes further than Abinales and Amoroso by looking at multiple voices expressed and the diverse groups that worked together in society, aside from the state, that enabled Filipinos to unite and express indigenous agency.

The state used its power to consolidate people and institutions. The state promoted the rise of organizations such as the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) that oversaw Filipino presidential elections and used state agencies to promote community development in the rural areas. Other manifestations of state power involved the deployment of government workers, barrio workers, volunteers, local provincial leaders and the Filipino military to be used for local development. The state also encouraged participatory forms of community-building in the rural villages during the early to the mid-1950s. These helped bridge the gap that existed between Manila and the barrios, as well as between elite Filipinos and non-elite Filipinos. Members of the general public in the urban and the rural areas also formulated and expressed their thoughts and opinions regarding the role of the state in Filipino nation-building. Editorial opinions published in newspapers, interview transcripts, and speeches aid in the reconstruction of the narrative of popular participation.

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[2] Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005).

This study explores how Filipinos came together to build a united, thriving country during the critical first decade of independence in the midst of a decolonizing Cold War Third World in Asia. This study would look at trends, patterns and trajectories of the main players, their ideas, perspectives, and efforts that shaped and reshaped Filipino nationalisms during the first decade. Looking through the literature, contending narratives often ignored Filipino agency during the Cold War. Dominant narratives privileged focus on American power that supposedly continued to control and influence events in the archipelago. Others such as the neo-colonialist school retold the Filipino nationalist narrative through the lens of class, and alleged collusion between elite Filipinos and the United States. Using Filipino and American sources, this study explores the continuous evolution of Filipino nationalisms during the first post-independence decade. It pieces together the various evidence of models and visions of Filipino nationalisms.

Building on indigenous Filipino and American sources, this study seeks to explore and explain convergences and similarities of the nation-state building goals of Filipinos and of Americans. This study shows how existing brands of Filipino nationalisms point to the presence of indigenous agency on the part of Filipinos. The Philippines, as so many past scholars including Paul Kramer's *Blood of Government* and Al McCoy's *Policing America's Empire* pointed out, has always been depicted as a collectivity of ethnicities and regions and with little sense of national consciousness. The Spanish and American colonizers classified the inhabitants of the archipelago based on

tribe, blood, and empire, which the Third Republic based in Manila inherited.[3] The complex interactions between the elite and the non-elite strains of nationalism have been overlooked by scholars who tend to focus on a supposed US involvement in Filipino affairs after 1946, or those who viewed the emergence of Filipino nationalisms as an affair primarily of elite Filipinos.

This study finds two broad streams of Filipino nationalism in the archipelago, as the Third Republic engaged in the state and nation-building project. Elite nationalism incorporated not only the Manila-centric perspective or the upper class in Filipino society, but also forms of interaction that privileged articulation by Filipinos who had access to communications media. For the purposes of this study, elite nationalism would be defined as the kind of nationalism articulated by Filipino leaders (who had access to various forms of media) both in Manila and in the provinces. For the purposes of the study, non-elite nationalism would refer not only exclusively to the Filipino lower classes but to all Filipinos whose voices articulated themselves even if only occasionally. These ordinary Filipinos' voices would be just as critical in the expression of indigenous agency. Filipinos would use the republican state and their society as a platform to collectively assert being an independent country with their own visions.

This study looks at how the state engaged in state- and nation-building in Manila and in the communities. This involves looking at the national government, the local and municipal officials in the provinces across the archipelago, organizations engaged in

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[3] Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15.

community-building by working under the government, and ordinary citizens of various backgrounds who actively participated in the different modes of nation-building. This study would look at Filipino state and nation-building during the three administrations, their similarities and differences in approach, the extent of public participation, individual thoughts and opinions on community mobilizations and on national issues. The main premise of this study is that nation-state making initiatives progressively sought to consolidate Filipinos across the archipelago regardless of individual, familial, ethnic, regional, occupational and ideological differences. These were true for state and for non-state actors in society. The study assumes that nation-state making entailed the broad-based and inclusive participation of the government, its agencies (such as the Presidential Assistant on Community Development and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement), national and regional newspapers, intellectuals, universities, political parties, politicians, diplomats, soldiers in the military, the Church, oligarchs, businessmen, traders, market vendors, landowners, farmers, tenants, leading clan families, people who live in the rural communities, government and volunteer workers who went to work with people in the barrios, town halls, aid groups, organizations such as NAMFREL, local warlords, the aboriginal tribes, the Moros, the Chinese-Filipinos, the ex-Huk guerillas, and most critically, public participation during national elections. When ranked, the most critical challenge for Filipino nation-state making was how to unite all the ethnicities in the archipelago. This was especially true for the Chinese-Filipinos and for the former Huk guerillas. Respecting and taking advantage of differences and diversities in the islands ensured that anti-communism served as a

unifying ideology and a means for the expression of indigenous agencies. This study would define indigenous agency as the collective Filipino act of creating a multicultural, multiracial people who would view themselves as one people and one nation with a common purpose, vision, objective and undertaking. This study integrates themes such as race and ethnicity, the postcolonial state, urban-rural relations, community-building, transnational dynamics and Filipino relations with the United States under the Truman administration. Upon being granted independence on July 4, 1946, Filipinos realized that possession of Filipino citizenship in a nation-state framework entailed new obligations and responsibilities. Citizenship in the midst of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds presented Filipinos with new opportunities to express indigenous agency.

The available literature on Filipino nationalisms, indigenous agency and nation-state building could be broadly grouped together into the America-centric perspective, which largely relied on American sources and the American post-colonial and Cold War perspectives; the neo-colonial perspective, which looked at class as the basic unit of analysis in studying societies; a Manila-centric school, which stressed the role which government played in nation-building; and a growing school of postmodern scholars who increasingly placed emphasis on themes such as race, ethnicity, empire, and transnational ties and regional community development.

Theoretical definitions of Filipino state-building and nation-building can be found in works such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which also argues that while waves of nationalisms get transplanted across societies over time, there are variations in national experiences, as well as Prasenjit Duara's *Rescuing History From*

the Nation, which looked at contending, multiple narratives of the nation-state that embodied its essence. Similarly, Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* looked at the role of the "nation –state" in pushing narratives on citizenship and modernity through the use of state power to define narratives and modes of knowledge production.[4]

Many works examine the role of the United States in the Philippines from the standpoint of Cold War objectives after empire. These included H.W. Brands' *Bound to Empire*, Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image*, Mark Gallichio's *The Scramble for Asia* and Robert McMahon's *Limits of Empire.* These argue that America's colonial experiment in the Philippines was a success and that it was Filipinos, upon attaining independence, who were responsible for their mistakes during the post-war era. Filipino aims, ambitions, aspirations, and culture were not prominent in these narratives, except in so far as the Philippines was seen as part of the US-led Cold War anti-communist coalition. The main pitfall of these works was the tendency to overlook indigenous agency and perspectives in favor of more visible instruments of American power such as bases, embassies, money, treaties, and regional organizations.

The neocolonial school looked at Filipino nationalism from the perspective of class struggle. What these scholars' works had in common was the assumption that to be nationalistic was to be revolutionary and to be anti-American. These works generally painted the Huks in a favorable light. These works included Renato Constantino's *A*

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[4] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 41.

History of the Philippines, and former American communist guerilla William Pomeroy's *The Philippines: Colonialism, Collaboration and Resistance!* These works and others collectively argued that the independence attained by Filipinos in 1946 was allegedly a sham and did not result in large scale political, economic and social reforms due to a perceived collusion between colonial era Filipino elites and American power. Similarly, Benedict Kerkvliet's *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* looked at the colonial-era roots of peasant discontent and how it manifested itself in the form of a full-blown agrarian revolt during the Roxas and the Quirino years from the perspective of the Huks and their sympathizers in the peasant villages. All these works believed that the Third Republic was not an expression of indigenous Filipino agency. The main limitation of all these works appeared to be that class was primarily a Marxist Western construct and was only one among many determinant factors in the Filipino setting. There was little effort to look at the complexity and diversity of the issues and players involved in a constantly evolving environment. Nevertheless, these works appeared to have consulted reliable sources of information on the history of the Third Republic.

There were also scholars who believed that nation-state-building could only be accomplished through state actions based in Manila. Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso's *State and Society in the Philippines* anchored their study of the evolution of Filipino nationalisms based on the relationship between state and society. As their argument went, the state constantly interacted with forces in society to deliver goods and services to people. The presumption was that only the state was capable of expressing

nationalism. Their work also argued that a weak state inevitably led to a weak nation.[5] Their study echoed Amando Doronila's argument in *State, Economic Transformation and Political Change in the Philippines, 1946 to 1972*, which looked at the role of the State as an autonomous entity as compared to the multiple social forces in society. Another work, by political development scholar Amy Blitz's *The Contested State*, looked at the Filipino state as a zone of "contestation" by competing forces in Filipino society. These largely Manila-centric scholars viewed the state as the leading actor in delivering goods and services to society. The problem lay with the reality that the state can be subject to multiple social factors in its wider environment.

Postmodern historians looked at transnationalism and empire as a phenomenon that would define nation-building, such as Jeremi Suri's *Liberty's Surest Guardian*'s argument in his chapter entitled "Reconstruction After Empire," where American nation (or perhaps empire)-building in the Philippines took place primarily through the building up of the public school system in the islands at the turn of the century.[6] Paul Kramer, in *Blood of Government*, argued that race, power and transnational empire-building by the Spanish and the Americans in the Philippines competed with one another to create new

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[5] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 6, 7.

[6] For a more in-depth discussion of the background of American involvement in the building up of the Filipino public school system during the early 1900s, see Chapter 3, "Reconstruction After Empire." Suri argued that the transnational relationships between Americans and Filipinos who worked to educate the young in the islands was also a form of nation-building. This was an American legacy which Suri said endured in the Philippines up to the present. Jeremi Suri, *Liberty's Surest Guardian: American Nation-Building From the Founders to Obama* (New York: Free Press, 2011), 82-123.

"connections and transformations," generated new "hierarchies of difference," and influenced relationships among the different groups in the archipelago, such as between darker-skinned hill tribal up-landers and more "civilized" sedentary lowlanders. The idea of divided communities took root as a legacy of empire and colonialism. Furthermore, the work explained that the dynamics continued even after Filipino independence, as the Filipino Third Republic consolidated itself in Manila and in the rural countryside.[7] Al McCoy's *Policing America's Empire* looked at how postcolonial continuities took place as the Third Republic used the institutional security apparatus inherited from the American colonizers to consolidate its hold across the Philippine archipelago. McCoy argued that the Third Republic ended up serving as a security proxy for American empire during the Cold War. But McCoy conceded that Filipino agency existed by exhibiting how Filipinos during the Third Republic appropriated American practices into the indigenous context to pursue Filipino ends. This was seen during the Third Republic's war against the Huks. Julian Go's *Patterns of Empire* critiqued the idea of American Exceptionalism in interactions with non-Western peoples, such as in Southeast Asia. His work's main premise was that the United States has often been motivated by the idea of transnational empire and that American people, values, ideas, institutions, money and military supposedly shaped other societies in the world. The same was the case with Masuda Hajimu's *Cold War Crucible*, which explained how the Cold War supposedly played a central role in influencing societies. These transnational works on

[7] Kramer, *The Blood of Government*, 2.

empire collectively explained how external factors such as the interplay of race, empire and power played a role in Filipino nation- state building.

Other scholars looked the evolution of Filipino identity within the context of politics, society and culture. Luis Francia's survey work *A History of the Philippines* argued that there has been an ongoing evolution of Filipino identity since precolonial times. The natives in the archipelago began to see themselves as a people who were different from their colonizers, exhibiting forms of resistance, mediation and collaboration to preserve indigenous local identity.[8] What Francia's work did not explore at greater length was the continuity of the evolution of Filipino identity. This did not stop upon the attainment of independence in 1946. Nick Cullather's *Illusions of Influence* was a classic secondary source material on the Third Republic Philippines that revealed the extent with which Filipino culture was steeped in patronage politics from the most obscure clans in communities far from Manila to the presidential palace and the legislative halls. Cullather explained that this was the context with which Filipino leaders including Magsaysay operated, and which American officials and policy-makers such as John Melby did not appear to understand very well. US policymakers were blinded by their assumptions that the United States continued to directly influence events in the archipelago and that Filipinos were simply their Cold War clients.[9] Cullather's work appeared to have focused too much on the role of politics, diplomacy and of

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[8] Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 14.

[9] Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

interest groups in looking at US-Philippines relations. This study of nation-state making would instead incorporate transnationalism, development, relationship between the urban and the rural, the Cold War (and its impact on notions of ideology and ethnicity), disputes over bases and the trade treaties, as well as a changing Filipino culture.

Development scholars such as Daniel Immerwahr (who also belonged to the neo-colonial school), David Ekbladh, and Michael Latham looked at how Americans and Filipinos shared similar objectives. Immerwahr, in a chapter in his work *Thinking Small* entitled "Grassroots Empire," argued that "rural inequality" and patron-client relationships that resulted in exploitation and neglect over time eventually contributed to the Huk rebellion. Immerwahr argued that to prevent a repeat of the Huk rebellion, the government in the mid-1950s launched a "nationwide community development program" in the communities and achieved small –scale successes that headed off rural unrest.[10] A similar but more general work, Ekbladh's *The Great American Mission*, argued that in the new liberal order being constructed by the United States, development was wielded as an "ideological weapon" that would produce "large scale transformations" that could be wielded to combat threats such as communism. This was true for predominantly agricultural societies like the Philippines in the wake of the expansion of communism across Asia during the 1960's.[11] Latham's *The Right Kind of Revolution* argued that modernization was a new form of ideology that could be made

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[10] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[11] David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization & the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

into a powerful weapon due to its transformative potential. The objective was to benefit everyone and improve the welfare of peoples, particularly those in developing societies like the Philippines. Latham argued that these visions of development was used by the United States to justify civilizing "racial inferiors," such as the Filipinos at the turn of the century. The emphasis on development took an alarmist turn, when, during the 1950s, a Huk rebellion was brewing in the independent country's agriculturally-rich regions.[12] These convergences suggested that Filipinos appropriated external rhetoric and stressed similarities with American objectives to pursue their nation-building aims.

This study integrates the above various perspectives and locates itself in the postmodern school. It looks at the efforts by Filipinos to engage in nation-making by transcending questions on race and ethnicity, among all other local conditions. These ensured not only that communism would not find a fertile soil in the islands but that anti-communism would be a major source of unity and the basis for nation-making in the archipelago. The study pushes the argument that the state would be the leading expression in Filipino nation-state making after independence. Filipinos, regardless of their ethnic identity, collectively undertook efforts to realize their visions of a united Filipino nation-state. The study also negates the idea of class as a basis for classification and categorization as propounded by the neo-colonial school since the idea of social differences are perceived and practiced differently by people over time. Many subaltern

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[12] Michael Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution, Modernization, Development and US Foreign Policy From the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), 3, 4, 14, 112.

voices were simply overlooked and hence needed to be narrated and brought out into the open.

This study employs a chronological and thematic approach. It chronologically begins with 1946, when Filipinos gained their independence, and ends with 1957, with the untimely death of Magsaysay. Thematically, this study looks at the roles of various actors and the issues involved. It would use indigenous Filipino perspectives on Filipino state and nation-building in decolonizing Cold War Southeast Asia. The narrative would also incorporate views of American policymakers on their interactions with Filipinos, their observations and their participation in these efforts.

The Harry S. Truman Library and Institute holdings have been immensely helpful to my work. The Myron Cowen and the John Melby collections shed light into the extent by which American officials in the US embassy in Manila and at the State Department in Washington DC perceived the nuances and complexities of Filipino society. Other large collections consulted included the White House Confidential File, White House Central Files and the Official Files. Other American sources were drawn from the National Archives and Records Administration, which contained declassified telegrams, reports by the State Department and from the US Embassy in Manila on Filipino activities in the capital and in the provinces, American observers' appraisals of Filipino leaders, as well as US government files on the Philippines. Large files consulted included documents drawn from the Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/ Agency Files, The Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, and the General Records of the Department of State. The Library of Congress contained National Security Progress and

Central Intelligence Agency reports on the Filipino security situation in the islands, especially concerning the Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos, from the end of World War II in 1945 up to the later 1950s, when the Huk threat receded. Documents from the Library of Congress also included expressions and pronouncements related to the formation of Filipino nationalist ideologies made by prominent figures such as Carlos P. Romulo. The US National Security Council Documents on the Philippines, from 1953 to 1960, edited by Nick Cullather, contained a valuable compilation of progress reports made by the US National Security Council on the Filipino administrations and their policies during the Eisenhower years. Lastly, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Office of the Historian contained State Department correspondences and transcripts of conversations between Filipino and American leaders, during the Quirino and the Magsaysay years.

This study also draws from numerous indigenous Filipino sources. These included personal (e.g. Manuel Roxas, Carlos Romulo) and presidential papers (such as the Quirino papers during the Huk uprising), agency reports, speeches, telegrams, newspaper articles (particularly, but not limited to the *Manila Times* and the *Daily Mirror*) that dated back from 1946 to 1957. Other sources included magazine clipping files, opinion editorials, surveys, accounts and letters by ordinary Filipino citizens regarding affairs in the barrio, the community, the province and the state from World War II to the 1950s. These works represent the views of both elite and non-elite Filipinos. This study also looks at the emergence of concrete manifestations of common Filipino solidarities from 1946 to 1957. The chapters explore the main themes and issues involved for each time period. The period spans three Filipino administrations (Roxas,

Quirino and Magsaysay). The process takes place from the level of the individual and the family in the local communities to the national. Filipino culture and identity changed to reflect indigenous Filipino ends.

Chapter 2, "The Promise and the Perils of Independence, Filipino State and Nation-building from the Ground-Up, 1946 to 1948," looks at state consolidation during the Roxas years during the first two years of independence. The chapter argues that Filipinos finally had their sovereign state and that this gave them the ability to shape their collective destiny as a people, despite the multiple challenges that lay ahead. This was contrary to the belief by outsiders that the Philippines was well on its way to becoming America's successful colonial experiment in Asia. Apparently, Filipinos as early as the Roxas administration had other ideas. The main issues and themes included reconstruction, US forces in the archipelago, dealing with the Huk uprising, use of Tagalog as a national language, and the need to gather together Filipinos of all backgrounds despite the state being weak at the outset of independence.

Chapter 3**, "**Rescuing the Nation-State: The crisis years and the makings of a Filipino nation-building ideology, 1948 to 1951,**"** looks at the Philippines in the midst of the Huk uprising, which posed a threat to the Third Republic model. The chapter argues that contrary to what many believed, the Quirino administration possessed a well-defined ideology which it used to express Filipino agency and to make the Third Republic the only legitimate expression of that indigenous agency. To accomplish this, the Quirino administration even demonized the Huks as the "alien" other who had to be suppressed. The main issues and themes included integrating the Huks and the Filipino

Chinese, Quirino's "neutralism" in Filipino foreign relations, corruption, dirty elections, and the disconnect between Manila and the barrios.

Chapter 4, "From Manila to the barrios and from the barrios to Manila: **'**To unify the nation, 1950 to 1954,**"** looks at the various Filipino expressions of agency domestically and internationally. The chapter argues that the Third Republic not only asserted its claim to be the legitimate expression of Filipino indigenous agency but sought to build bridges to include all Filipinos in the nation-state building project. The main issues and themes included patronage and political power, the role of the Filipino military, rural community development and rural participation, security (internal and external) and expressions of Filipino anti-communism. The period also saw the beginnings of debates over the role of the Filipino-Chinese and of US bases in the islands.

Chapter 5, "One nation, one people, undivided: The Age of Magsaysay, 1953-1957,**"** looks at the vibrant debates and multiple voices taking place across all sectors of Filipino society under Ramon Magsaysay, the strongman of the people. The period was an intensely nationalistic time, with the US bases in the archipelago and negotiations over the Laurel-Langley Act of 1954 becoming major issues of contention uniting all Filipinos. The chapter argues that American anti-communism led many to overlook Filipino agency. The main issues and themes included the rapidly expanding phase of rural community-building, Filipino expression of indigenous agency internationally through SEATO and by participating at the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference, continued challenges in integrating the Chinese-Filipinos, the indigenous tribes and the non-elite

Filipinos, revisions in school curricula, separation of Church and State, and Tagalog as the national language across the archipelago.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMISE AND PERILS OF INDEPENDENCE: FILIPINO STATE- AND NATION-BUILDING FROM THE GROUND UP, 1946-1948

". . . this nation is above all a nation of people. Its Government exists by the consent of the governed. The welfare of the people must be our primary concern . . ."[1]

- Manuel A. Roxas, Filipino President

On July 4, 1946, the Stars and Stripes was lowered at Luneta Park while the Filipino flag with its golden sunrays was raised. Filipinos had finally attained their independence.[2] Filipinos at last possessed a sovereign state and the ability to shape and determine their collective destiny as a nation. But no sooner than independence had been declared that Filipinos realized the magnitude of the colossal changes that lay ahead. The Filipino nation that emerged would not turn out to be what George Taylor and other scholars who belonged to the American Exceptionalist school described as "America's experiment" and America's "showcase in Asia."[3] Nor was indigenous agency an affair exclusively of Elite Filipinos and the state, as argued by scholars in works such as

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[1] His Excellency Manuel A. Roxas, "Address, Inauguration of the Philippine Republic," July 4, 1946, 360, Folder-OF 1055, Seventh Report of the United States High Commissioner To the Philippines, 1945-46, Harry S. Truman Library and Institute, Independence, Missouri.

[2]Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 192.

[3] Garel Grunder and William E. Livezey, *The Philippines and the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), 276.

Renato Constantino's *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* and Amando Doronila's *The State, Economic Transformation and Political Change in the Philippines*. The idea of Filipino elites supposedly building the nation in collusion with the former colonial power, the United States, was a very common approach of those who belong to the neo-colonialist school.

The main themes and issues during the first two years after independence inevitably began with the Filipino state's consolidation of what was described as a "weak state." This entailed the utilization of the state and local networks to pursue state and nation-building. There were many debates amongst Filipinos over whether to welcome American forces in the archipelago. The Huk uprising, which had its beginnings during the late American colonial period, also provided in the later years a threatening alternative to the Third Republic in winning the hearts and minds of Filipinos, especially in the rural areas. At the same time, this also spurred early efforts after independence to make the Huks part of the Filipino state and nation-building project. Meanwhile, Tagalog has been the national language since 1937. However, Tagalog was not yet widely used and adopted by a large number of Filipinos. Tagalog needed the support of the state, through its organs such as the educational system, to plant the seeds of linguistic unity and forms of collective identity. With power in the hands of the local leaders and of leading provincial clans, the Roxas administration saw the need to gather many grassroots groups. To deal with the Huk problem, the Roxas administration not only fought the peasant fighters in the field but used state policies and

local autonomy that appealed to rural Filipinos to counteract the communist-oriented message of the Huks.

Reconstruction

The road to Filipino independence was never easy, in no small part due to World War II. Filipinos during the occupation experienced food, fuel and clothing shortages as resources in the islands were all conscripted to the Japanese war effort.[4] Wartime conditions such as food, currency, and housing shortages forced ordinary Filipinos to focus on survival. The Japanese, acting to impose law and order amidst the occupation chaos, were blamed for taking over large urban blocks for military and administrative purposes.[5]

The Japanese espoused Pan-Asianism as an ideology that would seek to unite its newly conquered peoples across Asia. This was meant to appeal to Filipinos. But the main purpose of the Japanese in the islands was to extract and requisition resources such as rice to support the war effort against the Allies in the Pacific. The Filipino 2nd Republic under Jose Laurel was established to give Filipinos the idea that Filipinos could rule themselves, with independence proclaimed on October 14, 1943. But the Japanese military could be seen nearly everywhere and controlled all facets of life in the

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[4] Ricardo T. Jose (ed.), *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People*, "The Japanese Occupation," Volume 7 (Manila: Asia Publishing Company Limited, 1998), 173, 190.

[5] Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House Inc., 1989), 309.

archipelago.[6] Besides, Pan-Asianism was just another expression of Japanese nationalism, and which asserted that only Japan could lead Asia against the West.[7]

The Japanese occupiers found it difficult to appeal to Filipinos. The United States had ruled the Philippines benevolently and allowed Filipinos a share in governing colonial affairs in the islands. Filipinos resisted Japanese attempts to convert Filipinos to the Japanese way of life and a Japanese-defined Asian Identity. It did not help that the Japanese wanted to grow cotton in the archipelago instead of sugar. This ruined the wartime Filipino economy (and no doubt angered the large sugar planters, whose prosperity depended on sugar as a prized cash crop). The Japanese requisitioned food and basic commodities (such as salt and soap) for the war effort. Many Filipinos also lamented the loss of morality as well as the corruption (not only in the financial but in the personal sense) that Filipinos had to resort to in order to survive the Occupation.[8] The Japanese used many Filipino women as "comfort women." Torture and mass terror was used to cow the population in the urban and in the rural areas across the archipelago.[9] As far as Filipinos were concerned, the Japanese were a different race and the Japanese were behaving as just another set of conquerors as far as the Filipinos were

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[6] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 182.

[7] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003), 98.

[8] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 308, 309.

[9] Sonia M. Zaide, "Japanese War Crimes: A Forgotten Story," undated, Folder-World War II, Ortigas Foundation Library.

concerned.[10] The United States had promised independence to the Filipinos in 1946 when the United States established the Commonwealth government in the archipelago back in 1935. Filipinos were therefore ambivalent towards the Japanese presence, even as the Japanese sought to promote and use Filipino nationalism during the Second Republic.[11] Many Filipinos also knew that the Japanese did not have a strong chance of prevailing over the US armed forces in the Pacific as word spread of American victories getting closer to the Philippine coastline from the east.

Other Filipinos took advantage of the Japanese occupation to consolidate territories under their control, stockpiling weapons, with an eye towards the post-war world. Multiple guerilla attacks against the Japanese and against rival pro-American resistance fighters by groups such as the communist HUKBALAHAP (*Hukbo ng Bayan*

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[10] Renato Constantino, Letizia Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Manila: The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 55.

[11] Most Filipinos who worked with the Japanese did so because of the vacuum left behind by the United States and due to Quezon's directive that Filipinos do so to prevent breakdown. Many of the Filipino officials who worked under the Japanese also served under the previous Commonwealth government. Interestingly, many Filipinos, such as the Japanese installed 2nd Republic President Jose Laurel, used the Japanese occupation to promote Filipino nationalism at the popular level through the promotion of teaching and writing Tagalog, revival of the memory of the Filipino Revolution (which established the 1st Republic under Aguinaldo at the turn of the century) in textbooks and the promotion that the Philippines was very much a part of Asia. Many of these nationalists were members of the Filipino elite who sought to express Filipino agency. Many Filipinos saw the Huks not as anti-Japanese resistance fighters but as communists who sought to redistribute land, regardless of who was in charge. Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005), 159, 160, 163.

Laban sa Hapon), who would later be called the Huks, took place across the islands.[12] By late 1944, American forces under General Douglas MacArthur were back in the islands, inching their way from the central islands towards Manila in Luzon Island.[13] Fighting turned the Philippines into a hellish Pacific inferno.[14] The physical devastation was uneven, with Manila and the surrounding areas suffering heavy damage during the

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[12] This wasn't helped when the Japanese assumed a patronizing attitude towards Filipinos. The Japanese stated that Japan knew what was best for the Philippines and that Filipinos needed to be weaned away from the United States and its colonial influences. Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 181, 182.

[13] US Army manuals for troops about to land to fight the Japanese occupation in the Philippines described at length the Filipinos whom many US troops would be encountering for the first time. It described the Filipinos as heavily Christianized by the Spanish. The manual categorized Filipinos into five kinds- a.) the cultured college graduate, b.) the non-professional Filipino, c.) the countryman farmer or fisherman, d.) the primitive jungle-native or Negritos, and e.) the Mohammedan Moros. One interesting description of the Moros was that ". . . With all their fierceness, Moros have shown that they like Americans better than any "outside group" they have come into contact with. They (the Moros) will prove to be excellent friends of ours . . ." Furthermore, the manual about the Philippines for American troops stated that ". . . your language difficulties in the Philippines will be very few . . . English has been the language of instruction used in the school system since the earliest days of the American occupation . . ." It also said that there were 87 dialects drawn from 8 different languages across the archipelago, such that "Filipinos in one island cannot understand the dialect from another." English was said to have been introduced to the school system so that Filipinos in all the islands would share one common language.

The manual also contained a "Tagalog Language Guide," for the American troops, which involved translations from English into Tagalog of Greetings and General Phrases, of Greetings, of Locations, of Directions, of Numbers, as well as asking for things, "American Perceptions of Filipinos," White Folder- World War II, 1944-1945, Zaide Series 5, Folder 265, Ortigas Foundation Library.

[14] Daniel Immerwahr, "The Decolonization of the United States: The Ordeal of the Philippines," July 28, 2014, Unpublished manuscript.

final offensive in early 1945 to retake the city.[15] And with liberation came new challenges for the restored Commonwealth.

Filipinos and Americans began preparing for the transition to independence. The Philippines under Commonwealth President Sergio Osmena held presidential elections in May 1946 (just three months before independence), which Osmena's political rival, Manuel Roxas, won. For the first time, Filipino women participated in voting, something not done during the Commonwealth presidential elections of 1935 and 1941 during the US colonial period.[16] Roxas' *Nacionalista* party had "almost unchallenged" political control of the House, the Senate and the local provincial administrations (although during this period, Manila had a weak hold over the provinces).[17] The United States colonial authorities did not hold-off on granting the much desired independence to Filipinos. On July 4th, 1946. High Commissioner McNutt, in front of Senator Tydings, General McArthur and the Filipino leaders, read President Harry Truman's proclamation

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[15]The battle to retake Manila took a month and resulted in 1,000 American soldiers, 16,000 Japanese soldiers and "tens of thousands of Filipinos" killed, with around "80% of the city destroyed" in the aftermath of the fighting. Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 163, 170.

[16] Benedict R. Anderson, "Elections and Participation," in R.H. Taylor (ed.), *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996), 21, 23.

[17] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, August 4, 1947, "The Collaboration Issue," General Political Situation, 1, 2, Folder G-21, General Surveys of Conditions in the Philippines, Box 2, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948 to 1957, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

that withdrew US sovereignty and extended recognition to Filipino independence.[18] During the same day, July 4th, 1946, the Treaty of General Relations was signed between the newly-independent Philippines and the United States.[19] In his inaugural speech, President Manuel Roxas remarked that, "No longer are we protected by the mantle of American sovereignty," since "we [Filipinos] are an adult in the council of nations."[20]

As soon as independence was declared, Filipino political culture began to express itself on the issues of postwar reconstruction and in the collaboration issue. The scholar H.W. Brands, in *Bound to Empire,* argued that Filipino political culture, with its shared experiences and mutual interests, played a role in reconstruction. Members of the wartime Jose Laurel administration, such as Claro Recto, were part of the pre-war political elite and proudly espoused anticolonial nationalism. But many of their families, friends, and colleagues belonged to multiple interdependent webs where one couldn't move an agenda forward without getting involved in patronage networks. This

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[18] Ricardo Jose, "One Hundred Years of Philippine-United States Relations: An Outline History," in Aileen San Pablo Baviera and Lydia-Yu Jose (ed.) *Philippine External Relations: A Centennial Vista* (Pasay City: Foreign Service Institute, 1998), 406, 407.

[19] This treaty involved the US recognizing Filipino independence, while the United States "withdrew and surrendered all rights of possession, supervision, jurisdiction and sovereignty over the territory and the people of the Philippines , except the use of such bases, necessary appurtenances to such bases, and the rights incident thereto, as the United States of America by agreement with the Republic of the Philippines may deem necessary to retain for the mutual protection of the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines." The treaty also provided for "reciprocal diplomatic privileges and immunities." Milton Walter Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (University of Hawaii Press, 1965), 32, 33.

[20] Inaugural Address on the Independence of the Philippines, July 4, 1946, 146, *Papers, Addresses and Writings of Manuel Roxas*, Lopez Museum Library.

phenomenon was just as true with the ordinary Filipino individual. One example was in the issue of wartime collaboration. Rivals accused Roxas of working with the Japanese during the war.[21] Roxas, as well as other wartime leaders such as Jose Laurel were eventually exonerated by the Filipino courts.[22] The Filipino public did not possess "serious convictions" on the issue since Filipinos knew that the presence of Filipino officials in wartime administration made life more tolerable for ordinary people under oppressive conditions. The "family system" in the islands was too entrenched and made prosecution difficult because there was said to have often been a "relative involved." Roxas ultimately decided not to pursue the collaboration issue for fear of public backlash especially with the case of Laurel.[23] The Truman administration was confused by how the elite treated the issue, and was perplexed by how Roxas granted amnesty to the "anti-American, pro-Japanese collaborators" such as Laurel, since Roxas himself faced the same accusations.[24]

According to Philippines scholar Luis Francia, part of the explanation for why the United States did not become more involved with the collaboration issue lay with the emerging Cold War and the "perceived threat" arising from the potential spread of communism. The United States, which continued to exert influence in the archipelago during the first few years of independence, valued the Filipino President's anti-

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[21]H.W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 230.

[22] "The Collaboration Issue," General Political Situation, 1, 2.

[23] "The Collaboration Issue," General Political Situation, 1, 2.

[24] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 233.

communism and government efforts to maintain stability in the archipelago.[25] The United States in many ways was using the Philippines to pursue its regional and security aims. Filipinos used their foreign relations with the United States to assert its indigenous agency and its agenda of consolidating all Filipinos together. The issue of collaboration was therefore treated much less seriously by all parties except by the Huks.

Filipinos saw nation-building in Filipino terms. An American report looked at inter-ethnic relations in the islands, describing "anti-foreign agitation" in the Philippines directed toward the Chinese-Filipinos. The ordinary Filipino was said to have possessed a "decidedly friendly feeling" towards the United States. Roxas took advantage of the pro-American sentiments of Filipinos to "make cooperation with Americans the main theme of his administration." Roxas knew that the United States was concerned that pro-Japanese, anti-American leaders such as Jose Laurel might somehow come to power in the archipelago.[26] Roxas was determined to show that "American –style democracy" was "superior" to alternatives such as communism, non-alignment and revolutionary nationalism.[27]

Filipino policy was also summed up in an American report regarding Roxas' pronouncements which stated that:

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[25] Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 194, 195.

[26] "The Collaboration Issue," General Political Situation, 2.

[27] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 167.

> The ambition of Filipinos, said the President (Roxas) . . . is to show our neighbors that Democracy can thrive in the tropics and that the happiness of a people can best be insured by giving them the amplest freedom in the management of their affairs . . . the nations of Asia are counselled to entrust the solution of their internal problems to decisions of the people through the processes of free discussion and deliberation.[28]

Challenges of state included lack of a properly working bureaucracy, the lack of a professional military and continued oligarchic control of police and private armies in the various provinces.[29] Many of the landlords in the provinces, particularly in the grain-producing lowlands of Central Luzon Island, used force to quell peasant unrest. These provincial warlords, such as Pampanga Governor Pablo Angeles David, took advantage of the vacuum created by the postwar disarray, particularly from the central government.[30] The government faced formidable obstacles, such as wartime collaboration, bills for compensation, and the need to resolve peasant uprisings against local landlords. The Filipino political system was patterned after the American model, though as a centralized republic with its capital in Manila. The largely elite-dominated legislature proved to be a rival to the executive. Scions of elite families and individuals

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[28] Nathaniel P. Davis to The Secretary of State, Washington, "Broadcast Address by President Roxas on V-J Day Anniversary," August 15, 1947, Foreign Service of the United States of America, no. 1086, American Embassy, Manila, Philippines, Folder 896.001/5-1547, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.008/1-145 to 896.003/12-3149, NARA.

[29] Anderson, "Elections and Participation," 23, 24, in Taylor (ed.), *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia*.

[30] Renato Constantino, Letizia Constantino. *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City: The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 206, 207.

who owed their advancement and affiliation to these patronage networks dominated the judiciary. The political and economic elites dominated Congress, the Executive and the Judiciary. In these factional conflicts, Roxas used his national and provincial networks to win during the 1946 presidential election and consolidate power from the *Nacionalista*-dominated Congress. Roxas was helped in large part by the phenomenon of "block voting," which when augmented with patronage would have been an effective mechanism for the elites to maintain power.[31] Roxas sought to obtain reconstruction funds from the US.[32] The Filipino President did not hesitate to ask for financial help from its former colonizer, due to the challenges of reconstruction, so long as it served Filipino ends.[33]

Filipinos knew that they needed foreign help and expertise in building and developing the nation. The Roxas government used the presidency and the government to rally support for US capital and technology, while also building up local infrastructure

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[31] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society*, 169,170.

[32] The US Department of State, under the Appropriation Act of 1950, transferred an amount of US $14, 789, 850 in accordance with the Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1950 to [restore] and [improve] "roads, ports and harbors, public buildings and public health services," Memorandum for the President: Authorization to Transfer Funds Under the Philippine Rehabilitation Act, Philippine Rehabilitation Program, August 11, 1949, Allocations 2 of 2, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, AI 1548, Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/Agency Files, 1946-1951, Box 0001, NARA.

[33] Which also included the "purchase of equipment" and the added "improvements" to airport facilities in Laoag and Manila, for the fiscal year, 1948. Letter by Ralph C. Jones to F. Hubert Havlik, September 25, 1947, Department of Commerce, Office of the Secretary, Washington, Philippine Rehabilitation Program, Allocations 1 of 2, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, AI 1548, Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/Agency Files, 1946-1951, Box 0001, NARA.

and production.[34] This government program for development included areas as far as Basilan Island, such as with a plan to plant palm trees in a land that enjoyed "even rainfall" all year-round, and the high process due to the demand for that product in the global market.[35] The government objective was to uplift the welfare of the lower and middle class Filipinos. This lent the mirage of a top-down, state-centric brush to the nation-building enterprise.[36] The Roxas administration had always believed in the primacy of state power. Given postwar conditions and the government's desire for consensus, consolidation entailed cooperation from leaders from various parts of the archipelago.

Money was needed to finance Filipino reconstruction. The Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1946 ensured the provision of US $620 million for public and for private war-damaged properties.[37] The highly controversial Philippine Trade Act (or Bell Trade Act of 1946) provided for the "duty-free" importation of Filipino-made goods by the US for a period of eight-years, before raising the tariffs gradually until reaching full tariff by 1974. But there were onerous provisions for the Philippines that restricted Filipino manufacturing goods that might compete with US goods. A provision giving American and Filipino prospectors equal rights to invest in the country's natural

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[34] "President Probes Problems in the South," *The Manila Times*, January 24, 1947.

[35] Vicente F. Barranco, "Roxas Sets New Policy In Gov't Units, President Will Seek Laws To Extend Vacation Rights," *The Manila Times*, March 20, 1948.

[36] "Roxas Says Free Port Here Possible To Bring US Capital," *The Manila Times*, March 10, 1948.

[37] Frank Golay, "Economic Collaboration: The Role of American Investment," in Frank H. Golay (ed.), *United States and the Philippines* (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall Inc., 1966), 99.

resources and ownership of stakes in the public utilities proved controversial.[38] The premise behind the Bell Trade Act of 1946 was that domestic production in the islands had to be made efficient, personal incomes had to increase, while the standard of living was "below pre-war level.[39]" The dilemma according to George Taylor, in his work *The Philippines and the United States*, was that Filipinos "had to decide which they wanted more, their traditional value system or adequate economic growth." Taylor further argued that Filipinos cannot have both.[40] The best way to approach Filipino indigenous agency when couched in terms of national "development" was that Filipinos ultimately expressed agency through the prism of Filipino visions and ambitions. That Filipinos sought external aid such as from its former colonizer, America, did not submerge the indigenous agendas that lay underneath. Manuel Roxas warned Filipinos that:

> . . . you must not have the impression that our economic and social rehabilitation can be achieved merely by approval of the Rehabilitation Acts or by the inauguration of my administration. The assistance derived from America will merely give us the means or part of the means which we need to effectuate our economic reconstruction.[41]

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[38] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 202, 203.

[39] George E. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership* (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), 136.

[40] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 139.

[41] "Radio Address to the Filipino People," April 30, 1946, 16, *Papers, Addresses and Writings of Manuel Roxas*, Lopez Museum Library.

The Third Republic saw the treaties it signed with the United States as ultimately beneficial to Filipinos. Filipino Senator Ramon Diokno stated that even as he disagreed with the Roxas administration for having pushed for those trade deals to be passed, these treaties were still a product of Filipino consensus. But while there was public support amongst the majority non-elite Filipinos, there was also much disapproval.[42] The challenge for the Roxas administration was to show that the state and the nation-building project could be a vision shared by all Filipinos with a common future. Therefore, the chief of state exhorted Filipinos to help build the nation, stating that:

> . . . the actual work must be done by ourselves. You can't expect everything from the government; the Government alone can't create the wealth needed for the sustenance of the nation. This duty devolves upon all our people for their individual welfare and out national prosperity.[43]

The Roxas administration sought to build industrialization and an export-based society.[44] The state encouraged practicality in advocating for trades and crafts to promote industrial efficiency. It saw the necessity of fighting on two fronts: crime and poverty.[45] The State placed emphasis on the health of ordinary Filipinos, such as during the

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[42] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 203.

[43] "Radio Address to the Filipino People," April 30, 1946, *Papers, Addresses and Writings of Manuel Roxas*, 16, Lopez Museum Library.

[44] "Industrialised PI, Supplying Far East, Is Roxas Vision," *The Manila Times*, January 28, 1947.

[45] Vicente Barranco, "Learn by Work, Roxas Urges in Albay Speech," *The Manila Times*, February 26, 1947.

tuberculosis crisis in Manila and the provinces.[46] The State looked after the "nutritional" well-being of ordinary Filipinos in urban and in rural areas.[47] Meanwhile, the Executive worked harmoniously with the Filipino Congress, with a record 119 bills acted upon, and 97 passed.[48]

Filipino print media, meanwhile, ran editorials that urged the administration to focus more on developing self-sufficiency.[49] Broadsheets such as the *Manila Post* suggested that the solution for ordinary Filipinos lay with working hard and relying on themselves rather than on external assistance, as this appeared to be the only way Filipinos could express their independence as a people.[50] That Filipinos were supportive of the United States did not mean that the Philippines saw themselves as dependent on the former colonizer.

Security and Nation-Building: Debates over US Bases

Another source of nationalist controversy in Filipino society was security, namely the issue of whether there should be permanent US bases in the archipelago. A Military Assistance Act was passed on June 26, 1946, prior to the granting of

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[46] "Roxas' P1,000 Opens T-B Drive," *The Manila Times*, July 20, 1947.

[47] "Roxas Praises Work of Doctors During War, Reveals Plans," *The Manila Times*, May 8, 1947.

[48] "Roxas Rests After Acting on 119 Bills; Laws Result of Teamwork," *The Manila Times*, June 23, 1947.

[49] Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 50.

[50] Enclosure No. 9, Newspaper Extract, Editorials, January 1, 1947, *The Manila Post*, in American Embassy, Manila, Despatch no. 424. January 6, 1947, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

independence in July of that year. The Act entailed a group of US military officers coming over to the Philippines for help in the planning of the Philippine Army. The US Military Bases Agreement was signed on March 14, 1947, while the Military Assistance Agreement was signed March 21, 1947.[51] The negotiations over the bases revealed the reluctance of the United States to base forces in the archipelago. Filipinos were willing to welcome American forces for Filipino security, with the qualification that Filipino sovereignty and jurisdiction be respected.

In 1946, the State Department debated where to place the US military in the Asia-Pacific region, and along with Pentagon military planners, leaned toward basing in Guam, Korea and Okinawa.[52] The reason given was that sites such as Guam and Okinawa were "much easier to defend," the US Congress was becoming reluctant to "fund a spending spree" for bases, and that the United States had to defend Europe against the Soviet Union due to rising Cold War tensions.[53] High Commissioner Paul McNutt in December 1946 informed President Roxas of an impending drawdown of US forces in Manila, since the Philippines was not considered by the US government as a priority for basing.[54]

President Roxas supported the presence of American military bases in the archipelago. The Filipino President, in a speech to the Filipino Congress in January

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[51] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, August 4, 1947, "The Collaboration Issue," 3, The Military Situation.

[52] Amy Blitz, *The Contested State: American Foreign Policy and Regime Change in the Philippines* (Lanham and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 83.

[53] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 332.

[54] Blitz, *The Contested State*, 83.

1947, stressed the continued need for a US military presence and for external economic aid. This expression of intent did not sit well with Filipino nationalist politicians who opposed the perceived dependence of the US on its former colonizer.[55] The nationalist Senator Lorenzo Sumulong criticized Filipino independence as conditional due to the potential for permanent American military bases in the archipelago, despite Filipino attainment of independence.[56] In an interview with the Philippine National Broadcasting System, Roxas sought to reassure and assuage fears that the potential presence of American air and naval bases in the Philippines would not infringe on Philippine sovereignty.[57] Roxas argued, during a radio interview with Harkness, that:

> . . . There is no major group in the Philippines which seriously objects to American bases in the Islands. As far as the great majority of Philippine people is concerned, they welcome the use by the United States of base

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[55] From Manila (Paul McNutt) to the Secretary of State, Department of State, Incoming Telegram, January 29, 1947, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[56] There had always been a strong tradition of peasant-based resistance based on grievances over landlord-tenant relations, the role of the major parties such as the Nacionalista Party in intimidating Popular Front candidates during the 1930s, in the central islands of Luzon. The left leaning Democratic Alliance Party of 1947 had its precursor in the Popular Front Party which ran in the elections of 1937 and 1940. For a more thorough discussion of the history of elections in the Philippines, see Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contested Meaning of elections in the Philippines," in R.H. Taylor, *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1996), 136-163.

[57] Radio Interviews over the National Broadcasting System, May 16, 1946, *Papers, Writings and Addresses of Manuel Roxas*, 38, 39, Lopez Museum Library.

> facilities for the protection and defense of both the Philippines and the United States. [58]

American policymakers were not as eager to station permanent US forces in the Philippines, as was often assumed. There were debates taking place among American officials over the "potential withdrawal of United States forces from the archipelago." US Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote to President Harry Truman, and restated the State Department's recommendation that "the United States withdraw all its army forces from the Philippines, with the proviso that should the Philippine government request that some forces remain such forces should be small in number." Acheson mentioned to Truman that Filipino President Roxas stated to Acheson the position of the Filipino government, "that the Philippine government does desire the maintenance of some US military bases in the Philippines [and that] the Philippine Government desires the retention of such United States troops as may be required for bases." Acheson cited the approval of the Filipino Congress in 1946, stating their desire for US forces to remain in the archipelago, where bases were "deemed necessary for the mutual protection of the Philippines and of the United States." Acheson reiterated his previous position that should the US President find it helpful, Truman might want to issue a directive that "token US forces be continued in the Philippines." The Filipino government stated that Roxas' "public statements" and the government position reflected the general Filipino consensus. Roxas apparently did want to make it appear that the Filipino government

[58] Radio Interviews over the National Broadcasting System.

was merely acceding to an American "request." [59] The Filipino government also "objected" to the idea of permanent bases in the urban areas, such as Manila.[60]

Even United States' agencies were divided on the issue. The US military had other views apart from the bureaucrats in Washington DC. A subsequent note the same day on December 24, 1946, described the concerns of the military. The Acting Chief of Staff of the War Department in Washington DC sought to bring to Truman's attention the unlikely event that "the small force and defense installations now projected will not be sufficient for the defense of the Philippines." The United States, according to the American official, should be wary of "entering into any mutual defense arrangement by which the US guarantees the security (of the Philippines)." [61]

The major issues involved during the 1946 debates between Filipinos and Americans, included the stationing of permanent bases in the archipelago, transfer of bases from the United States to Filipinos, and military and financial assistance by the United States to Filipinos. The US War Department wanted to maintain "a large number of troops in the Philippines," proposing the retention of installations such as the Nichols Base Field and Fort McKinley, both located just outside Manila. Americans GIs based

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[59] Dean Acheson, Memorandum to the President, "Withdrawal of US troops, Philippines," December 24, 1946, 1, 2, Folder-State Department Correspondence, 1946-47, [3 of 5], WHCF: Confidential File, State Department Files: Correspondences, HSTLI.

[60] Garel Grunder and William Livezey, *The Philippines and the United States* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1951), The Philippines and the United States, 273.

[61] From Thos. T. Hardy to Admiral Leahy, "Memorandum for Admiral Leahy," December 24, 1946, War Department, Office of the Chief of Staff, Washington, WHCF Confidential File- State Department Files Correspondences, Folder- State Department Correspondences, 1946-47 [3 of 5], HSTLI.

in Manila, particularly in the Nichols Field Base, did not exercise discipline. There were reports that the Filipinos were unhappy with the prospect of a continuing American presence. The Roxas administration ended up issuing an "ultimatum" that the United States could not obtain "public acceptance of a military agreement that provided for the maintenance of bases, (referring to these bases which the United States wanted to retain near Manila), in a metropolitan area." The War Department, realizing that it could not obtain the money needed to "maintain the forces" the United States had on the ground, instead gave the Roxas administration an offer to "withdraw entirely from the Philippines unless the Philippine government requested the American forces to stay, (in the event, the United States would then be willing to maintain token forces in the Philippines)." The War Department offered to station forces instead at Clark Air Field and thus withdrew from the other bases they previously sought to station troops in. The Navy Department reduced its offer to just stationing forces in the naval base at Subic Bay.[62]

The United States sent a group of Army officers to the Philippines to begin talks with the Filipino government and help build a Philippine Army. It appeared that Filipinos had other plans. The Filipino government would only accede to the American

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[62] Token forces were to have been "stationed at Clark Field in Central Luzon, about seventy-five miles north of Manila." Other "small reservations" existed for radio stations and for recreation. Even the US Navy Department reduced its request for installations to Subic Bay. But, as early as 1947, the United States had begun considering the withdrawal of troops almost entirely from the islands had the Filipino government asked the American authorities to do so. From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Military Situation, 3.

plan to organize the Filipino military, if the United States were to provide a certain amount of money (US $9 million) to Filipinos. Otherwise, Manila would instead organize the Filipino army as it saw fit, and not according to American advice. The United States, according to the report, was trying to figure out how committed America must be in stationing military forces, including advisers, in the archipelago given that the Filipinos had their own plans for their own security in any event.[63]

The United States, in addition, acceded to the request by the Filipino government to transfer some of the bases America formerly held. This was particularly true for the bases which the United States acquired from Spain at the turn of the century. The official "position" of the Filipino government was that "all the bases not specifically retained under the Bases Agreement virtually automatically passed to the Philippine government." The US War and Navy Department's position was that the United States had "certain rights and titles" to land obtained "from private owners by expropriation."[64] The American plan was to "persuade (Filipinos) in return for the surrender of these rights to expropriate and turn over to the United States additional areas [they] say they need in the vicinity of Clark Field and of Subic Bay." The report concluded, stating that "it did not seem likely that the Philippine government will be moved from its position that all unreserved bases reverted to Filipino hands."[65]

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[63] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Military Situation, 3.

[64] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Military Situation, 3.

[65] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Military Situation, 3.

The United States eventually settled for staying, due to more potential real estate for permanently emplacing its armed forces in Asian locations. Another document dated November 23, 1946, bluntly described the position of the Joint Chiefs when it came to the presence of military bases. Their "strategic concept" foresaw "not only the adequate defense of the Philippines but the utility of a Philippine area for staging and mounting sizeable air and ground forces," should any future conflict arise. American military chiefs had also gone over the "global implications" of a potential US military withdrawal from the Philippines. The chiefs were worried that the prospect of US withdrawal "might be interpreted as an indication of a decreased US interest in the Far East, including China." The United States also believed that complete withdrawal might "prejudice" the American position in the eyes of the Chinese, the Japanese and the Koreans, which might lead to a military vacuum. The action might be construed as "desertion" by some of the pro-American Filipinos.[66] The US government was willing to accommodate itself to the requests of the Filipino government.

The American report also looked at whether the presence of US bases in the islands would affect the "good faith" that existed between Americans and Filipinos. Washington always believed that "the independence of the Philippine government has resulted from the common action of our two peoples." American officials assumed that the US-Filipino relationship was critical for America's standing in the world. The

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[66] Memorandum by the Chief of Staff, US Army, Joint Chiefs of Staff, "War Department Requirements for Military Bases and Rights in the Philippine Islands," WHCF Confidential File- State Department Files Correspondences, State Department Correspondence, 1946-47 [3 of 5], HSTLI.

military and strategic importance of US Army troops" in the Philippines, therefore should be "weighted" with this in mind."[67]

American military authorities expressed skepticism with regards to stationing permanent bases in the archipelago, arguing that "any base rights in the Philippine Islands would be of very limited value, if not a source of weakness, without the full and complete cooperation of the Filipino people." Therefore, the US Joint Chiefs came up with the recommendation for withdrawal, although they foresaw the eventuality that Filipino authorities may seek some forces to remain, "for reasons of political and military security."[68] The defense authorities would also be working with the Department of State to arrive at a plan for the phased withdrawal of American military forces in the Islands. The Defense Department agreed with the previous State Department report that only limited forces be retained in the islands. These forces "consisted approximately of one composite air group with a very small ground detachment." The military report also considered complete withdrawal of US forces from the archipelago, with only a "request" to be made for "long term air transit rights."[69] The United States, as much as it hoped to maintain strong ties with Filipinos, did not wish to be seen as continuing empire in its former colony and in a Cold War decolonizing world.

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[67] Memorandum by the Chief of Staff.

[68] Memorandum by the Chief of Staff.

[69] Memorandum by the Chief of Staff.

On December 24, 1946, Harry Truman laid out the policy of his government with regards to the potential withdrawal of American forces from the Philippines. In it, the American President stated that the US War Department would adopt as:

> . . . settled policy a program of withdrawing as rapidly as possible the major part of our forces in the Philippines in particular from the metropolitan area in and around the city of Manila, but that the limited forces . . . be retained in the Philippines on such bases as will be available to this Government under the military base agreement now being considered by the two Governments.[70]

The 1947 Military Bases Agreement, originally supposed to expire in 2046, eventually opened 23 military facilities across the country to US forces, the most critical of which included the sprawling Clark Air Base, with its excellent training area in Crow Valley, and the deep-water Subic Bay Naval Base.[71] The Agreement proved very controversial, especially amongst poor residents and 1,200 families in Mabalacat site who lived near Clark Air Base, and whose lands were declared "a US Army reservation."[72] Some argued that America exerted undue "pressure" on the Filipino government to approve the Military Bases Agreement of 1947 where US advisers would train the Filipino military.[73]

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[70] Harry S. Truman, "Memorandum for the Secretary of War," January 9, 1947, Folder- State Department Correspondence, 1946-47 [3 of 5], White House Confidential File, State Department File: Correspondences, HSTLI.

[71] Marc Gallicchio, *The Scramble for Asia: US Military in the Aftermath of the Pacific War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 149.

[72] Jose L. Guevara, "Private Lands Policy is Set by President," *The Manila Times*, January 18, 1948.

[73] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 171.

American stationing of troops in a foreign land was not a blank check in the eyes of Filipinos.

The United States Military did not enjoy full freedom even as America obtained bases in the islands. A State Department Memorandum as early as late 1946, showed that the Americans were trying to abide by the intentions of the Philippine government regarding the size—and the strict Filipino oversight-- of the military forces deployed to the islands.[74] Some critical issues involved surrounding the presence of US bases, included jurisdiction over the trial of American soldiers, sailors or civilian employees who broke Philippine law. The issue was whether the accused US military personnel needed to be tried in US or in Filipino courts.[75] There was also the continuing dispute over titles to the baselands and over compensation.

By 1948, the US State Department sent out its decision regarding the "future disposition of bases not retained under the US Military Bases Agreement." According to the American Secretary of State, "all thought of attempt to bargain on the question of exchange of lands should be abandoned," while Filipinos were to be informed by the American representatives that, "while the United States was advised that it had legal title to the property, it proposed to transfer it as soon as possible to the Philippine

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[74] Memorandum for the President, State Department Correspondence, December 24, 1946, 1946 to 1947, 3 of 5, White House Confidential File, HSTLI.

[75] Amy Blitz, *The Contested State: American Foreign Policy and Regime Change in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 83.

government."[76] Some American figures had other opinions, such as General Dwight Eisenhower, who believed that the value of the US-Filipino special relationship overrode whatever strategic or symbolic value the bases held for American Cold War strategy in the broader region.[77]

US President Harry Truman responded to the State Department's concerns on July 1948. Truman stated that he completely agreed with the Secretary of State "that the bases the United States did not need," must be turned over to Filipinos "without compensation." Truman furthermore said that "if title is not clear, we should make it clear by the proper transfer." And on September 1948, the Secretary of the Navy stated in a letter ". . . that the Navy proposed to transfer to the Philippine government without compensation certain land to which it held title and in return ask for certain land to be transferred to it." A request was to be made by the United States to the Philippine government to recognize that America had a legal title to the US bases in the archipelago, "as was listed in Annex A of the Military Bases Agreement," signed between the two countries back in 1947.[78]

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[76] "Historical Background, Philippines Negotiations," 9, Copy no.24, Folder- Philippine Negotiations-memoranda, airgrams, letters, Box no. 47, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Miscellaneous Lot Files, Lot File No. 60 D 172 (Box 3 of 5), Working Files on the US Delegation to Negotiate a Military Bases Agreement with the Philippines, 1955-1956, NARA.

[77] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 196, 197.

[78] "Historical Background, Philippines Negotiations," 9.

America was chiefly concerned that Filipino nationalism might turn "anti-American."[79] American policymakers saw the danger, as a result of the economic crisis then gripping the Philippines, of appeals by the outsized, wealthy and powerful Filipino Chinese, the Huks, the Filipino Communist Party and American communists in the United States.[80] There was fear that Filipinos, should they feel that the US had "abandoned" support for the Filipino cause, might abrogate the mutual security and defense treaties, or even worse, elect someone like the ultranationalist Claro Recto. American policymakers therefore believed that America needed to continue providing aid, advice and assistance to Filipinos if only to have some form of postcolonial leverage.

Filipinos were also looking for leverage over the Americans. They found it through American Cold War security fears. The Roxas administration knew that the United States was searching for as many allies as it could find against the Soviet Union.[81] This meant that America could not interfere as much as it hoped for, or wished to in the internal affairs of its former colony. The Filipino political leadership was aware of where it stood in its relationship with the US and knew how to take advantage of their relations with the former colonizer.[82] This was highlighted in a speech to the Philippine

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[79] William Pomeroy, *The Philippines: Colonialism, Collaboration and Resistance* (New York: International Publishers, 1992), 183.

[80] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 65

[81]According to a declassified document by a US Army Chief of Staff, the Philippine Islands are considered "strategically and politically important," for US military use. State Department Correspondence, 1946 to 1947, 3 of 5, White House Central Files: Confidential File, HSTLI.

[82] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 246.

Bar Association, where Roxas stated that the Philippines was in charge of its internal and foreign affairs.[83] The United States was allowed by Filipino authorities to set up bases in Filipino territory which also meant the potential for local jobs and prosperity in the base areas. Filipinos would enjoy security while the United States would have another host country for their forces. Roxas welcomed US forces in, although the American presence subsequently led to issues over sovereignty and bases jurisdiction during the coming years.[84] Before his unexpected passing, Roxas delivered a speech at Clark Field, where he lauded the presence of US military bases, such as Clark Air Force Base. The American report dated April 1948, which drew its cited passages from the Filipino newspaper *Manila Times*, stated that the Filipino President made it clear that ". . . the existence of such an American base in the Philippines was brought about through voluntary and free choice in the Philippines . . . that its main purpose was to insure mutual security of the Philippines and of the United States . . . "[85] Security was but one of many Filipino concerns in building the Filipino nation.

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[83] Julius Edelstein, The Foreign Service of the United States of America No. 242, October 15, 1946, American Embassy, 896.001 Roxas 10-1546 CSV, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[84] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 331, 332.

[85] From Manila to the Secretary of State, Department of State, Incoming Telegram Plain, Control 5864, Recorded April 16, 1948. 896.001/ Roxas/4-1648, Folder 896.001/5-1547, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.008/1-145 to 896.003/12-3149, NARA.

Bringing All Groups Together: Elite and Non-Elite Filipinos

Defining Filipino identity was often a challenge in state and nation-building. A radio interview with Manuel Roxas over the National Broadcasting system back in 1946 revealed that Filipinos had dilemmas not only over unity but over self-identifying as Asians. Roxas was asked about the "racial relationship of Filipinos to the other peoples of the Orient, Filipino customs in the islands and the prevalent language. The Filipino President answered that Filipinos were related to its neighbors by virtue of a common Malayan heritage. But Filipinos also did not interact much with their Asian neighbors over the centuries, according to Roxas. Referring to the heritage of centuries of Spanish colonialism, Roxas said that 90 percent of Filipinos are Catholics. Also, despite the proliferation of so many local dialects, the common language used and understood by Filipinos was still both English [and Tagalog] in 1946.[86] At the time, Spanish, the other colonizers' language in the archipelago, was only spoken by less than 3% of the population by the late 1930s, according to a survey done under the then-Philippine Commonwealth.[87]

A common national language also played a critical role in the expression of indigenous identity and in nation-state building in the islands. This was true given the multiplicity of the dialects which existed across the archipelago. A national language appeared to be needed. Debates over the national language dated back to the

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[86] Radio Interviews over the National Broadcasting System, May 16, 1946, 37, *Papers, Writings and Addresses of Manuel Roxas*, Lopez Museum Library.

[87] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 147.

Commonwealth period. Some, such as politician and educator Rafael Palma, as early as 1930, argued that, "to adopt Tagalog as a national language would be to isolate the Philippines from the rest of the world." Apparently, Palma's views evolved over time. By 1935, Palma became a leader of a faction in the Philippine Constitutional Convention, (which helped draft the 1935 Philippine Constitution) that supported Tagalog as the Filipino national language.[88]

The opposition to Tagalog as the national language extended to the non-Tagalog ethnicities. Manuel Quezon's representatives were tasked with propagating the teaching of Tagalog in schools across the archipelago. These representatives encountered challenges from regional groups in the central Philippine islands such as the Cebuanos, another major ethnicity speaking a different dialect. The Cebuanos were opposed to the work of the Institute of the National Language, which they perceived as favoring Tagalog too much. They therefore sought to present alternatives. The Cebuanos even mobilized groups such as the *Kaumahang Binisaya* (Bisayan Culture), where one of the members, a Vicente Sotto, "prepared a grammar and a dictionary." The Cebuanos also argued that the Bisayans were "numerically superior to the Tagalogs." In 1938, the Institute of National Language sent Professor Cecilio Lopez to Cebu to pacify groups that arose over the issue. Only Quezon's "moral suasion and authority" prevented an "open rift" on the National Language question. Even Quezon's authority, according to

[88] "Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved," *Saturday Magazine*, December 7, 1946.

Gonzalez, did not result in acceptance by many non-Tagalogs until much later.[89] Receptive adaptation of Tagalog only took place, once the Third Republic was able to plant Tagalog's roots throughout the rest of the archipelago. The language question also exhibited the value of state power in consolidating people, especially when negotiating contested spaces and encountering various forms of local resistance.

Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon supported the idea of a national language. In 1937, Quezon "proclaimed the Tagalog dialect as the basis for the national language of the Philippines." According to the Commonwealth President back in 1938:

> . . . we will not be conscious of oneness as a nation until we speak a common language. . . ridiculous and humiliating that often Filipinos have to use a foreign language to understand each other. . . Do not attempt the impossible, do not attempt to make it (referring to English) the national language of the Philippines because it will never be.[90]

A passage in a *Philippine Magazine* article stated back in 1938 that ". . . it must be admitted that English . . . stands very little chance to become the language of the masses or the people." According to a Jose Hernandez, ". . . with independence, English will recede more and more to the background."[91] In 1939, Quezon, speaking in Tagalog

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[89] Andrew B. Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism: The Philippine Experience Thus Far* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980), 75.

[90] "Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved."

[91] "Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved."

(which was then only used by a quarter of all English-speaking Filipinos), proclaimed Tagalog as the "national language of the Philippines."[92]

In 1940, Quezon "authorized" the Institute of National Language (established under Commonwealth Act No. 184 back in 1936) to print a dictionary and grammar. Also, in 1940, Tagalog came to be taught in all Filipino schools.[93] The problem, as Andrew Gonzalez stated, was that the Commonwealth government, working with Filipino schools, found that there was a "shortage of teachers" that could teach Tagalog to Filipino schoolchildren.[94] Scholarly works on the Tagalog language also began to appear. In 1940, a book entitled "Sinupan ng Wikang Tagalog," by Professor J. Sevilla and A. Alvero studied Tagalog as an "ancient system of writing." Other works involved looking at "the principal orthographic symbols of the ancient Tagalog syllabary," "Tagalog syllables," and "the value of accents in the Tagalog language."[95]

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[92] Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 74.

[93] Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People, 8th Edition* (Quezon City: Garotech Publishing, 1990), 361.

[94] Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 74.

[95] Some examples of the Filipino experts' results included "an illustrated Tagalog-English vocabulary of the parts of the human body, and then movements, and of the most common local insects and animals, and a collection of 147 old Tagalog proverbs . . . brief quotations from Tagalog writers, short biographical sketches of prominent Filipinos, and lastly by a sonnet all written in Tagalog characters by Mr. Sevilla himself. The third essay dealt with Tagalog numerology, with corresponding symbols adopted from the innovations introduced by Guillermo E. Tolentino in his "Ang Wika at Baybaying Tagalog . . . Mr. Sevilla's work will help to facilitate a clearer understanding of the long neglected and generally forgotten art of ancient Tagalog writing." Postal Card, September 11, 1940, Folder 5- Language, Ortigas Foundation Library.

Filipino independence on July 4, 1946, marked the time when Tagalog became an official language for Filipinos, within the context of a sovereign state.[96] The lively debates over the national language continued after independence. A *Saturday Magazine* issue with an article entitled "Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved," in December 1946, tackled the multiple voices and debates surrounding Tagalog not only amongst Filipinos, but even some Americans. The issue offered a sampling of opinions on Tagalog as the Filipino national language. A Mr. McNutt, appearing to favor the English language, critiqued the "misdirected pressure for a national language in the Philippines." McNutt warned others [referring to the non-Tagalog speaking Filipinos] of the danger that in using Tagalog, "we might be reviving an ancient dialect as a vehicle for your thoughts." A local Jesuit, Fr. James Reuter, criticized McNutt's statements, arguing that McNutt "virtually advocated the use of English as the Philippine National Language," when Filipinos looked like they needed the national language. The *Manila Times* in December 1946 also opined that the issue over the national language could lead to "super-nationalism." Filipinos were divided regarding the national language situation during the early years of independence.[97]

This ambivalence amongst Filipinos was evident in a survey of the opinions of some well-known Filipinos. A congressman criticized the "Tagalog business" and doubted the concept of a "national language." Another congressman from Pangasinan province in Luzon Island stated that ". . . The American language is good, but I don't

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[96] Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 74.

[97] "Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved."

agree that a Filipino should rise to protest against the use of his own tongue . . .” In addition, a “majority” of the representatives in Congress from the southern Philippines criticized Tagalog as the national language. On the other hand, renowned linguists such as Jose Villa Panganiban advocated for a common national language.[98]

The teaching of Tagalog as a required subject for all high school students in public and in private schools across the country from the first grade to the fourth year of high school, began in 1946. Tagalog education was divided between the school system and formal education. But there was no principle of bilingualism to teach Filipino schoolchildren. According to educational researcher Andrew Gonzalez, “Filipino children from Grade One on were taught the national language as a subject of study, a content subject, and were taught about the language rather than how to communicate in the language.” Furthermore, Filipino school textbooks at the time showed stress on the grammar of Tagalog, as seen in the *Balarila* textbook. Reading activities were limited to Tagalog literary masterpieces said to “have been incomprehensible even to the adult native speaker of Tagalog living in Manila and accustomed only to the colloquial variety of Tagalog.”[99] Despite this initial limit, the number of Tagalog speakers in the islands grew from 4,060,859, or 25.5% out of a total of 15,900,436 Filipinos in the 1939 census to 7,101,196 or 39.4% out of 18,024,365 Filipinos in the 1948 census.[100] Tagalog as a

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[98] “Our Language Problem Remains Unresolved,” *Saturday Magazine*, December 7, 1946.

[99] Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 100.

[100] Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism*, 103.

source of unity was pushed not only by the state through education but spread through Tagalog's increasing use in wider society across the archipelago.

Meanwhile, state power was weak and Filipinos needed to be gathered together to develop the nation, with the Third Republic as the legitimate expression of indigenous Filipino nation-building. In the aftermath of World War II, challenges of state included ". . . the destruction of Manila, the displacement of landlord power in the adjoining provinces, and the disruption of plantation agriculture . . ."[101] Minority groups and individuals across the islands and far from the national capital were enjoined to participate in the Third Republic's national state-building project.[102] The Roxas administration used colonial methods and local, provincial ties to consolidate its power. In the southern islands, numerous "Moro tribesmen and chieftains" were enjoined to resolve their differences, to unite, and to work with one another. In exchange, the state government will work for the "agricultural rehabilitation" of the province.[103]

The state also granted "universal suffrage" and took steps to make the status of many provinces "regular," similar to the rights enjoyed by other provinces. According to Roxas, the objective was "to bring more democracy to the people concerned." This entailed appointment of governors and of provincial board members "from natives and longtime residents in the provinces," and to encourage these municipal districts to

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[101] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 170.

[102] "Roxas Scores Opposition: President Defends Administration Against Minority Charges, Says Efforts Being Made To Rehabilitate Country, Help People," *The Manila Times*, October 19, 1947.

[103] Felisberto M. Verano, "Roxas Unifies Warring Tribes," *The Manila Times*, September 18, 1947.

"organize themselves into regular municipalities."[104] Nation-state building had a territorial aspect to it.

The Roxas administration sought to alleviate postwar conditions for ordinary Filipinos. Roxas knew in 1947 that he needed the State to deal with the Chinese, who controlled key sectors of the economy such as lumber, and hence, the prices for building materials. To avoid further potential domestic discord between Filipinos and the Chinese, the Filipino President asked the Chinese to find ways to deal with the situation by "bringing down the prices." The Chinese lumberman agreed to "cooperate" with the Roxas administration on lumber pricing, according to a *Manila Times* article dated February 1947.[105]

The state knew that many Filipinos needed available low-cost housing, in the aftermath of the ravages of World War II, particularly in, but not limited to the Manila area. The government, through the National Housing Corporation, embarked on a "building program" to resolve the "acute housing shortage in Manila and in the provinces." The government purchased a factory from the United States for use in the "manufacture of hollow blocks for home-building." The Filipino government acquired the factory in 1947 at a cost of 70,000 Philippine pesos. Government also sought to work with private enterprise in the country to help quicken the reconstruction of homes,

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[104] "Suffrage Right Given Special Provinces: Roxas Proclamation Extends Democratic Processes," *The Manila Times*, August 27, 1947.

[105] "Roxas to ease controls; Will clear many items to open market," *The Manila Times*, February 14, 1947.

particularly bungalows, in rural areas all over the country.[106] Government-sponsored housing was provided for poor Filipinos. Homes were constructed for low-income government employees. This process entailed the cooperation of various government corporations.[107]

Roxas used his executive power to boost Filipino confidence and engaged in presidential tours, (often with heavy turnout numbering up to 150,000 people in provinces like Cebu) where he delivered speeches across the archipelago. Boy Scouts, students, youth groups, municipal officials flocked to provincial capitals to listen to the President speak. The ordinary Filipino may not have the money or the political power but expressed his/her individual agency through voting and the use of family and informal community linkages to influence others.[108] Mobilizing people in the age of Roxas entailed an effort by the weak state to reach out to the non-elite Filipinos, who often mobilized collectively to bring themselves close to the center of power.

The non-elite Filipinos in the rural areas were not passive, dependent and merely being reactive to the edicts coming from Imperial Manila. In one of his provincial sorties in 1947, Roxas observed that there was a growing "Town Hall movement." Roxas let it

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[106] "Roxas Okays Sample Houses," *The Manila Times*, July 11, 1947.

[107] Vicente Barranco, "Roxas Pleads for Aid to Low-Salary Folk: Keynotes Task of Gov't Enterprises," *The Manila Times*, January 3, 1948.

[108] From Comdr. Julius Edelstein to the Secretary of State, Washington DC, "President Roxas' Second Tour of Visayan Provinces and Mindanao," The Foreign Service of the United States of America, American Embassy, Philippines, January 31, 1947, 1, 896.001 Roxas/1-3147 CS/A, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

be known that he viewed this movement's growth positively, as it would stimulate "discussions of live issues and important subjects confronting the New Republic." The Chief Executive also let it be known that the "Town Hall" could ideally include "matured people," and "respected members of the community" such as "professional men, businessmen, publishers and welfare workers." Furthermore, according to the Filipino President, ". . . if the Town Hall could create sufficient interest in the community, businesses would back it up financially and see that it grows in stature . . . " Interestingly, Roxas also hoped that the Town Hall "be kept out of politics and avoid controversial subjects that will tend to divide people into groups . . ." Roxas hoped that the formation of the Town Halls ". . . manage it in such a way that it will gain the support of responsible people," and that the best people to lead these kinds of movements would be "civic-minded people with academic backgrounds," who would gain the respect of the community. Government would play a role in encouraging the Town Hall movement by making available public buildings for discussions.[109]

Roxas also kept the local leaders, who also served as "middlemen" between the non-elite Filipinos and the central government in Manila, at arm's length. For instance, Roxas met in 1948 with many political leaders and government officials in Iloilo province during one of his various conferences. Roxas used the opportunity to demonstrate the administration's intent not to "tolerate election irregularities," and instructed the local officials and the campaign volunteers to do everything to insure "clean and peaceful balloting" in the concerned provinces. According to the people

[109] "Roxas for Better Town Hall Forum," *The Manila Times*, July 12, 1947.

whom the President met in Visayan provinces such as Leyte and Iloilo, Roxas had "made clear to all political parties concerned and to all local government agencies that the government will do its best to guarantee a clean and absolutely popular suffrage."[110]

These initiatives from the central government to bring Filipinos together extended to the Moros. In an address to an assembly of Moro tribesmen in Lanao, Roxas mentioned to the Moros that they had exhibited loyalty to the Philippines during World War II and had fought alongside Christian Filipinos. Therefore, the government promised to help develop the region. The government also sought Moro cooperation to resolve challenges such as the proliferation of firearms in the countryside and Moro slavery of Christian captives. The central government intervened in the latter, with Roxas giving the Moro slavers a month to set free the Christian slaves whom the Moros were holding.[111]

Filipinos also possessed a continued tendency to be regionalistic and nationalistic. This was true in the use of word *nation-building*. Vice President Quirino, who came from Ilocos province, said that his home province needed an "industrialization program" involving factories, harnessing hydroelectric power in big rivers, provision of weaving machineries from Japan, the creation of a port of entry in the provincial capitol, the construction of roads, bridges, and of public buildings.[112] Quirino also exhorted

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[110] Vicente Barranco, "Roxas Warns against Frauds, Orders Officials to Guard Against Polls," *The Manila Times*, March 18, 1948

[111] "Lanao Tribesmen Hear Roxas Pledge," *The Manila Times*, January 17, 1947.

[112] "Quirino Pleads for Cooperation in Gov't. Task of Nation-building," *The Manila Times*, October 31, 1947.

Filipinos already based in the United States to return to the Philippines and help "rebuild the nation." In Quirino's eyes, the United States is "rich," and America did not need Filipino industrial skills "in the same way that the Philippines does."[113]

The Roxas administration promoted autonomy outside Manila by allowing local leaders in the provinces to decide on local appointments, taxation and licensing goods in the local markets.[114] The government also discouraged the practice of reliance on subsidies, given the state of government finances and increased taxes at the time.[115] This level of intervention sought to prevent too much regionalism that only benefited local "bosses" amassing power and control over scattered, rogue provinces that threatened to spin out of Manila's orbit.[116] Roxas did not feel constrained by the limits of the weak Filipino state during his administration. He used the opportunity for the state to encourage local Filipinos in the provinces to work independently by finding ways to build and develop the communities and regions.

The Huk Challenge

The communist Huks had their early origins, according to American reports, as a "farmer tenant organization in Central Luzon." The Huk movement in the central plains arose during the interwar 1930s as a result of grievances against the "large landlords of

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[113] "Quirino asks US Filipinos to Return, Aid in Developing PI," *The Manila Times*, May 8, 1947.

[114] Jose L. Guevara, "Roxas Favors Wider Powers to Local Units," *The Manila Times*, January 22, 1948.

[115] "Roxas Urges Self-Help Policy On Provinces," *The Manila Times*, December 14, 1947.

[116]Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 371.

Central Luzon." The reality was that there were simply too many people for so little land available. The Huks ran the landlords "out of the provinces, harvested the rice, kept out the crops," and fought the Japanese. The Huks were consolidating its strongholds to control the Central Luzon provinces. At the end of World War II, the Huks enjoyed huge stockpiles of arms, which they were reluctant to surrender to the returning Americans or to the Filipinos.[117] The Huks apparently wanted to retain control over the tracts of land they controlled, while continuing to stockpile arms for what they saw as the looming conflict with the government in Manila in the coming years. The returning US and Filipino forces disarmed the Huks, arrested the leaders, and dislodged them from the territories Huks once ruled over since Washington [and the restored Commonwealth government] was afraid of the specter of a Manila that would lean towards the communists.[118] Similarly, the elite Filipinos in Manila and their landlord allies in the rural areas have always viewed the Huks in the late 1940s as a dangerous force since they allowed the peasants "a taste of local power" in the areas it ruled over, to garner local support.[119]

The Huks had always opposed Manuel Roxas, as they felt that he was an ally of the landlords. Throughout 1946, government and allied local forces employed a "pacification campaign" in suppressing the Huks in Central Luzon.[120] This did not mean that Roxas would not or could not negotiate with the Huks. Roxas preferred that the

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[117] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Hukbalahaps, 8.

[118] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 204.

[119] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 174.

[120] Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 206, 207, 208.

Huks surrender their arms. But many of the Huks did not trust the Roxas government and both sides were exact opposites in terms of ideology.[121] The central government's approach towards the Huk challenge in 1947 involved using the Third Republic as a bulwark against general lawlessness and to promote the state as the only force capable of protecting the ordinary Filipino in the rural areas from elements beyond the individual's control.[122]

Huks presented the foremost challenge to the Third Republic's quest for security. According to American estimates, the Huks numbered 15,000 heavily armed guerillas and enjoyed "wide support" among 2.5 million impoverished peasants in the central plains of Luzon.[123] Filipino intelligence estimates were more accurate, as Filipinos in the field enjoyed the advantages of local familiarity. Filipino Constabulary Colonel Napoleon Valeriano believed the American figure of 10,000 to 15,000 fighters to be somewhat exaggerated, though that number might be true as loose arms abounded, with an estimated 250,000 Huk sympathizers in early 1946.[124]

The Filipino Third Republic knew that the Huks presented a dangerous alternative to Manila's state and nation-building project. The objective of the government was to "isolate the Huks." With sustained offensives throughout 1946, the Huks were forced on the defensive and decided that they needed to establish a presence

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[121] Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 208, 210.

[122] "Roxas Sounds Stern Warning Against Extermination View," *The Manila Times*, February 23, 1947.

[123] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 374.

[124] "Symposium on the Role of Airpower in Counterinsurgency and Unconventional Warfare: The Philippine Huk Campaign," 8.

in the neighboring regions to serve as fallback in case Huk positions in Central Luzon were overrun by the government's forces. Their fighters were subsequently reduced to conducting hit and run ambushes against the central government in Manila. The Huks sought to appeal to the Constabulary soldier, arguing that the Filipinos should not fight other Filipinos, but to fight their "common oppressors," referring to the Manila-based Third Republic. As part of its propaganda campaign, government portrayed the Huks as "bandits" and proclaimed that the "peace and order" problem has been settled.[125]

Why did the government perceive the Huks as particularly dangerous? The scholar George Taylor argues that the Huks during and after World War II created an organization that defied traditional landlord-tenant relations. Huks offered non-elite Filipinos the promise of a break from what many Filipinos perceived as the "paternalism" and domination of landlord families. The Huks possessed cross-regional appeal, "demanded institutional loyalties, had a military machine and the potential to create national and international networks (due to their communist ideology).[126] Huk demands also did not sound unreasonable to some of the ordinary non-elite Filipinos. These demands, expressed in negotiations between 1946 and 1948, were limited to agricultural reforms, the dismantling of vigilante groups, blanket amnesty for their fighters and legislative seats in government.[127] In short, Huks cultivated an image of

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[125] Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 212, 213, 214.

[126] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 171, 172.

[127] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 340, 341.

being sensible to some Filipinos, which made them especially dangerous in the eyes of the Third Republic.

Aside from the military-oriented "Iron Fist" approach, the Third Republic used other means to suppress and co-opt the Huks. Government worked with the local landlords to negotiate over agrarian reform. The Roxas administration knew that grievances over centuries-old landlord-tenant relations set the stage for the Huk rebellion. Therefore, the government bought some landed estates to be resold to tenants. The State also labelled the Huks as "outlaws, criminals and subversives." The State also refused to provide amnesty for communist rebels in 1948.[128] In the eyes of the Filipino government, Huks were seditious and wanted to overthrow the Filipino government. Huks were outlawed on March 1948, while affiliated associations were banned.[129]

Government stressed people's rights as it continued its counterinsurgency campaign in 1948 to counteract Huk appeal.[130] The Filipino President, in an address to the members of the armed forces and the other agencies tasked with internal security, encouraged the soldiers to become familiar with and respect the civil liberties of ordinary Filipinos.[131] Roxas stressed the obligations of Filipino citizenship, of those 21

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[128] Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 198, 199.

[129] Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 215.

[130] Anatolio Litonjua, "Guard Civil: Only Lawful Steps Will be Taken-Roxas, Parties Advocating Violence to be State's Target," *The Manila Times*, March 10, 1948.

[131] Jose L. Guevara, "Roxas Warns PI Law Agents Against Violation of Men's Rights in Constitution Talk," *The Manila Times*, February 9, 1948.

years old and up, in mass assemblies held in barrios, towns and cities.[132] The state in return would focus on making social security more effective and far-reaching, enact and implement more liberal banking laws, as well as private and public disability insurance benefits.[133] These measures were meant to counteract the idea that the Huks were more concerned about people's welfare than the Third Republic was. Under Roxas, government efforts to integrate the Huks would not be effective since the government refused to include the Huks in the political process and instead relied more heavily on military measures to bring the fighters to heel.[134]

As the scholar Luis Francia had argued, Cold War realities led America to view the communists as a threat. Similarly, the Third Republic saw in the Huks not only a military danger, but an ideological rival that sought to gain the appeal of the peasantry that would eventually "seize state power" and take the Third Republic's place.[135] The Third Republic found Huks threatening because the rebellion posed a threat to national unity. Huks also employed what they called "popular democracy" to gain the support of peasants. In the eyes of the United States, of elite Filipinos, and of many non-elite Filipinos, there was reason to believe that the Huks sought power and control over the countryside.[136] Renato Constantino argued that the United States had also been playing a

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[132] "Guevara, Roxas Warns PI Law Agents Against Violation of Men's Rights in Constitution Talk."

[133] Litonjua, "Guard Civil: Only Lawful Steps Will be Taken-Roxas, Parties Advocating Violence to be State's Target."

[134] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 340, 341.

[135] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 205.

[136] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 174.

role behind the curtains by encouraging the anti-communist Third Republic not to allow the Huks any participation in public life.[137] The Huks caused sleepless night in Manila and across the islands.

Provisional local governments, with the tacit support of Manila, organized "armed and special agents" to deal with the Huks. Filipino army MPs carried out campaigns against the communist insurgents that resulted in the "improvement of the situation to some extent," but Huk terror continued to stalk the countryside.[138] The Roxas administration used the indigenous Military Police Command (MPC) of 23,000 soldiers to crush the peasant revolt.[139] Early efforts only produced limited success as the Huk rebellion rapidly turned into a brushfire. Roxas outlawed the Huks and their political arm, the Filipino Communist Party. A "full scale civil war" thereafter broke out in Central Luzon.[140] Regional landlords exerted their local hold outside Manila while corruption pervaded the inner sanctum of Manila's political elite. The Filipino Constabulary, like its predecessor, the Filipino Military Police Command (which was "poorly trained,") was said to have "standards of leadership and conduct (that) were considerably below . . . prewar performance."[141] The communists organized and established elaborate supply lines connecting regions, mountains, barrios and camps to

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[137] Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 225.

[138] From Mr. Ely to Mr. Butterworth, The Hukbalahaps, 8.

[139] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 375.

[140] Blitz, *The Contested State*, 87.

[141] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 375.

ensure good communications and logistics.[142] The scholar Masuda Hajimu argued that the Filipino government therefore felt increasing pressure by the later 1940s to portray itself as more Filipino and as the "protector of the Filipino nation," as opposed to the communist Huk rebels who were growing in popularity among some peasants in the Central Luzon plains.[143] Huks were portrayed as separatists undermining Filipino internal security and seeking to impose communism in the islands.

Not all Filipinos wanted to tie the Huk insurgency to Filipino external security. There were voices, even at the highest levels of the Filipino political world, arguing that the Philippines must not be involved in superpower rivalries just because of domestic events. Elpidio Quirino argued that the Philippines "will not be directly involved" in a potential war since the country was "too far away." According to the Vice President, "the atomic bombs will fall not on Manila, Cebu, Iloilo or Vigan but on Honolulu and New York or Washington or Chicago, on Moscow and the other teeming cities of Russia."[144] Quirino's ideas suggested that Filipinos must chart their own collective destiny. Quirino's own presidency was not too far away.

Roxas died of natural causes on April 16, 1948, after delivering a speech in Clark Air Field, leaving much unfinished business.[145] The diplomatic historian Milton Walter

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[142] Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, 174, 175.

[143] Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 275.

[144] "Quirino Scouts War Talk, Urges More Protection," *The Manila Times*, February 20, 1948.

[145] During his final day in this world, Roxas reaffirmed the alliance between the US and the Philippines and supported further expansion of Clark Air Base. From Lockett (Manila) to the US Secretary of State, Washington DC, Department of State Incoming Telegram, April 30, 1948, Control 11196, 896.001

Meyer, in *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, argued that one of Roxas' concrete legacies was in having formulated the "nature of the economic and military ties" between the Philippines and the United States. These were said to have served as the foundations for Filipino state policies towards the United States for the years to come.[146] Roxas was succeeded by his Vice President, Elpidio Quirino. Upon taking office, Quirino immediately sought a resolution to the Huk problem. The new President sent military detachments to rural areas to warn villagers not to leave, and prevent local governmental officials from deserting their local posts.[147]

Conclusion

At the outset, the Third Republic and the Roxas administration did not see any role for the Huks in Filipino nation-state building. The Third Republic under Roxas used a largely military-oriented approach and refused to compromise with the Huks. The government painted the Huks in the eyes of the other Filipinos as threats to state stability and a dangerous rival to the quest for legitimacy by the Third Republic. The failure to integrate the Huks in Third Republic state and nation-building, Renato Constantino argued in *The Continuing Past*, resulted in the expansion of the Huk rebellion to other parts of the archipelago. The spread of the Cold War to Asia, beginning with the fall of

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Quezon/ 4-3048, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[146] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 81.

[147] "Officials Get Stern Warning From President: Chief Executive Talks to People for Fresh Data," *The Manila Times*, April 30, 1948.

China in 1949, was said to have increased Huk appeal in terms of "armed strength and mass support" in the central lowlands of Luzon.[148] Local conditions, particularly the government's dependence on landlord support, and a natural aversion to communism in the islands, played a role in the unwillingness to include the Huks in the national project.

Taylor's *The Philippines and the United States* argues that the Third Republic found the Huks threatening because they were the only other organization aside from the Third Republic that mustered enough support and had the potential to gain legitimacy across the archipelago. Rural Filipinos were getting exasperated by the government's initially clumsy campaign of mass terror in the countryside, as well as the reformist impulses which many mistakenly believed that the Third Republic and the Huks shared. The resolution of the Huk challenge was to reach its climax during the Elpidio Quirino years. This meant that Filipino nation-state building during the Roxas years would still largely be a work in progress.

Reconstruction and rehabilitation revealed the extent with which Roxas used local and international networks to pursue the Third Republic's vision for national unity. The Filipino state used its position to encourage practices such as autonomy and of self-sufficiency. The state alleviated the plight of many non-elite Filipinos, using state resources to promote development such as building infrastructure. Filipino authorities invited the United States in and signed treaties with it. Filipinos believed that a strong postcolonial relationship would be in the best security, economic, and trade interests of

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[148] Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 224, 225.

the country. The Philippines could have easily not invited the Americans in to permanently station forces in bases across the islands, given that there was little danger then coming from Nationalist-ruled mainland China. Cold War fears could also not be used by Filipinos to invite the Americans in, at least until the fall of China in 1949. But Filipinos continued the post-colonial relationship with America, aware that the United States was eager to preserve its credibility in the region. The Quirino years was to be a litmus test for Filipino indigenous agency.

Filipino society was changing, with the national language a source of unity. More Filipinos used Tagalog, since it was being taught in the state educational system. More Filipinos were slowly learning the language and using it more widely outside Manila. According to the scholar George Taylor, in *The Philippines and the United States*, even as Filipinos spoke both English and Tagalog in the aftermath of the American colonial period, Tagalog in the next decade increasingly became more widely used in society.[149]

[149] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 167.

CHAPTER 3

RESCUING THE NATION-STATE? THE CRISIS YEARS AND THE MAKINGS OF A FILIPINO NATION BUILDING IDEOLOGY, 1948-1951

> Every right-thinking Filipino should realize its importance, not only in the light of our present needs, but in the light of our future destiny as a sovereign people. I know we could make progress only if we dedicate our time . . . in greater economic pursuits independent of outside help. We should remember that the present achievements and economic standing . . . were particularly the result of . . . internal collective efforts. Let that be a lesson to us.[1]
>
> - An anonymous faculty member from the College of Education of a local university in Manila, on the need for Filipino self-help and self-sufficiency

The years 1948 to 1951 saw the survival of the Filipino nation-state building enterprise called into question. The state appeared to be losing its moorings as the leading expression and vessel of Filipino nationalism. This period saw the spread of the Huk insurgency, money shortages, security issues, accusations of corruption, dirty elections, and growing public discontent over how the Filipino government was run. Filipinos on the street became more critical of the government's perceived dependence on the United States for Filipino security and foreign aid. The Third Republic used Cold

[1] Editorial Comments on Ambassador Myron Cowen's Speech, "American Aid to the Philippines: Past, Present and Future," *The Philippines Herald*, Sept, 7, 1949, State Department Correspondence, 1949, 1 of 3, White House Central Files: Confidential File, Harry S. Truman Library and Institute.

War security rhetoric at home and abroad to paint the Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos as threats to the state. Domestically, the state promoted the idea of a strong center that would unify the nation. Internationally, Filipinos under Quirino promoted "neutralism" as an alternative to communism and to establish Filipino leadership in Asian affairs. Contrary to the one-dimensional view of corruption and mismanagement which many often associated with the Quirino administration, the Third Republic in fact possessed a well-defined and coherent, though not well-known, ideology for nation-state building in the islands.

This state ideology as described in a State Department report on Quirino, involved the creation of a distinctive "Filipino" nation which combined "democracy" and "communism" with indigenous elements. The state vision was of a government being cleansed of graft and of corruption. The government would then help establish peace and order. Government would guide the masses so that they would not be "exploited." Government would encourage "openness to new ideas," foster "peace and national unity," in order that "foreign capital" and investments from the United States would flow to the islands. This supposedly would bring about prosperity. The State would therefore play a leading role in the "development" of the country's natural resources and consolidate all government-owned corporations. The Quirino administration desired help from the technical expertise of development consultants from other countries.[2] All these together constituted a well-articulated ideology, which,

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[2] "From Thomas Lockett to the US Secretary of State, Washington DC, "Subject: The Tour of President Quirino through the Southern Philippines, November 22 to December 4, 1948 ," December 8, 1948, 2, no.

if Filipinos applied it to their country's modernization needs, would promote inclusive nation-state building.

The Third Republic's nation-state ideology possessed similarities and parallelisms with American approaches to nation-building. Works by scholars such as Daniel Immerwahr's *Thinking Small*, David Ekbladh's *The Great American Mission* and Jeremi Suri's *Liberty's Surest Guardian*, discussed at length how American ideas and practices affected post-colonial development. All these works stressed, in many ways, that the American model could be replicated elsewhere. The idea of replicating and transplanting America elsewhere could be found in Suri's chapter on the Philippines, which discussed efforts to build colonial public education in the islands at the turn of the century. Immerwahr reveals the role of grassroots organizations in rural Filipino communities during the Magsaysay years; Ekbladh offers a kind of meta-argument that colonial peoples such as Filipinos could only be brought up from colonial backwardness into modernization under American stewardship. All these works generally argue that the empire-state or the nation-state during the 1900s made use of teachers, travelers, government workers, community workers, and organizations to build up the state and the nation. However, these development scholars tend to overlook that peoples such as the Filipinos possessed their own ideas on development and knew how to bring indigenous dreams, ambitions and visions into reality in their own soil.

1242, American Embassy, Manila, Philippines, 896.001 Quirino /12-848, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

Vice President Elpidio Quirino succeeded to the Presidency after Roxas passed away unexpectedly, after delivering a policy speech at Clark Air Force Base. At the beginning, Quirino was regarded as an accidental President, since Quirino was neither Roxas' nor the Liberal Party's anointed successor. But Quirino acted swiftly, working with Filipino congressional leaders. The Filipino president promised to "put the interests of the country" over that of the party. Upon taking office, Quirino paid attention to pressing issues such as the "law and order problem" in Central Luzon. He also promised to deal with "graft and corruption," to maintain friendly ties with the United States, and "direct visits to troubled areas and points of interest in the Philippines," especially in lands controlled by the Huks.[3] The general consensus according to US State Department observers was that Quirino in 1948 had a good start. A local newspaper article stated the opinion that, "Politics in the Philippines, at best, is an uncertain profession and the office holder who today is winning public acclaim may tomorrow be suffering public ignominy."[4]

The new Filipino President sought to be a unifying figure. Quirino invited opposition figures to serve in the government. For instance, a *Manila Times* article written during the first few months of his presidency narrated Quirino's belief that Jose Laurel's "experience and background in administration [was] invaluable to the

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[3] Thomas H. Lockett to the Secretary of State, "Elpidio Quirino and the Presidency: An Appraisal," June 5, 1948, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, No. 551, Manila, Philippines, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[4] "Subject: Elpidio Quirino and the Presidency: An Appraisal," 5.

Republic."[5] The President crossed party lines and included those "outside the government now or who belong to minority groups that may be invited to serve the government in these critical times." According to Quirino, "It is of great importance to utilize the services of the best available men . . . In a spirit of national unity, we must count on all elements available to cooperate and lend their services to the administration." Unity would not only include the cabinet but "all levels of government . . . such as diplomatic positions abroad, key positions in the government corporations, and perhaps the Council of State," in the utilization of talents previously untapped. The purpose of "drawing in of outside talents to the fold," according to Quirino, was to put "an end to petty personal strife engendered by some elements," and for the nation to work together for a common national interest.[6]

Effective nation-state-building also meant transcending regional differences. The new President came from the northern Ilocos province but told "a group of officials and political leaders," that "his administration will not tolerate any act of favoritism in favor of Ilocanos and asked the Ilocanos in general never to expect special consideration from him as chief executive." Quirino believed that "individual qualifications alone will determine the appointment of persons . . . to avoid any group of people from having a

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[5] The individuals the President had in mind for his appointments in mid to late 1948, aside from Laurel included "former Justice Claro M. Recto, Eulogio Rodriguez Sr. (who unsuccessfully ran for Vice President later in 1949 on the opposition ticket), Jorge B. Vargas (who was Ambassador to Japan during the Japanese sponsored Second Republic), Teofilo Sison, Arsenio Bonifacio, and others." Vicente F. Barranco, "Would Cross Party Lines for Good Men, High Posts Open to Opposition, says President," *The Manila Times*, undated.

[6] Barranco, "Would Cross Party Lines for Good Men, High Posts Open to Opposition, says President."

monopoly of the government service during his term." Quirino most likely was referring to any ethnicity or tribe that might exert any undue influence on government matters arising from who was currently living in the presidential palace at the time. The newspaper *Manila Times* stated that the new President wanted to avoid the impression that he was favoring people from his own region and that he was "determined to give people from all regions of the country equal opportunities in the government service."[7]

Quirino echoed common national goals such as "improving living standards [and] cooperation between capital and labor," and the creation of a "Labor-Capital Advisory Board." This undertaking was not a top-down affair since labor and peasant groups (e.g. Congress of Labor Organizations, the National Labor Union, the Philippine United Peasant and Labor Organization), as well as nationalist politicians (e.g. Jose Laurel, Lorenzo Tanada), participated in this collective project.[8] The President undertook a "new development program."[9] One of Quirino's innovations included "a nationwide ocular survey covering key points of the archipelago." The purpose was to obtain data that would "revise the financial system" to help strengthen the monetary

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[7] "Quirino assures Equality for All," *The Manila Times*, April 28, 1948.

[8] "Labor Address of His Excellency, Elpidio Quirino, President of the Philippines", May 1, 1948, Rizal Memorial Stadium, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, No. 446, American Embassy, Manila, Philippines, May 3, 1948, 1, 2, 896.001 Quirino/ 5-348 CS/A, Box no. 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[9] This development involved ". . . the hydroelectric power project in Lanao and Luzon, the fertilizer plant in Lanao, the hemp industry in Davao, the rice industry in Cotabato and Central Luzon, the lumber industry in Agusan, the tobacco industry in Isabela, the textile industry in the Ilocos provinces and Manila, machine tools in Manila, etc." Vicente F. Barranco, "New Development Program is Mapped out by President," *The Manila Times*, October 29, 1948

situation of the republic. The national project also involved the "revamping of the educational system," and "pushing through an economic rehabilitation and social amelioration program."[10]

Quirino believed in strengthening Filipino youth. In an address at a public university in Manila, Quirino stated that the student "no longer confines himself to the four walls but the world has become his classroom." Quirino believed that "a university does not stop at simply making knowledge and wisdom available to all; it should train the students to make use of knowledge and wisdom to attain the biggest possible measure of usefulness in the everyday life of their community and country." Quirino also knew that Filipinos belonged to the "eastern world," with "no less than a billion people whose potentialities are scarcely developed, and are at least not as exhausted as those of the old world or of the new world."[11] These reflected Quirino's belief that the classroom and the outside world cannot be treated separately. It was Quirino as the old barrio teacher at work again, this time on a national scale.

The Quirino administration paid attention to local community concerns. The objective was to consolidate the nation and to counter-act the appeal of the Huks by increasing government involvement in the rural communities. For instance, Interior Secretary Sotero Baluyot in 1948 publicly broached the necessity of bringing Manila home to the barrios when he related how a sick man in Siquijor province in the Central

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[10] Barranco, "New Development Program is Mapped out by President."

[11] "Quirino Rallies Small Nations, Urges Self-Assertion in FEU Address," *The Manila Times*, November 6, 1948.

Visayas region mentioned to Baluyot "that there were not enough government physicians." The Secretary used this example to stress why the Quirino government should "bring government closer to the people."[12] Quirino had appointed Baluyut as Interior Secretary to prosecute more strongly the war against the Huks. Baluyut was a former governor of Pampanga province in Central Luzon. Many labor leaders saw him as a foe.[13] Quirino possessed ardent anti-communist leanings and this was one example of how Quirino intended to fight the Huks. The Third Republic also opened up international spaces in their war against the Huks through an anti-communist foreign policy.

Towards An Independent Filipino Foreign Policy

The US-Filipino relationship deteriorated rapidly as Americans and Filipinos realized the wide gulf separating them. Quirino believed that Filipinos needed to pursue their own course. Quirino promoted "neutralism" in Filipino foreign relations. The Filipino President argued that Filipinos were neither communist nor anti-communist. Quirino believed that Filipinos would "respect" what kinds of governments their "Far Eastern neighbors" would choose to have, as the main priorities of Filipinos involved

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[12] Teodoro V. Madamba, "Baluyot Proposes to Bring Gov't Closer to the People," *The Pioneer Press*, November 26, 1948, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

[13] From Thomas Lockett, Charge d'Affaires to The Secretary of State, Washington, "Subject: President Quirino's New Cabinet," September 22, 1948, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, 896.002/9-2248, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

"economic prosperity," and "our own happiness." The Quirino administration gathered together the non-Communist Asian countries to promote "regional cooperation" in "social, economic and cultural" matters.[14] This was not surprising. During the later years, Carlos Romulo would write in his memoirs that Americans possessed a tendency to assume that "American-style democracy" would be "native to Asia."[15]

Quirino and Romulo, appointed as Foreign Secretary, worked together closely in foreign policy. In a letter, Quirino stated that a new national objective was "forging a closer union among the peoples of Southeast Asia dedicated to the maintenance of peace and freedom in the region through appropriate methods of political, economic and cultural cooperation with one another." Quirino believed that Filipinos needed to be proud of their history and culture, despite centuries of colonial domination. During its years of colonialism, Quirino mentioned that the Philippines "had the oldest and most aggressive nationalist movement in Asia," that Filipinos were the first to achieve independence in the post-war period and "have consistently defended the right to freedom of subject peoples around the world." Quirino further argued that Filipino freedom was "part of the first wave of Asian freedom," and that Filipinos also looked forward to the eventual freedom of other Asian countries (such as of Indonesia, which

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[14] Milton Walter Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (University of Hawaii Press, 1965), 126, 127.

[15] Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 45.

would gain independence in 1949).[16] As early as 1950, Filipinos were increasingly seeing themselves as part of a growing regional Asian and Third World nationalist consciousness.

In 1949, Quirino sent Romulo as representative to the New Delhi conference in India, since Quirino was "convinced that the Philippines had a special responsibility to support the struggles for freedom of the Asian peoples." Quirino instructed Romulo to "sponsor the idea of establishing a permanent organ of consultation on problems of common interest among the countries of Southeast Asia within the framework of the United Nations." Filipino participation at the conference was seen by Filipinos as an "outstanding success." Quirino credited Romulo for the "establishment of a suitable machinery for consultation." Romulo also helped ensure that "participating countries exhibit[ed] keen interest in establishing a permanent organization to safeguard their common interest." Quirino and Romulo worked to create "a parallel safeguard for Southeast Asia" that would be similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe.[17] The Filipino role in regional cooperation initiated by Quirino and Carlos Romulo continued to express itself during the Baguio Conference, where Quirino highlighted the:

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[16] Elpidio Quirino, "Text of Letter Addressed to Ambassador Romulo by President Quirino," August 3, 1949, 1, 2, WHCF- Confidential File, Folder- State Department Correspondence, 1948-49 [6 of 6], HSTLI.

[17] Quirino, "Text of Letter Addressed to Ambassador Romulo by President Quirino," 2, 3.

> necessity of accelerating the process of establishing a union, predicated upon the independence and sovereignty of the peoples of Southeast Asia and the countries of the Pacific so that, masters of their own destiny, they can concentrate their attention to their coordinated full development in order to ensure their stability and security and thus contribute to world peace and advancement.[18]

Quirino envisioned that this "Union" would not be involved in military commitments but would be based on an act of "common faith" among the countries. The union would entail cooperation at the economic, political, and cultural levels.[19] The underlying Filipino ideology for this proposal was based on the idea that "our strongest defense against totalitarian subversion would lie in providing a life of substance and contentment and promoting higher living standards among the Asian peoples."[20] Quirino and Romulo knew that the Philippines could use its advantage as an independent state and as an Asian country to become a leading voice in Asian regional affairs.

The elites were not the only players involved in talks surrounding the Pacific Pact. The *Manila Times* conducted a survey of the "domestic reaction" in 1949 to the Pacific Union proposal worked out by Quirino and Nationalist China leader Chiang Kai-Shek. The results, according to the newspaper's provincial correspondents in "strategic provinces," showed that there was "popular approval" across the archipelago. This was despite the presence of opposition. The strongest support appeared to be in northern

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[18] Quirino, "Text of Letter Addressed to Ambassador Romulo by President Quirino," 3.

[19] Quirino, "Text of Letter Addressed to Ambassador Romulo by President Quirino," 3.

[20] Quirino, "Text of Letter Addressed to Ambassador Romulo by President Quirino," 3, 4.

Luzon, particularly in Ilocos Sur province. This was where Quirino came from, and where the *Manila Times* correspondent editorialized that "the President cannot be wrong and that whatever commitments he has made are for the best interests of the Philippines." An opinion from Legaspi town in Bicol region in south-east Luzon Island expressed that the union was an "effective means of counteracting the onslaught of communism in the Far East." Government and businessmen in the Huk-occupied areas supported Quirino's initiative. The newspaper survey extended to foreign merchants and to ethnic minorities from elsewhere doing business in the Philippines. Local Indian and Chinese businessmen in the town of Tuguegarao, Cagayan province in northeast Luzon declared that "this united front of Orientals will bolster the resistance to communism in the Far East." Other newspapers such as the *North Star* in the President's hometown of Vigan in Ilocos Sur criticized Quirino for dealing with Chiang Kai-Shek but praised the talks. For these local newspapers, "the talks have established for the Philippines leadership in Asian affairs."[21] Filipino expression of indigenous agency in the international scene under Quirino generally enjoyed public support, although there were voices in the opposition.

Opposition to the Pacific Pact came from a few, local militant newspapers in the islands. One of these newspapers, the *Pioneer Herald*, criticized Quirino's efforts at forming a union as an "under-estimation of the communist threat and ignorance of communist tactics." US foreign nationals were also opposed to the Pacific Pact. An

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[21] Vicente J. Guzman, "Nation-Wide Poll Supports Drive on Reds, Romulo Due Friday-Opposition Objects to Tie-Up with Chiang," *The Manila Times*, July 21, 1949.

American veteran who served as reserve officer in the United States Navy was concerned that "the Pacific Union will eventually lead to war because America will have to arm all Pacific countries to encircle Russia."[22]

Quirino's proposed Pacific Pact of 1950 possessed overtones of neutralism. It brought together countries such as Nationalist China, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand, to safeguard against external aggression. The United States and India were treated as vital external actors although Jawaharlal Nehru was skeptical that an Asian version of NATO would materialize "until present internal conflicts in Asia were resolved." The United States saw the notion of a defense pact in Asia as "redundant," and ran the risk of drawing the US into conflicts with countries such as Communist China in the mainland. Quirino, working with Romulo, had to shelve the plan for a Pacific Pact and instead proposed a collective Southeast Asian "close political, economic and cultural cooperation." This new plan stressed "defense against totalitarian subversion by promoting higher living standards among Asian peoples," instead of "military commitments."[23]

The historian Milton Walter Meyer, in *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, described Quirino during these years as a visionary who "stressed non-military ties in regional unity." The diplomatic offensive, spearheaded by Carlos Romulo,

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[22] Guzman, "Nation-Wide Poll Supports Drive on Reds, Romulo Due Friday-Opposition Objects to Tie-Up with Chiang."

[23] W. Walton Butterworth, "Subject: Visit of Quirino," Memorandum for the President," August 5, 1949, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

stressed that the purpose was to contain communism by any means, even if this involved countries such as India under Jawaharlal Nehru, and the United States under Harry S. Truman. Quirino also supported the prospect of Indian leadership under this proposed Southeast Asian Union (SEAU), with the caveat that the meeting to establish this union was to be held in the Philippines. Quirino's geographical dream expanded to Middle-Eastern countries. Quirino hoped that a "Democratic League of the East" would materialize.[24] The Philippines, at the height of the Huk rebellion, possessed ambitions to lead Asian countries.

In any event, a conference took place in Baguio on May 1950, where participants from many countries in Asia were invited. The attendees included Australia, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Thailand and Indonesia. The Philippines served as host while Nationalist China was not invited since that country was seeking military aid to fight the communists. Quirino took the lead in setting the tone and the agenda for the meeting. The agenda included "discovering mutual interests," "meeting common internal problems through collective action," and initiating machinery for a concrete base for regional collaboration." Romulo added a "security dimension," where security was defined as internally oriented, rather an outwardly aggressive. The conference did not deal with military cooperation and open anti-communism. It focused instead on economic, social, and cultural issues. The resolution, collectively adopted on May 30, 1950, resulted in a recommendation that "participating governments take common measures to promote commercial and financial interests and unite their efforts to

[24] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 150, 151.

facilitate cultural progress and social well-being." There was no political organization built, nor was there a machinery for an established organization. Instead, Asian governments were to "consult through normal diplomatic channels, seek joint action in United States organs, and insure that Asian viewpoints be consulted in world consideration of Asian problems."[25]

Meyer's book argued that while Baguio did not result in the formation of an organization, the conference brought together many Asian countries. The gathering together of these nations established "neutralism" as a force in regional Asian affairs. On the eve of the Korean War on June 22, 1950, Romulo argued that the United States must "recognize the validity of neutralism in world politics, understand that democracy did not necessarily work in Asia and not to brand all national movements as communist."[26] These events provided a preface for what the Philippines and Romulo would express during the subsequent Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955.

Meanwhile, the Quirino administration signed the 1951 US-Filipino Mutual Defense Treaty for Filipino security. This treaty bound the United States and the Philippines militarily, where the United States would consider an armed attack on the Philippines as an armed attack on American soil. Many domestic critics such as Recto were skeptical. The critics believed that the United States was more likely to adhere strictly to its alliances with the "North Atlantic" countries and cited the American

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[25] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 152, 153.

[26] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 154.

inability to defend the Philippines back in 1941 from the Japanese.[27] Quirino believed that the treaty was a concession that Filipinos would find more safety in the American alliance, but for the time being it met mutual needs.[28] Filipinos also tended to assume that US-Filipino ties possessed a sentimental aspect, due to the long decades of American benevolent colonial rule, and the close working relationships between American officials and many Filipinos. The Filipino critics believed that in the Cold War world, and in the "American fight against communism . . . It is not probable that Uncle Sam will be more considerate to the Philippines than China or Formosa because of sentimental reasons."[29] Within the state, there were therefore multiple contending voices on Filipino security.

The state also consolidated people, using the specter of the alien "other" that would threaten the national project. Filipino leaders created the "Committee on Un-

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[27] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippines*, 104, 105.

[28] This sentiment was echoed by Carlos P. Romulo, then Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, who described the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 not only by describing the "friendship of the Filipino and of the American peoples" during the colonial period and during the common struggle against the Japanese. Romulo couched the 1951 Treaty as a Filipino initiative, arguing that "a bold beginning be made, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to forge an effective security system for the Pacific area." Romulo expressed the value of the Treaty in terms of ". . . moral imperatives . . . rooted in our shared experiences and ideals and they are nourished by our common hope for the future." Statement by General Carlos P. Romulo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Papers of Harry S. Truman, undated, 1, 2, Folder- B File . . . Pacific Rim . . . Indochina, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines [3 of 15], Official File, HSTLI.

[29] Editorial, "Here's Hoping," *The Pioneer Press*, Newspaper published at Cebu, Republic of the Philippines, Daily Excerpt Monday, August 7, 1949, Box 7412, Record Group no. 59, Department of State Decimal File 1945-49, From 896.003/1-145 to 896.003/12-31-49, NARA.

Filipino Activities" on the premise that communist Chinese foreign agents were working with the local Huk guerillas to "promote domestic subversion" against the Filipino Third Republic. The chairman of the committee in the Filipino Congress, Tito Tizon, mentioned to the local press that the Chinese- Filipino and Huk alliance appeared to be "far more dangerous to the Philippines" than the Chinese communists from the mainland.[30] Equally interesting was Quirino's belief that the Philippines must not be a puppet of anyone. According to Quirino, Filipinos must be wary of "elements" that sought to "justify foreign intervention and ultimately deliver this free country into the grip of either the old colonial powers or the latter day imperialists, the Communists." Quirino argued in his monthly radio chat on June 1950 that there must be more emphasis on uniting people, and a "cooperative effort for development." In Quirino's eyes, the greatest danger was "destroy [ing] public confidence in the constituted government," as this would risk benefiting communists and colonialists. Quirino viewed imperialism and communism as equally bad.[31] The President's foreign policy views were also complemented by his desire for a strong Filipino state domestically.

A Strong State

Quirino's patronage networks provided a stumbling block to efforts at effective nation state-building. The consolidation of these networks resulted in a greater emphasis

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[30] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 127.

[31] "Gives Warning Against Reds, Imperialists, calls attention, in monthly Radio Chat, to Positive Outlook," *The Manila Times*, June 16, 1950.

on Manila as compared to the Roxas administration.[32] This view of a strong state based on patronage networks was in contrast to Quirino's predecessor Roxas, who believed in a looser and more consensual approach to cooperation between Manila and the provinces. Roxas believed that the state alone must not take the initiative. Roxas believed that for "economic and industrial development" to take root in places such as the southern regions, the "rival Moro tribes" must come up with ways to unify and resolve disputes on their own.[33]

Quirino believed in bringing Filipinos together. Quirino expressed this in an interview, where the President argued that people in Visayas and Mindanao needed to share the burden of what he defined as "nation-building." Interestingly, Quirino also reflected the view of the Filipino elites based in Manila towards the provinces. The President stated that "the once backward people of Mindanao have matured with a sense of responsibility." In his radio interview, the President stressed that the provinces and the villages all form part of a "national backyard," which Manila must help transform.[34] The

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[32] The Roxas administration enjoyed extensive ties with the landed elite in the provinces. The Filipino state worked with local government (of local networks of independent minded politicians and of landlord elites), from the ground-up. Local authorities and leaders enjoyed more control in their own localities than the central government, with the tacit support of the Roxas administration. The Roxas and the Quirino administration possessed similar objectives, such as in obtaining reconstruction money or in the attempts to pacify the Huks. But state views on local autonomy varied. For more details, see Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005), 170, 171.

[33] Felisberto M. Verano, "Roxas Unifies Warring Tribes," *The Manila Times*, September 18, 1947.

[34] "Look Beyond Urban Issues, says Quirino," *The Manila Times*, December 16, 1948.

Third Republic based in Manila saw it as necessary to assert Manila's capacity to unite all Filipinos together, in light of the Huk rebellion in the rural areas.

Upon taking office on April 1948, Quirino initially adopted Roxas' methods and "brutally" cracked down on the Huk uprising.[35] But Quirino's hardline efforts towards Huks were neutralized by the widespread corruption under his administration, which partly fueled the continued strength of the Huk rebellion. The Third Republic was encountering a crisis of legitimacy in the midst of a growing Filipino civil war. Quirino believed that granting amnesty to the Huks would lead many of the guerillas to officially register with the government and surrender their arms, but the turnout by surrendering Huks was low in 1948. Huks such as Luis Taruc stated that they would not lay down their arms so long as the bases and US imperialism continued to be present in the islands which Taruc believed the Third Republic and Filipinos must not be fighting for.[36] Officials in the Third Republic strove to find a middle ground though to no avail. Meanwhile, Carlos Romulo rejected an American proposal to send its own troops to suppress the Huk uprising and to forestall a potential Huk takeover, however remote. In Romulo's eyes, "the Filipino people can and will do their own house cleaning."[37] The resolution of the core dilemmas of Filipino nation-state-building lay with the Filipinos.

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[35] Amy Blitz, *The Contested State: American Foreign Policy and Regime Change in the Philippines* (Boston and Oxford: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 87.

[36] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 127.

[37] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 127.

Meanwhile, Quirino was not deeply popular with the Filipino public by the end of his second year in office late in 1949, an election year.[38] The 1949 presidential election was the first to be held under the Third Republic. The United States was surprisingly well-informed. But their observations and assessments were often limited to events taking place in Manila, through the US Embassy. An American "personal and confidential" report on the 1949 Filipino presidential election looked at the main candidates, their political ideologies and the major issues involved. The 1949 presidential election was described in the report as a three-way race between the "Quirino wing" of the Liberal Party, the breakaway "Avelino" wing, and the former Second Republic President Jose Laurel of the Nacionalista Party. Incumbent President Quirino enjoyed the advantage of political machinery. The National Elections Commission gave Quirino's Liberal party "two elections inspections for each polling place as against one each for the other parties," while Jose Laurel enjoyed the support of former President Osmena, who continued to hold sway in his old power base in Cebu Island. Filipino party politics during the presidential election that year was highly factional and prone to defections back and forth between the Liberal and the Nacionalista Party. The American report also described the Filipino electoral system as working through "block voting," as "one X of the pen in the proper block includes the whole ticket." Former Chairman of the Liberal Party and candidate Jose Avelino, a presidential candidate, was in charge of "appointments throughout the provinces,

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[38] Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 81.

municipalities and Chartered cities."[39] What this American document showed was that the system of patronage politics connecting state and society remained the same, an observation not lost on Americans and Filipinos alike.

The 1949 Filipino presidential election was the first election where rural Filipinos began to play a more pronounced role. The American report described the candidates for the 1949 Filipino presidential elections as travelling physically to the most distant barrios to obtain votes. Issues raised also involved Laurel's "collaboration" with the Japanese. This was a concern shared by American observers, who described Laurel as "collaborationist," and "definitely anti-American." Quirino was slightly favored to win the election, although the report stated that Laurel had a decent chance to win. Laurel's argument capitalized on lingering anti-Japanese resentments amongst the Filipio public. According to Laurel, he managed to prevent the Japanese from conscripting Filipino youth from serving in the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II.[40] Both candidates presented stark alternatives and subscribed to the same patronage networks.

Local newspaper accounts on the presidential elections, such as the *Manila Times* in September 1949, tended to favor Quirino. One account described Quirino on the campaign trail. In a transcript of a fireside talk in Zamboanga, Mindanao that was

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[39] John A. O'Donnell, untitled, October 20, 1949, Manila, OF 1055, Folder- (1949), HSTLI.

[40] The report contained an assessment of the social structure in the Philippines, stating that "Two percent of the people in the Philippines control ninety-eight percent of the wealth. The Philippines is, primarily, an agricultural country. Its backbone is the *common tao* (peon) who tills the soil on his rice paddies. He does not have an awful lot of education, and glib orators (of which we have too many) can easily sway him." O'Donnell, Untitled.

rebroadcast nationwide, Quirino stated in the talk that the issue "is the plow and the pen." Quirino also argued that he espoused "creative economics," describing Laurel as a "self-styled intellectual." Quirino argued that he had a "definite" economic plan and program for development, and could inspire people to help realize these plans while Laurel simply had an "idle" dream to be "personally vindicated" by winning a presidential election.[41]

The 1949 election campaign was described as messy and violent. A month before the election, on October 1949, Quirino's rivals in Congress unsuccessfully sought to have the President impeached. Quirino blamed the attempt on his opponents Laurel and Avelino. The November 1949 election was said to have involved taking "fraud and intimidation to a new level." Private armies battled at polling stations where 1/5 of the ballots were deemed as "fraudulent." Government troops under orders of President Quirino suppressed "an election day uprising in Laurel's home province of Tarlac." The Huks sought to take advantage of the chaos by arguing that the ordinary Filipino could "hope for nothing" from the politicians. Nick Cullather, in *Illusions of Influence*, argued that the 1949 Filipino presidential election "accelerated the decline of the Quirino government," and contributed to the increased appeal of Huks for some Filipinos.[42]

The 1949 presidential election was seen universally in a highly negative light. While the presidential electoral results showed a sizable Quirino victory, a considerable

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[41] "Fireside Chat Warns Anew of Communism, Asks People to Take Initiative or Forfeit Chance to Red Menace," *The Manila Times*, September 16, 1949.

[42] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 81.

part was due to fraud. The high turnout in this presidential election and the intensity it generated did not obscure the extent to which many local caciques benefited from the Quirino regime. The caciques and their allies used their local power, resources, and connections to retain, consolidate, and expand their hold on their fiefdom-provinces during election period. Filipinos during the time believed that had the 1949 presidential elections been held without any violence, voter fraud, and intimidation, the more pragmatic Laurel would likely have emerged as victor over the American-supported Quirino.[43] In the aftermath of this election, many disaffected Laurel supporters came to sympathize with or support outright the Huks, not out of sympathy for communism but largely due to the Quirino administration's perceived weaknesses.[44]

The weak state under Quirino continued to be on shaky ground after the 1949 presidential election. The islands were facing a rapidly expanding insurgency that threatened to spin out of control, an economic crisis, and numerous corruption allegations that shook the political classes.[45] This began to extend to US-Filipino

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[43] Benedict Kerkvliet, "Contested Meanings of Elections in the Philippines," in R.H. Taylor (ed.), *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996), 53.

[44] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 81.

[45] The scale of corruption was so dire by 1950 under Quirino, that from independence in 1946 to 1950, the Filipino economy remained weak because Quirino and the people around him was said to have "enriched themselves" with the aid coming from the United States treasury and from the Philippine government revenues obtained from the sale and export of copra. To add to the problems surrounding money management, the remaining available aid was said not to have been used "wisely" by the Quirino administration. These supposedly formed part of the reason as to why inequality between the elites and the

relations. Filipino government officials such as Pio Pedrosa argued with US State Department officials such as Dean Acheson in 1950 that the Filipino government had "misused" 2 billion US dollars of American aid. In a statement commenting on Acheson's charge of misuse, Finance Secretary Pedrosa stated that the government used the money for "salaries, wages and operating expenses of military, air, naval and civilian installations of the United States in the Philippines." Others went to war damage payments, veterans payments, and the transfer of surplus property.[46] All these might have given outsiders the impression that Filipinos were still dependent on their former colonizer and the American pursuit of Cold War objectives. Money flowed from the outside to the islands, which supposedly bred corruption in the eyes of many. American policymakers saw an archipelago at risk of falling to communism due to what it perceived as corruption, mismanagement and a failing economy.[47]

In 1950, Manila was a hotbed of intrigues. The grapevine in Manila's social circles was that the Huks were "months away from capturing the presidential palace."[48] Quirino suspended the writ of *habeas corpus*, which curtailed some rights of Filipino citizens in the name of national security, to forestall a plot from the communist Huks and disgruntled right-wing factions aimed at overthrowing his government. Quirino's financial adviser, Miguel Cuaderno, warned the President that failure to pay the salaries

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non-elites grew faster than it used, which led to more resentment and added fuel to the Huk brushfire. Blitz, *The Contested State*, 88.

[46] Untitled, January 13, 1950, OF1055, Folder- (1950-53), HSTLI.

[47] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 33.

[48] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 174.

of Filipino servicemen might prove risky if the Third Republic wished to retain the loyalties of its soldiers in the midst of a war against the peasant Huk armies. And at the height of the Huk rebellion in 1950, Quirino was rumored to be preparing to flee the Presidential Palace should the Huks march into Manila. These were all demoralizing to the public. Manila was also barricaded by the government's armed forces, with sandbags lining the highways leading towards the national capital as Huk attacks drew closer.[49]

The situation by mid-1950 in the Philippines was depicted as dire. The scholar George Taylor described the government "as practically bankrupt and the government was fighting for its life against Communist efforts to seize power."[50] A *Manila Times* article, dated April 1950, illustrated the political hysteria then gripping the archipelago. Provincial, city and municipal officials were ordered to undergo a "loyalty check," and were to be removed if they were found to be "in connivance," or "in sympathy" with Huk elements. These stringent measures were to be carried out by the (personally unpopular, according to one American report) Interior Secretary Baluyut. Baluyut started work in his home province, Huk-infested Pampanga, where he fired several local officials "found fraternizing with the Huks." The accounts also revealed that many

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[49] Amando Doronila, *The State, Economic Transformation, and Political Change in the Philippines, 1946-1972* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992), 52, 53.

[50] For more extensive discussions on the scope of the challenges facing US-Filipino relations during the Quirino years, see Chapter 7, entitled "Partners in Crisis" in George Taylor's work. One critique that could be made of Taylor's work was that it also tended to subscribe to the American Exceptionalist thesis wherein the United States supposedly possessed the burden of turning the Philippines around instead of Filipinos being the agents in building their society. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 134, 135.

officials were hesitant to remain at their posts in these war torn areas. Secretary Baluyut simply replaced these officials by others. Quirino also sought the head of the Huk Supreme Leader Luis Taruc. Quirino also knew that the problems in the Philippines possessed similarities with other countries, and that Filipino problems cannot be isolated from the problems of the rest of the world.[51] But American officials saw Filipino problems differently.

The View From The Street: Non-Elite Filipino Public Opinion

American preconceptions on race and empire played a role in shaping American views of Filipinos. Officials such as US Ambassador to Manila John Melby believed that even with independence, Filipinos remained unable to govern themselves. Filipinos supposedly held on to primitive beliefs, ideas, values and practices. Similar views were held by Dean Acheson and W. Walton Butterworth regarding the capacity of Filipinos to defeat communism in the islands due to their supposed inability to govern themselves and understand the nature of their own country's problems.[52] American officials, with these preconceptions, therefore felt free to give out their own ideas on how Filipinos should build their nation. US Ambassador to Manila Myron Cowen in 1949 gave a speech regarding the need for Filipinos to embark on self-help measures to avail of

[51] Vicente F. Barranco, "Quirino to Order Gov't Loyalty Check," *The Manila Times*, April 11, 1950.
[52] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 83, 84.

greater American aid.[53] There were many Filipino responses to the speech. A Filipino veteran of the US Army living in Rizal province in Luzon Island expressed his opinion that:

> Ambassador Cowen's remarks about the granting of further aid to the Philippines if we put our house in order first are justified. China's present situation is a lesson to Uncle Sam who is now becoming dollar-wise. She no longer believes in mere handouts but in giving financial aid which will be beneficial to the country in general.[54]

The Filipino military officer believed that the Philippines must learn "to put its own house in order first." This was meant as an admonishment to the Quirino administration that the Filipino government needed to focus its efforts on combatting ills such as waste and corruption, before going on to other less-pressing priorities and concerns.[55]

A brief survey of other opinions on the street by ordinary Filipino citizens showed that many non-elite Filipinos preferred resolving local problems and issues first, before asking for outside aid from powers such as the United States. For instance, an engineering student at a Manila University agreed with the US Ambassador's comments

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[53] "American Aid to the Philippines: Past, Present and Future," Address by the Honorable Myron M. Cowen, United States Ambassador to the Philippines, at the Rotary Club of Manila, September 1, 1949, WHCF Confidential File, State Department File: Correspondences, Folder- State Department Correspondences, 1949 [1 of 3. . .], HSTLI.

[54] Editorial Comments on Ambassador Myron Cowen's Speech, "American Aid to the Philippines: Past, Present and Future," *The Philippines Herald*, Sept, 7, 1949, State Department Correspondence, 1949, 1 of 3, White House Central Files: Confidential File, HSTLI.

[55] Editorial Comments on Ambassador Myron Cowen's Speech, "American Aid to the Philippines: Past, Present and Future."

regarding "self-help." According to the student, there were "so many internal ills like peace and order, economic problems and others just as important. All these should be fixed first of all so that the American aid will be given to us will be fruitfully used. "A bookstore employee opined that "we must solve our home problems first in order to deserve more American aid. It is useless to receive aid if the allotment and distribution will be hampered by too much internal troubles and problems. It will only result in more troubles piling up on our government." A self-described blue collar worker reflected what the public thought, expressing that:

> I have not given the Ambassador's speech much thought because I am only one of the working class. However, the policy he advocated really needs close following especially from our leaders who are in the habit of making promises. They make reports about this and that and give assurances that all this and that are okay. You know, it is like the saying that a fellow man who talks too much should never be trusted because in most cases his points are not correct. To deserve more American aid, we should really help ourselves first of all.[56]

All these statements suggested that Filipinos knew that they needed to find their own path to make the country self-sustaining. The state, mindful of the Filipinos' well-being, also promoted indigenous control of the country's economy. The Quirino government imposed import controls, so Filipinos could get a bigger share of allocations through imports as compared to US commercial companies. Quirino also did not heed the advice

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[56] Editorial Comments on Ambassador Myron Cowen's Speech, "American Aid to the Philippines: Past, Present and Future."

of the Bell Trade Mission regarding the liberalization of controls, and supported the adoption on July 1, 1951 of an Import Control Law wherein the main provision was that importers must reserve at least 50 percent of imports for enterprising Filipinos.[57] Filipinos did not listen to American advice all the time and had their own ideas on nation-state-building.

Filipinos also did not hesitate to express their reservations regarding trade treaties such as the Bell Trade Act. A report in 1950 from the Filipino executive office lamented the lack of cooperation and trust between the two governments.[58] Filipino recalcitrance was due in part to the perceived "strings attached" to any such American money. America could speak of partnership and mutual cooperation. In reality, Washington represented American interests when dealing with Filipinos. It went without saying that if the Filipino government accepted American money, the US government would have a level of influence in how Filipinos would run their own government. This was true in the areas where Washington believed the Filipino government needed improvement, such as rehabilitation and reinforcement, such as in taxation, revenue collection, social legislation and economic development.[59]

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[57] Pomeroy, *The Philippines* 204.

[58] Statement/ Report by William C. Foster, Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration, Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration, November 7, 1950, Box 22, Folder 1, File 002, Ayala Museum.

[59] "Statement/ Report by William C. Foster, Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration regarding Exploratory talks with President Quirino," November 8, 1950, Box 22, Folder 1, File 003, Ayala Museum.

While Filipinos generally saw foreign aid as desirable then, these conditions came across as condescending. Foreign aid positioned Americans as postcolonial patrons to an independent nation with its own sovereignty. Americans tended to think in terms of developmental goals that provided for the material well-being of Filipinos-- but they often failed to take into account political culture, history, identity and the native psychologies in the course of their involvement. American policymakers tended to continue to view the Filipinos as their colonial wards, and the Philippines as a "client state" that would toe the line of American Cold War anti-communist objectives. Assuming as Constantino *et al* do that the American role in Filipino economic and financial matters was decisive is not supported by the evidence, which is ambiguous at best.

American Anti-Communism vs. Filipino Anti-Communism

American assessments were not only colored by reports on the islands written by American policymakers from the State Department. US assessments and analyses were also influenced by the elite Filipinos with whom many of these American officials interacted with. Quirino, for many of these American observers and practitioners, appeared to have been the worst possible Filipino executive at the worst possible time. Stanley Karnow, in *In Our Image*, described the Filipino president as unable to cope with the Huk uprising. Karnow argued that Quirino did not appear to understand the root causes of the uprising and that the government's only strategy appeared to consist of ordering the Filipino soldiers to hold their ground and destroy Huk-infested villages. The

end result therefore was to further increase the number of Huk fighters and sympathizers.[60] In the perception of ordinary Filipinos, of the landholding cacique class, and their allies, the potential victory of the Huks became synonymous with the predominance and influence of the Filipinos of Chinese descent, who were said to have possessed sympathy for mainland China out of ethnic kinship and a desire to dominate economic life in the islands.

American surveys showed that the Filipino communist guerillas were being aided by the Chinese and by the Soviets. The economic crisis also appeared to give the Huks a reasonable chance of success.[61] A National Security Council document (84/2) dated November 1950, entitled "US Policy in the Philippines," argued that while the Huks would be unable to take over the Philippines through military means, the dire social, economic and political situation continuously fed the growth of the Huk movement. The report's assessments of the capabilities of the 26,000-strong Filipino military and police in the Huk-infested areas were optimistic, affirming that the Filipino armed forces were capable of handling the insurgency. The report also expressed concerns regarding the "potential for subversion" by the large Chinese-Filipino minority, which might produce an armed, militant component.[62]

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[60] Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House Inc., 1989), 345.

[61] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 80.

[62] National Security Council Document 84/2, "US Policy on the Philippines," quoted in Daniel Schirmer and Stephen Shalom, *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship and Resistance* (Cambridge: Southend Press, 1987), 107, 108.

A US top secret report, dated December 27, 1948, looked at the dilemmas faced by the Third Republic in integrating the Chinese-Filipinos in the nation- state building project. The report revealed the extent with which American officials Ambassador John Melby, Major Charles Glazer, and their counterpart Filipino Army Chief of Staff Mariano Castaneda viewed the presence of the Chinese in the islands. The Filipino Army Chief of Staff expressed his alarm over the dire straits of the Nationalist government in mainland China. According to General Castaneda, there were an estimated 60,000 Chinese in Manila and with around 200,000 to 300,000 Chinese across the islands. The numbers of the Chinese-Filipinos, coupled with the impending fall of mainland China to communists would eventually create "difficulties" for the Philippines in matters of security, in the eyes of the Filipino General. The Filipino military officer's fear was that the Chinese community in the archipelago had already made "arrangements" with Chinese communists in the mainland. The General assumed that the Chinese-Filipinos in the Philippines might be "empowered" to become communist as a matter of "self-protection" from the Filipino state and people. The Filipino General indicated that plans were therefore afoot to "suppress any Chinese activities," and to "completely break any organized Chinese activities," to forestall any communist uprising in the islands.[63]

In the eyes of Filipino military officials such as General Castaneda, the inability of the Third Republic's forces to resolve the Chinese/Communist problem posed an

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[63] Memorandum of Conversation, "Effect of China Situation on the Philippines," December 27, 1948, 1, 2, Philippine File-General- 1948, Melby Papers, HSTLI.

existential security threat to the islands. Castaneda stated to the American officials during his meeting, that "there would be no communists or Chinese problem today," had military officials like him not been compelled by the Filipino government to release the communists, who were arrested wholesale years ago, due to Filipino "public pressure." Castaneda also believed that the biggest problem that Filipinos faced was the "possibility of a large-scale Chinese illegal infiltration into the Philippines," given the extensive coastline of the islands, emanating from areas in mainland Asia that recently fell to communism. He met American officials to seek American support for an "expanded naval patrol," and a "greatly increased air force" for the Philippines to forestall the dangers coming from the Chinese who might seek to enter the islands. The General also mentioned the Huk situation during the meeting, arguing that the use of "military force alone could not solve the problem permanently." Instead, there needed to be "a concerted government plan to solve the social problem which gave rise to the Huks."[64] Even the most hardline Filipino officials such as Castaneda, and his Commander in Chief, President Quirino, did not believe that the use of force would be the answer to Filipino security challenges. But they sought to appeal to American anti-communism to pursue indigenous Filipino objectives.

In the eyes of the Filipino establishment, the Third Republic could use the United States by appealing to Filipino and American suspicion of communist Chinese. This

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[64] General Castaneda also let it be known to the American officials in the meeting that he had gone over the contents of what he mentioned to these foreign officials with President Quirino before he met with the US officials. This was assumed to be a sign that he was also speaking on behalf of the Third Republic. Memorandum of Conversation, "Effect of China Situation on the Philippines," 1, 2.

mutually-shared hostility also extended to the Chinese-Filipinos and the Huks, whose loyalties at the height of the communist hysteria were deemed suspect. According to Ang Cheng Guan's article, the Filipino central government's relations with ethnic minorities were often a concern for the Third Republic. The Quirino administration, largely representing the "indigenous Spanish *mestizo* elite," and the majority of Filipinos, warily eyed the "highly educated urban intelligentsia," and the "unassimilated" Chinese-Filipinos, who were often assumed to be sympathetic towards communism.[65]

American assessments mirrored Filipino concerns. A secret CIA report on August 1950 feared that the Quirino administration's lack of interest in reform could lead to its replacement and the rise of an authoritarian government that could reach an accommodation with the communist Huks, A nightmare Cold War scenario for the United States had always been the prospect of America getting "cut out" from its interests in the archipelago. US policymakers feared a Huk-led central government aligning the Philippines away from the United States, and towards the Soviet Union. The report saw possible Huk alliances with the Chinese-Filipinos, radical labor groups,

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[65]Ang Cheng Guan, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory," in Christopher E. Goscha and Christopher E. Ostermann (ed.), *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Washington DC and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Press and Stanford University Press, 2009), 312, 313.

armed groups throughout the archipelago, and disaffected war veterans causing serious problems for the Third Republic's nation-state building project in the islands.[66]

Other American reports dovetailed with the Quirino administration's assessments on the situation regarding the ethnicities in the islands. A 1949 pamphlet described the 300,000 Chinese-Filipinos in the islands as a frequent "target" of anti-communist Filipino nationalism. Those of pure Chinese blood were generally considered "alien," "unassimilable," and as having a tendency to dominate the local economies. The Chinese-Filipinos were seen by nationalists as potential vehicles for the spread of communism, due to the suspected relationship of the Chinese-Filipinos with mainland Chinese communists. The ethnic Chinese based in the Philippines were seen as more likely to be co-opted by communists. This prospect of collusion was seen as doubly dangerous by the concentration of their numbers in Manila.[67] American analysts further believed that the specter of a dual urban-Chinese and rural-peasant communist threat could force the Filipino government to fight a battle on two fronts. The analysts, perhaps exaggerating the nature of the threat at the time, feared that the Third Republic may not ultimately prevail. The perceived communist threat to the islands undermined confidence in the economy, and public support for economic development. The ability of the

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[66] Central Intelligence Agency, "Prospects for Stability in the Philippines," Copy no. 171, 10 August 1950, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

[67] "South and Southeast Asia," Chart 11, Distribution of Chinese, White House Confidential File, State Department Correspondence, 1949[3 of 3], HSTLI.

Quirino government to provide security for Filipinos was also in doubt.[68] During the war against the Huks, Filipino nation-state building involved viewing and treating the Chinese-Filipinos as a potential security threat to the islands.

Third Republic pronouncements also depicted the peasant Huks and the communist threat from mainland China and the Soviet Union as "one and the same." The government accused the Huks of seeking after "Russian aid and ammunition, by submarine."[69] The Third Republic believed that Filipinos had no reason to trust the communist Huks. Huk motives were particularly viewed as sinister when former Commonwealth President Manuel Quezon's wife, Aurora Aragon, her daughter Baby, and many others in their convoy were assassinated by bandits suspected of being Huk fighters on April 28, 1949. Luis Taruc denied the charge that Huks were involved in the atrocity and accused the government of whipping up hysteria to galvanize the public against the Huks. But Taruc also responded with class warfare rhetoric, with the stated objective of overthrowing the government.[70]

Filipino anti-communism also had an international dimension. Filipinos sent a contingent under the banner of the United Nations to fight the communists during the Korean War in 1950. At a radio chat in September 1950, the Filipino President stressed that Filipino participation in the Korean War was an extension of the country's battle

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[68] Ang, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory," in Goscha and Ostermann (ed.), *Connecting Histories*, 312, 313.

[69] Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion*, 190, 191.

[70] Teodoro Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People, 8th Edition* (Quezon City: Garotech Publishing, 1990), 455, 456, 457.

against communism. Quirino said during the chat that Filipinos were loyal to their heritage and that they were determined to survive the challenges. The President stated in the chat that Filipinos were fighting for what they ". . . believe to be just and right and true." But more critically, Quirino believed that through these actions, Filipinos ". . . follow the hard but inescapable way of salvation not as individuals, but as people."[71]

Communism was not the only security issue facing all Filipinos. The government also sought to address the other aspects of Filipino security. This entailed dealing with crime and disorder. Quirino believed that the Third Republic needed to be a strong state but knew that this must be complemented by mobilization at the community level. For instance, at a radio talk at the end of August 1950, Quirino described a "dread Red Hand of Murder," which "menaced" communities, and that involved "murder, rapine and burning." There were also "horrible massacres" in some Filipino provinces. The solution to this, in Quirino's eyes, was in "forming neighborhood organizations in every community, similar to the Japanese-time vigilance associations." The undertaking involved the formation of "battalions of peace," and "barangays for peace." In Quirino's eyes, people must contribute to their communities and to support the formation of local citizens' armies.[72]

The government formed "barangay associations not only as basic civic units to promote community welfare." They were also formed for civilian defense against what

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[71] Vicente F. Barranco, "Quirino to the nation, President in radio chat discusses key issues, points to perils; barangay 'no private army," *The Manila Times*, September 16, 1950.

[72] Vicente F. Barranco, "Asks populace to unite, fight the 'Red Hand,' EQ keynotes radio talk with Balintawak crimes; stresses defense needs," *The Manila Times*, August 31, 1950.

Quirino termed as "the treacherous hand that strikes in the dark." Government was to run the country, the armed forces were to undertake "armed action" that guaranteed national security, while citizens all over the islands would work on the national project. According to Quirino, these undertakings were to be a sign of "people's readiness to invest their resources on courage and faith," in the objectives of the Third Republic.[73]

Huk armed offensives, beginning in March 1950, posed a danger to the Third Republic. By August, Huk guerillas were undertaking multiple hit-and-run attacks and raiding ammunition depots. Al McCoy, in *Policing America's Empire*, stated that the US National Security Council saw that it needed to promote military assistance so that the Philippines can defend itself.[74] The Filipino government also believed that it needed external aid and assistance from the United States. The American government, concerned about events in the archipelago, thereupon suggested to President Quirino that he appoint Ramon Magsaysay as Defense Secretary.[75] It was a time of a devastating Huk rebellion, with the threat of communism internationally and with scarce state resources. The Filipino government therefore valued foreign aid and advice to shore up the state. But the government knew that it also needed to appeal to the people first and foremost to safeguard and consolidate the nation-state building project.

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[73] Barranco, "Quirino to the nation, President in radio chat discusses key issues, points to perils; barangay 'no private army."

[74]Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 376.

[75]Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 206.

Enter Magsaysay: A New Age of Filipino Populism

Ramon Magsaysay was a populist, down-to-earth, non-elite Filipino. His first occupation was as a mechanic. Members of the ruling circles in Manila saw him as an honest, relatable, everyday Filipino. Magsaysay became acquainted with American officials in Washington early in 1950, when Magsaysay traveled as a then little-known legislator who asked for benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II. Magsaysay, by chance, was invited to spend the evening with Lt. Col. Edward Lansdale, who was then "on loan" to the US Office of Policy Coordination. This office was responsible for "covert action" overseas. Lansdale and Magsaysay had a conversation about the Huk threat in the Philippines. Magsaysay's knowledge of the rebellion, its root causes, and what was needed to be done greatly impressed Lansdale and his immediate superior, Frank Wisner, who then offered American political support to Magsaysay. America subsequently sent Assistant Secretary of State Livingston Merchant to propose to President Quirino that the Chief Executive appoint Magsaysay as Defense Minister in exchange for vastly increased US military aid to the Philippines. The Quirino administration, short of money, quickly acceded to this American proposition.[76]

Magsaysay, as a newly appointed Defense Secretary in 1950, worked on building up the Filipino military. The Defense Secretary reorganized and enlarged the Filipino military to 26 divisions. The victories of Filipino soldiers on the battlefield, beginning in late 1950, lifted morale and rolled back Huk advances.[77] Filipino officers, with US field

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[76] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 346.

[77] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire,* 377.

advisers, used cash incentives and monetary rewards to pay villagers who would inform on the Huks. A government program sought to encourage families of Huks to persuade members of their families who became guerillas to lay down their arms and to surrender to the government.[78]

Defense Secretary Magsaysay knew that he needed to try innovative approaches beyond those done under Roxas and Quirino. Magsaysay valued the inputs and the involvement of his American advisers, who had advised employing psychological warfare techniques locally. This was to counter the Huk insurgents, who were known for being superstitious. Lansdale, one of those covert US intelligence officers, believed that the Filipino war for hearts, minds and souls could not simply be won on the battlefield by crushing the Huks. Lansdale's familiarity with the local culture, his willingness to engage and put in positions of responsibility ordinary Filipinos, his understanding of Mao Tse-Tung's guerilla warfare tactics, such as encouraging the Filipino government to become a "brother of the people;" and his marriage to a Filipina reporter all enabled him to understand more deeply the root causes of Huk resentment, as compared to many of his American contemporaries.[79] The Third Republic, to suppress the Huks, made use of American Cold War fears, the expertise (and ingenuity) of their US military advisers,

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[78] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 378, 379.

[79] Lansdale's reporter-wife showed him the backcountry trails where many Huks operated as well as obtaining information from her since she was a Huk accomplice as well. For further information on Lansdale's activities, see Chapter 4, entitled "Grassroots Empire" in Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 107.

and local superstition. On the field, Filipino military advisers worked with their American counterparts such as Charles Bohannan, an ethnographer who studied Navajo folklore, to look at local traditions, myths, and folklore by studying the worst psychological fears of the Huks, who were ultimately products of their local environments.[80] The superstitious fear of many peasant Huks of vampires in native folklore was used to make the Huks assume that these blood-sucking creatures were living in their vicinities. These psychological warfare tactics ended up causing disarray and constant fear amongst the Huk fighters during the night. Other tactics involved the sabotage of Huk ordnance, infiltration, demoralization, the use of commandos, trained canines, counterintelligence gleaned from former Huks, and the use of napalm by the Filipino air force to degrade Huk ground cover and burn rebel food sources.[81]

McCoy, in *Policing America's Empire*, also described the role played by "talented Filipino officers," such as the ideologue Jose Crisol who supervised the propaganda campaign against the Huks by emphasizing politics over outright repression of the Huk guerillas.[82] Lansdale and Bohannan also relied on the infamous Filipino Constabulary Col. Napoleon Valeriano, whose "skull squadrons" were famous for chopping off the heads of suspected Huks, to sow terror amongst the Huks and their sympathizers. The relationship between Lansdale and Magsaysay became such that it

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[80] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 377.

[81] Renato Constantino, Letizia Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City: The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 239, 240.

[82] McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*, 377.

reached the extent of a mentor-protégé relationship where Magsaysay served an avid listener to Lansdale's ideas. Lansdale's ideas, it was said, flowed into Magsaysay's speeches as Defense Secretary and as President. The relationship was such that the journalist Stanley Karnow, in *In Our Image*, argued that Lansdale had helped "invent" Magsaysay.[83] Karnow's views had a tendency to view Filipino agency as an extension of Washington's Cold War objectives in the region. But the Filipinos were not simply henchmen or hirelings of the US military forces or of the State Department in the islands. It could be safely said that Filipinos were using American aid and advice to pursue native solutions to Filipino problems.

Magsaysay had many interesting pilot projects to wean the rural Filipinos away from the Huks. Renato Constantino's *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, described how the Third Republic appealed to the Huk supporters and turned them into ex-Huks. Magsaysay's most prominent program, the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR), involved the resettlement of ex-Huk families to new farm communities. The program was designed to answer the Huk "land for the landless" message to agrarian families. The program was meant to entice Huk families with the promise of titles to their own land in government-run EDCOR farms.[84] Another program, which Renato Constantino's work briefly touched on, was the Magsaysay administration's "Ten Centavo Plan." This allowed "anyone with grievance or with information about the Huks" to send in a "one page telegram," only worth ten centavos, directly to Secretary Magsaysay. "Free legal

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[83] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 350.

[84] Renato Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, 240, 241.

services by Army lawyers" were also offered to poor farmers," courtesy of the government. [85] According to Constantino, all these programs ended up bolstering Magsaysay's image as a messianic figure who would "personally and instantly" attend to the barrio people's needs.[86]

The Third Republic also embarked on electoral reform. Elections, particularly the previous 1949 presidential elections, were widely perceived as dirty and dishonest. These dampened public confidence on the government. Magsaysay therefore prepared for the 1951 congressional elections, with the help of the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). This volunteer watchdog composed of pro-American Filipinos, initially under American leadership, monitored the 1951 parliamentary and the 1953 presidential election. Their objectives included ensuring clean and honest elections, strengthening the electoral prospects and standing of Magsaysay's supporters, bolster the Defense Secretary's reputation for managing midterm elections, and ultimately to facilitate Magsaysay's ascension to the Presidency in 1953. Benedict Kerkvliet, in his article, argued that if one were to subscribe to the "neo-colonial" interpretation, then one would believe that the United States continued to "meddle" in the affairs of its former

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[85] Constantino used the statement of one American official, Roger Hilsman, who mentioned that one interesting aspect about the "Ten Centavo" program was that there were actually far fewer army lawyers at the government's disposal than was the case. But the Magsaysay team had a talent for immediately approaching the few peasants who came and who wrote a ten centavo telegram to Magsaysay for government help in resolving their land problems. Magsaysay's team then made a "publicity binge" out of it. Constantino, Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, 241.

[86] Constantino, Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, 242.

colony, at the guise of clean and honest elections."[87] That there was US involvement cannot be disputed. But whether NAMFREL was a form of "meddling" remained an open question. Even if the founder and the top leadership initially consisted of Americans, the vast majority of its members and subsequent leaders were comprised of volunteer Filipinos, both non-elite and elite.

Constantino, in a brief history of the organization, narrated that NAMFREL's brain trust was the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), whose main organizer was Gabriel Kaplan. Kaplan had relocated from New York City to Manila in 1951, and was given the task of overseeing this new electoral watchdog group to help Lansdale establish the foundations of Magsaysay's subsequent election as President. Many Filipino organizations were involved in field organizing, ranging from the Lions, Rotary, Jaycees, various women's Clubs, Masons, Parent-Teachers Associations, the YMCA, the Philippine Government Employees Association, the War Widows Association, Catholic Action, and the Federation of Free Workers. Jaime Ferrer served as the NAMFREL director, while NAMFREL chapters sprouted throughout the islands.[88]

The outcome of the 1951 congressional elections was seen as a success. Filipino political scientists Clarita Carlos and Rommel Banlaoi found that electoral turnout was sharply up, at 92.3%, during the 1951 congressional election.[89] The stage was set for a

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[87] Kerkvliet, "Contested Meanings of Elections in the Philippines," in R.H. Taylor (ed.), *The Politics of Elections*, 143, 144.

[88] Constantino, Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, 245.

[89] This work offered a comprehensive survey of the history of national elections throughout the islands from the pre-colonial period of the *barangays*, up to the Ramos administration in the 1990's. Chapter 4 of

new phase in Filipino governance beginning with Magsaysay. Constantino's work narrated how Magsaysay, working with NAMFREL, took advantage of his own charisma and his ability to communicate to all Filipinos, to also helped make electoral process a success. The Defense Secretary, using his magnetic personality, toured troubled spots, distant polling sites, talked to Filipino soldiers, provided military escorts for candidates regardless of party affiliation, and actively helped to dismantle private security teams. Magsaysay's actions were said to have provided a new form of military activism, where polls were policed well, ballot boxes were guarded, intimidation was absent, and electoral returns were sent quickly to national headquarters. Magsaysay's image was further bolstered when he exhibited political will in having ordered the arrest of Negros Provincial Governor Rafael Lacson, who was a member of the ruling party of Quirino and Magsaysay and who padded Quirino's votes in his fiefdom during the earlier 1949 presidential election, for the murder of a political rival. With the favorable outcome of the 1951 parliamentary election, the armed forces and Magsaysay thus began to prepare for the 1953 presidential elections.[90] Luis Francia's work, *A History of the Philippines*, argued that Magsaysay was effective because he became a "common man's hero," who defeated the Huks at their own turf. [91] Magsaysay knew that he had to

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this book looked at national elections during the Third Republic (1946-1972), with focus on the presidential and the congressional election years. Carlos, Clarita R., Banlaoi, Rommel C., *Elections in the Philippines: From Precolonial Period to the Present* (Makati City: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 1996), 88.

[90] Constantino, Constantino, *The Continuing Past*, 246, 247.

[91] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 206, 207.

integrate all aspects of governing effectively, with a deeper understanding of the issues involved if he were to encourage mass participation in and public support for the Third Republic.

Conclusion

The Quirino period was notable due to the Huk challenge to the Third Republic's vision of nation- state building. The Huks lost their greatest battles in Filipino homes since Filipinos did not believe in an agrarian communist-inspired revolutionary project that had suspect psychological, ideological, and racial links to Mao's China and whose armies were chasing the United Nations coalition (including the Filipino Expeditionary Forces battalions) down the Korean peninsula. The similarities between the Huk rebellion and the Maoist hordes in the mainland were not lost on Filipinos—nor on U.S. officials, who quadrupled military aid the following year after Ramon Magsaysay was appointed as Defense Secretary by President Quirino.[92] The Third Republic prevailed not so much due to Huk weaknesses, but due to the Third Republic's strengths and the superior appeal it held for many Filipinos, who had an aversion to collectivism and to communism.

The survival of Filipino nation-state building under Quirino therefore entailed a sense of unity and nationalism. Competent leaders ended up working skillfully with the limited tools at their disposal. Most critically, they enjoyed public support. Quirino was in many respects a flawed leader. But the President thought of Filipino interests while

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[92] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 206.

negotiating with American representatives. But he lacked a national mandate and was not popular, due to corruption. Quirino's administration was also unable to fully recognize and address the root causes of how to appeal to non-elite Filipinos.[93]

For instance, a *Manila Times* report narrated how Quirino's "barangay" plan, which his administration had advocated back in 1950 to deal with domestic crime and disorder, only produced mixed results on the ground. According to the newspaper, there were many reports trickling in from the provinces that many people were not as enthusiastic as they appeared to be in participating in the government project. Many people in the provinces, such as school-teachers, complained that they were being taken advantage of by local officials to "make some racket," and to victimize rural inhabitants. Funds that were supposed to be allocated to the barangays to maintain peace and order were appropriated by municipal authorities, policemen and others, who then claimed local authority over the salaries of school teachers, or forced civilians to contribute. It also did not help that interest "fizzled out," due to the lack of "follow-up," by the government. Many residents, particularly those who lived in the distant barrios, feared the threats emanating from dissidents. There was also confusion regarding what the function of the "barangay" would be. Initially, the barangay was conceived to be a "national militia" against dissidents that would work with the national armed forces. The barangay's role then subsequently evolved to becoming "a nucleus of cooperatives." It was also said that "the barangay was just going to be used for cultural purposes and

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[93] Schirmer, Shalom, *The Philippines Reader*, 105.

means of disseminating information.[94]" The *barangay* plan became a project for propaganda purposes in the eyes of the people instead of being an effective plan to bring home the government to the barrios.

A more cohesive nationalist Filipino state was still an accomplishment for Filipinos during the Quirino period, even if the grassroots were still to be fully reached. The Filipino public, after all, chose to support the Third Republic over the Huks. But the Third Republic also recognized that Manila was seen as too imperial and too distant from the ordinary *barrio* home. By 1951, government, with far more active involvement by individuals such as Magsaysay and the people around him, began to more effectively work with the grassroots in the communities to foster local economic development and to provide a bridge between the urban and the rural.

[94] "Palace policy baffles solons, President may return today or tomorrow," *The Manila Times*, May 1, 1951.

CHAPTER 4

FROM MANILA TO THE BARRIOS AND FROM THE BARRIOS TO MANILA: TO UNIFY THE NATION, 1950-54

> Magsaysay made it clear that no racial or geographic principles decide Manila's present and future policies and that any return to now-disappearing colonialism "shall not be tolerated in any form . . . world communism is today's threat in Asia and a good defense against this threat is healthy Asian nationalism.[1]

- New York's **Saturday Evening Post** newspaper, on Ramon Magsaysay in 1954

> The living conditions you have heard, Mr. President, are not unusual. In fact, they are all too common. And these people I have visited are not strangers. They are fellow Filipinos, Mr. President . . . like you and I . . . They are entitled to their share of the social services that are supposed to go with the democracy of our Republic. Put away your political maps Mr. President. Look at a large map, large enough to show the barrios that are the backbone of the nation.[2]

- Ramon Magsaysay's message from the barrios, addressed to Elpidio Quirino and the other officials in Manila

The Red wave appeared to be ebbing in the islands. 1951 saw the defeat of the Huks in the battlefields of the Central Luzon plains, in the rural communities and in urban Manila. Ramon Magsaysay was establishing a good reputation as Defense

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[1] "RM called Asia's most mature leader," *The Manila Times,* June 10, 1954.

[2] "RM presses attack on rural neglect," *The Manila Times*, August 26, 1953.

Secretary, ultimately to become President after the 1953 presidential elections. The Filipino economy was also recovering domestically amidst the Korean War's demand for Filipino goods. Filipinos expressed indigenous agency internationally, earlier by sending in a contingent to Korea in 1950 and also by helping establish organizations such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) by 1954. Filipino leaders such as Ramon Magsaysay and Carlos Romulo knew that to legitimately express indigenous agency and to define national identity, all Filipinos regardless of background and persuasion had to be enjoined to participate and to possess a stake in the nation-making project.

The Third Republic under Magsaysay staked the claim of being the legitimate expression of collective Filipino will. Nation-state building proved that the islands had a natural aversion to communism, to colonialism, and to corruption. The major challenges for defining and consolidating Filipino nationalisms also involved bridging Manila and the barrios, which included the effective use of the Filipino military as an effective agent of nation-state-building. There were also issues related to crime and the prevention communist infiltrators from entering the islands. There were also growing dilemmas regarding how to integrate Chinese Filipinos, and Filipino sovereignty over US military bases in the islands.

1950: Has the Colonizer Returned?

The Quirino administration at the start of the 1950s was in a state of crisis. An American report in 1950 described how "the Philippines (is) was facing serious

economic and financial problems which must be solved if the country is to become and remain stable and self- supporting." A joint US-Filipino economic survey mission looked into various economic sectors such as "internal and external finances, agriculture, mining, industry, distribution and foreign trade, amongst others." The objective of the joint mission was for Filipino agencies to operate with "reliability and stability." Most critically, the Joint Mission argued that Filipino "finances and foreign exchange" needed to be attended to, if economic collapse was to be avoided by the Third Republic. The report emphasized the need for Filipino "self-help, which the Philippines must take [on] and make effective" to achieve stability. The report also broached the amount of foreign aid "necessary or appropriate to supplement maximum self-help" by Filipinos.[3]

The government was also in dire need of money. Another report earlier in the year had warned of the rapidly depleting "foreign exchange reserves." The report went on to state that the money shortage could only be counteracted by the "possibility of encouraging the flow of private capital," the rehabilitation and the development of the Philippine economy, the "most effective and balanced" utilization of its resources, the "effective application of modern technology," and the "pursuit of development projects" to encourage investment.[4]

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[3] Warren Kelchner to The Secretary of State, "Designation of United States Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines," November 8, 1950, Folder- Philippine Economic Mission, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/ Agency Files, 1946-1951, Box 0015, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[4] Dean Acheson to the American Embassy in Manila, Department of State Outgoing Telegram, February 17, 1950, Folder, "Philippine Economic Mission," Record Group no. 59, General Records of the

A US Embassy report, dated May 1950, subsequently noted the growing "political and economic deterioration of the Philippines" under Quirino. The American report warned of a "rapid decline into chaos," and the "emergency" posed by the Huk insurgency to American Cold War interests in the islands. The report also noted Quirino's "political maneuverings," such as the President "using "a disgracefully large pork-barrel appropriation bill" to "re-establish his position," and even going as far as to ask the Filipino Congress to grant the President "emergency powers," but which Congress refused to do. The report went on further to state that although Quirino, and by extension the Third Republic, was not in any immediate danger of losing his grip on power, the Huks might take advantage of any political vacuum.[5]

Meanwhile, Filipinos sought American help in obtaining World War II reparations from Japan. The Filipinos were unhappy that these reparations were not yet forthcoming during the early 1950s. Some, such as businessman Francisco Sycip decided to act as middlemen. The businessman's argument was that part of the problem with obtaining war reparations from Japan lay with the Filipino government's "lack of a plan . . . on how to distribute any or all of the reparations and how such reparations can benefit the country and the people ultimately." The Filipino consensus regarding

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Department of State, Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/ Agency Files, 1946-1951, Box 0015, NARA.

[5] From John Melby to the Acting Secretary, May 17, 1950, Folder G-21- General Survey of Conditions in the Philippines, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, Box 002, NARA.

wartime reparations as of 1951 was that, "Japan should, as a matter of policy, acknowledge Philippine reparations." That this was symbolic did not reduce its significance. Filipinos feared a revived, reconstructed Japan. Therefore, Sycip suggested that "the Philippine government should condone such reparations in lieu of a guarantee of a peaceful Japan in the Far East for a period of at least twenty years."[6]

Other Filipinos lamented the corruption of the Quirino government, not only in Manila but in faraway Mindanao. A concerned farmer from Davao, in Mindanao, named Demetrio Velez sent a letter to President Truman through the US Embassy in Manila. In the letter, Velez expressed his gratitude for the education he received from "American teachers" during the colonial period. Velez represented himself as "one of the humble voices" of the Filipinos. Velez mentioned in his letter that he was not in any way connected to the Filipino government, but that in his view, a vast proportion of U.S. aid to the Quirino government was lost due to government "mismanagement" and to "corruption."[7]

American assessments of the Filipino government dovetailed with private Filipino assessments. US State Department officials knew that Quirino's own party members and the Filipino public were beginning to doubt the President's ability to lead.

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[6] From Francisco Sycip to Ambassador Myron Cowen, August 20, 1951, Papers of John F. Melby, B File, Harry S. Truman Library and Institute.

[7] Demetrio Valdes to Richard Ely, Deputy Director, Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Folder B6, Philippine Attitudes towards the United States, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge of Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

The revenue earned from import controls was lost to corruption and to the ineffective manner in which they were imposed and used. Quirino also refused to devalue the Philippine peso. The President's brother, Judge Antonio Quirino, was said to be involved in all kinds of "dubious" transactions involving veterans' benefits. Also, in the early 1950, the "Filipino government's finances [were] in very bad shape." The government insisted on maintaining tax rates said to be "among the lowest in the world," and which were often evaded by many. American officials also believed that "any aid that they would extend must be placed under rigid control," to prevent the money and the resources from being wasted and "dissipated."[8]

Surprisingly, Filipinos began to turn the situation around rather quickly. In 1951, Filipinos obtained money from foreign governments overseas and the government pursued sound economic policies. Government officials such as the Filipino Central Bank Head Miguel Cuaderno, widely viewed as competent, thanked the United States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for their "invaluable assistance" at a "critical period" of intense economic crisis, when foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time low. Filipino cash reserves increased from PhP 12.6 million in mid-1950 to PhP 73.6 million by mid-1951. The trade outlook was also beginning to look good. The outlook

[8] From Mr. Lacy to Mr. Rusk, "Current Problems in the Philippines," March 30, 1950, Folder B-2-D, Formulation of policy, ideas, suggestions and their think pieces, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

was becoming bright for the fiscal year 1951 to 1952, due to efforts by competent members of Quirino's government.[9]

According to a US State Department report on the Philippine Aid Program, American ease with the Filipino situation was further reinforced, when, in 1951, the international reserves of the central bank and the private banks together reached $100 million. This meant that the Filipino government "could afford to relax its exchange and import controls sufficiently," and enable the government to "import the necessary commodities" that benefited the country. But American State Department officials also made it clear that they preferred a military aid program over an economic aid program, since the United States saw the Huks as their main adversary for US interests in the islands, and on providing existing support for the Philippine armed forces.[10]

Filipinos knew that they needed to use foreign organizations, aid, and expertise to successfully pursue their nation-state building goals. An American document, dated November 24, 1950, described the "attitude of Philippine government officials," who invited "American technicians in advisory positions in key government agencies." The

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[9] M. Cuaderno Sr. to Mr. Rusk, Central Bank of the Philippines, Manila, July 9, 1951, Folder D15, Cost of the Philippines to US, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

[10] From Mr. Wannamaker to Mr. Melby, "Philippine Aid Program," March 28, 1951, Office Memorandum, United States Government, Folder B-2-D, Formulation of policy, ideas, suggestions and their think pieces, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

Americans were to be on the US payroll, but would "report directly" to the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), and would work under Filipino department heads albeit with "little supervision." The Americans' work included "survey," "advising," and "suggest improvements." The American officials knew, while discussing the number of technicians to be offered to the Filipino government, that the Filipinos they were interacting with largely came from the elites. These included personalities such as Finance Secretary Pedrosa, Economic Coordinator Araneta and Agriculture Secretary Lopez. The final number offered to the Philippine Government was "50 to 75 technicians, including those on short assignments."[11] The government welcomed the advisers and the technical expertise from the United States. That an independent state continued to rely on aid and advice from its former colonizer was not surprising. Filipinos had always viewed American colonialism as benevolent and remembered the peaceful manner in which the islands obtained independence from the American colonizer.

The security situation remained on edge, with the Huk uprising reaching its zenith in 1950. American pressure had prompted a reluctant Quirino administration to

[11] The report interestingly suggested that there was "little prospect for Americans to be accepted in operating posts." The report also stated that the "presence of honest Americans in Philippine departments" ended up "boosting the morale of honest Filipinos" working in those departments, and also "tended to act as deterrent to others." The report said that if the "American technician" had "tact," was "persuasive," and had the "ability," the American could bring about "marked improvements" within that department. From Vinton Chapin to the US Secretary of State, "Organization for Future Operations," November 20, 1950, Department of State, Folder- Philippine Economic Mission, Box 0015, Record Group no. 59 General Records of the Department of State, Philippine Rehabilitation Program Subject/ Agency Files, 1946-1951, NARA.

appoint Magsaysay as Secretary of Defense in 1950.[12] Many Filipinos warned the American officials that the new Defense Secretary was a good and honest man, but that even Magsaysay would not overcome the entrenched interests in the officer corps of the Filipino military. Other Filipinos told American officials that the Filipino military was "hated and feared" by some Filipinos, who sometimes saw scant difference between the soldiers and the Huk guerillas in the field. According to H.W. Brands, in *Bound to Empire*, Huks were generally seen as having bright leaders whose struggle had a strong chance of winning if things got out of hand. Lansdale, the CIA officer, was very surprised when he toured the countryside and discovered that there was much sympathy for the Huks in ordinary Filipino peasant homes across central Luzon, due to discontent over land.[13] Also, the Third Republic had yet to appeal effectively to ordinary Filipino homes in the rural communities across the islands.

Cold War-minded American advisers in the field such as CIA officer and Lt. Col. Edward Lansdale, and reform-minded Filipinos such as Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay deduced correctly that waging war against the Huks solely on the battlefield did not provide a long term solution to Filipino social ills.[14] To counteract the image of a disconnected and "imperial" state, Magsaysay promised to hire idealistic young people

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[12] Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 206.

[13] H.W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 242, 243.

[14] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 107.

from the middle and the lower classes to serve in his administration, while campaigning for the upcoming 1953 presidential elections. Magsaysay disagreed with Quirino's philosophy of governance, which held that citizens were to be treated as if they were "members of the crew" of the ship of state. According to Magsaysay, citizens were supposed to be the "owners of the vessels," where the captain was a "servant of the citizens." Magsaysay inculcated in the minds of the youth that "public office should not merely be a means for personal gain."[15]

Magsaysay established a partnership with ordinary Filipinos based on mutual trust by bringing Manila to the distant barrios. The *Manila Times* narrated how, in one of Magsaysay's sorties as a *Nacionalista* Party candidate, residents in Barrio San Mateo let it be known to the Defense Secretary that the citizens' main problems involved a lack of *nipa* huts to provide habitation for families, meager harvests of the rice crop, and the lack of a pump to bring river water to the fields and potable water to households. The average Filipino family only made only 85 centavos a day, far below what was needed to sustain life. This therefore led to large-scale borrowing and indebtedness for these rural Filipino families. A 70-year-old man named Jose Bautista who lived in one of these *barrios* told the Defense Secretary that he had been living in the locality for a long time, but that all he could do was wait. As far as he was concerned, government did not appear to exist and ordinary people's needs were being neglected.[16]

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[15] "Mag tells students poll issue," *The Manila Times*, September 17, 1953.

[16] "Mag opens radio call to Malacanan," *The Manila Times*, August 19, 1953.

This was not to say though that the average Filipino citizen lacked initiative. Barrio residents told Magsaysay in the same *Manila Times* article about how they helped build the local school "out of their earnings," which benefited other members of the *barrio*. The people were willing to forgo a significant chunk of their savings for the good of the community. But there were also other problems. There were no clinics or even doctors in the vicinity to treat the sick in the barrios. Only the Filipino military brought the presence of the Third Republic into the lives of people in the *barrios*, and only in 1953.[17] The foundations of nation-state building could only be established if both the grassroots and the state worked together to address the myriad local problems.

The Third Republic believed that the elite Filipinos also played an important role in nation-state building. But the landowners did not fully share the Filipino government's goals of social reform. The Filipino oligarchy and the landlords may have possessed an interest in maintaining the law and order required for business-- but this did not extend to redistributing their estates for the sake of the peasants.[18] This did not mean though that elite Filipinos they were not interested in the well-being of other Filipinos. In one of President Quirino's local tours, Quirino could not help but be impressed at the "many young scions of rich families in Manila and Central Luzon who have settled there (in Occidental Mindoro province) to embark in mechanized farming." These sons of elite parents left their secure "white collar jobs" in the cities for farm work. They found that

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[17] "Mag opens radio call to Malacanan."

[18] Immerwahr. *Thinking Small*, 107, 111.

the biggest problem of these farms was "rat infestation."[19] For the elites to understand the everyday lives and experiences of their fellow Filipinos, they needed to become familiar with the living conditions of Filipinos in the rural communities. The elites realized that they could protect their own interests, but at the same time reach out to rural Filipinos.

Filipino consolidation extended to the regions. The Quirino administration, aware that regional and ethnic differences existed across the islands, encouraged Ilocanos, from the northern Luzon province of Ilocos, to settle and take advantage of "vast opportunities" in Mindanao in the south. The government sought to encourage Mindanao's "agricultural and economic advancement." The Quirino administration promoted "economic development" there, including "farming, fishing, weaving, and livestock breeding." The President also championed the idea that "technical men and brilliant minds" would help solve economic problems in resource-poor provinces such as Ilocos Sur.[20] To "promote community life," and to encourage the development of a "community spirit," the government also encouraged and supported individual homeownership by the ordinary Filipino and his family. This nationwide housing project extended from Baguio City in the North to Mindanao in the South.[21]

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[19] Manuel B. Salak Jr. "Quirino ends rural tour, due today," *The Manila Times,* April 29, 1952.

[20] "Go south, EQ tells Ilocanos, Issues call as he swears in Gov. Quirino," *The Manila Times,* January 3, 1952.

[21] "Asks capital to build more cheap homes, will return to Manila tonight-Phil-Am housing project is inaugurated," *The Manila Times,* March 27, 1952.

The government focused on regional community development in Mindanao. Addressing the local inhabitants in June 1952, Quirino argued that people in Mindanao did not work together to unite by themselves due to local "politics" and "partisan strifes." According to Quirino, this disunity resulted from "scheming peoples" and "clan-based hatreds." As a result, the local population "suffered," while development was "hampered." Direct intervention by the Filipino Executive and the Filipino military appeared necessary then. But even the government knew that intervention was a temporary solution. For the long term, Quirino placed emphasis on the need for "acquainting one's self with local conditions and local problems" in Mindanao. Quirino's advice for the local people was to ". . . Please forget political quarrels and work together."[22] The Third Republic believed that the nation- state building project would only be successful if familial, clan, tribal and geographical loyalties were transcended.

By 1953, Quirino was facing strong headwinds in his efforts to win a new presidential term. The incumbent knew that Magsaysay, and possibly Carlos Romulo, would be his rival for the post during the presidential election later that year. Quirino therefore realized that he needed all the domestic allies he could obtain. Quirino also made sure that his Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the *cacique* Joaquin Elizalde, kept US Embassy officials in Manila apprised of the political plans of the incumbent President. In conversations with Embassy officials, the secretary mentioned to officials that Quirino

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[22] "Mindanao folk told politics pins progress, Quirino, given warm welcome, says people should develop area," *The Manila Times,* June 12, 1952.

was looking forward to a smooth re-election campaign, where he expected to win easily over Magsaysay and Romulo. Quirino's envoy denied to US officials that the President intended to use "coercion," or "fraud", or to deploy the armed forces to assure his re-election that year.[23]

A report by the State Department's Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs stated that the biggest problem in the Philippines was the politics, due indirectly to the educational system that was a legacy of American colonial rule. Education was found to have bred interest in political affairs by Filipinos regardless of background, but it did little to raise the "poor" quality of Filipino political leadership, according to the Bureau report. The US Mutual Security Agency's task therefore was to encourage the Quirino government to ensure "free elections" in 1953, amid reports from "many sources" that the Quirino government intended to use "intimidation" to assure the incumbent's victory.[24]

One major concern was "cleanliness in politics." American observers thought that the Philippines needed to be encouraged to get into "good shape," and eventually learn to "wean [themselves] away from American aid." Filipinos have often been fond of

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[23] "President Quirino's Visit to the United States and Matters Relating to Philippine Political Situation," August 13, 1953, Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, Folder G-11 President Quirino, Box 002, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

[24] From C. Tyler Wood to Ronald Renne, "Report on Visit to the Philippines, October 19, November 4-10, 1952," Mutual Security Agency, Washington DC, Folder G-21 General Surveys of Conditions in the Philippines, Box 002, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

pointing to the strong relations Filipinos had enjoyed with Americans while fighting the Japanese during World War II. Filipinos often used this memory and legacy of cooperation as a reason to ask for more foreign military and economic aid from the United States. The 1952 US Mutual Security Agency report recommended further continuation of military aid to the Philippines, but was more hesitant to continue the previous scale of economic aid, due to the Quirino government's legacy of corruption and misuse.[25]

A *Manila Times* article dated January 1952 showed how Americans and Filipinos shared a common concern for the security situation in the islands. A shared objective was the "plugging of all loopholes of illegal arms and strategic war materials smuggling between the Philippines and communist territories." U.S. security aid to Filipinos was to be used for "new battalion combat teams to be organized to finish the dissident campaign in the country." Manila was also receiving reports of "banditry in Leyte," and the "illegal purchase of arms" across the countryside. Smuggling was rife between Borneo and the southern Philippines.[26] These all implied that a strong Filipino military would result in public order, as well as more effective consolidation by the Third Republic.

The government deployed military forces not only against Huks but against regional warlords. For instance, in 1952, the *Manila Times* reported on how the Manila-

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[25] "Report on Visit to the Philippines, October 19, November 4-10, 1952."

[26] Vicente F. Barranco, "US aid will finance six combat teams: President tells Duque to plug smuggle loopholes, backs plea for pensions," *The Manila Times*, January 24, 1952.

based government deployed 200 marines in the southern Sulu archipelago to stop the "outward" (of "firearms and of strategic war supplies") and the "inward" (of cigarettes and opium) flow of smuggling goods in the islands. Reports claimed that the arms shipped out of the Philippines were being received by "communist agents" outside the country. But with the sharp decline of the Huk rebellion after 1951, the newest challenge faced by the Third Republic was "political violence in the countryside." Before World War II, Filipino authorities working under the US Commonwealth strictly imposed "gun control," which did not exempt politicians. But after World War II, "provincial bosses obtained arms from the black market and formed private armies." Quirino knew that the local leaders "could deliver blocs of voters whose sum was often the margin of victory," which potentially provided electoral windfall in a close race in the upcoming presidential contest. [27] Quirino also knew that he needed to appeal to communities in the provinces for his re-election prospects, even if it meant deploying troops to vital regions to secure peace and maintain order. The Filipino military was also able to maintain its forces due to a better financial situation for Manila.[28] Electoral interests, the quest for security and order, and nation-state building did not necessarily contradict one another.

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[27] Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 379.

[28] The Filipino government made an oral request to the US Embassy and to the Joint US Military Advisory Group by invoking the previously signed 1951 US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty. This "special fund" of approximately $5,000,000.00 was to "support an increase in the troop strength of the Philippine Army and to purchase loose and un surrendered firearms." Other components of the aid money were to be used to maintain additional troops for another eighteen months. According to the report, "This increase will would bring certain battalion combat teams to full strength, and would establish, in accordance with NSC

Election of Magsaysay as President: From Manila to the Barrios

1953 was an election year. Defense Secretary Magsaysay knew that he enjoyed the advantage of having much stronger ties with the United States than incumbent President Quirino possessed.[29] Magsaysay also was aware that he enjoyed the support of the Filipino public. But Quirino pulled all the stops, using government resources and his personal patronage networks on the ground to attempt to secure re-election in 1953. Magsaysay's popularity was also boosted by the support of American media and military advisors--who promoted the populist slogan "Magsaysay is my guy," replete with a theme song, "Magsaysay Mambo," as the candidate toured the barrios-- overwhelmed

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84/2, a Philippine military force," that would be "restoring and maintaining internal security." The remainder of the money was to be spent on "buying up loose and un surrendered firearms" so that the communist Huks, still seen as an "existing threat to the internal security of the Philippines," would not have the ability to purchase these firearms. The problem for the Filipino government appeared to be that money was running low for the arms purchase program, which was said to have been historically effective in the past. William G. Foster to President Truman, "Mutual Defense Assistance," February 21, 1952, The Secretary of Defense, Washington, C.F. WHCF Confidential File, Folder-Mutual defense [program], [6 of 7], HSTLI.

[29] The previous year, in 1952, then Defense Minister Magsaysay was positively appraised by US officials. A memorandum described him as "having made remarkable progress in combating the Communist-led Huks and has wrested the offensive from them." The document credited Magsaysay with having offered more Filipino troops to be posted to Korea, aside from a Filipino combat battalion team already posted there. The report also mentioned that Magsaysay was a possible candidate for President of the Philippines during the 1953 Filipino presidential elections. Lastly, the report cautioned the United States from promoting Defense Minister Magsaysay too much at the expense of President Quirino. The US officials recommended "strengthening (Magsaysay's) hand," since the Defense Secretary was "largely responsible for the maintenance of law and order making possible honest elections in 1952. . ." But "by so doing he incurred the enmity of many politicians who, having suffered thereby are seeking means to secure his removal from office." John F. Simmons, Chief of Protocol, "Memorandum for Mr. Connelly," June 4, 1952, Folder- B File, Official File 1055, Papers of Harry S. Truman, HSTLI.

Quirino's extensive electoral machine. Magsaysay eventually won over Quirino with almost 70 percent of the total popular vote during the 1953 Filipino presidential election.[30] Much had been made regarding the American support for Magsaysay but the Defense Secretary also enjoyed mass support from sectors in Filipino society. Turnout was at an all-time high of 77.2% of registered voters across the islands.[31]

Magsaysay could have run as an independent, instead of under the *Nacionalista* Party, one of the two major political parties, and therefore been much less beholden to oligarchic interests, but the prospects for success amidst the patronage web of Filipino political culture would have been doubtful. Moreover, Magsaysay had to avoid being perceived as being too pro-American, particularly by fiery ultranationalists such as Claro Recto.[32] In Filipino politics, party labels did not matter much due to the social origins of the personalities involved. Members of the established parties also resisted the idea of ending corruption and of taking steps towards enacting land reform.[33] Magsaysay needed to walk a tightrope despite his vast popularity and good reputation.

Magsaysay would potentially have trouble moving his agenda forward unless he could navigate the intricacies of Filipino political culture--avoiding being labelled as

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[30] Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House Inc., 1989), 353.

[31] Hirofumi Ando, "Voting Turnout in the Philippines," *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, Volume 12, October 1969, 428.

[32] The Ambassador in the Philippines (Spruance) to the Department of State, Manila: March 22, 1954, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Volume 12, Part 2, East Asia and the Pacific (in two parts), Document 355. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v12p2/d341. Accessed last January 2016.

[33] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 245.

being seen either as an American puppet or as an incompetent leader. The oligarchy, if it sensed that the President did not reach out to its members, might provide a stumbling block to any new President's ability to push through sought-after reforms since Magsaysay would need the support of Congress to move forward the Executive branch's agenda. The President also knew that the battle to win the ordinary Filipino could only be won by tackling its root causes. This entailed addressing socio-economic ills such as "poverty, hunger, despair, economic and social stagnation."[34] Nation-state-building also could not be realized without the approval and the involvement vast majority of Filipinos who did not belong to the elite.

Magsaysay recollected his experiences to ordinary townsfolk while touring poverty-stricken barrios across the country. Magsaysay knew that Central Luzon was a breeding ground for the Huk rebellion not only through confidential state reports but through simple conversations with ordinary farmers during his provincial tours. A farmer whose name was Alavado, and who came from a small barrio in Central Luzon, told the Defense Secretary that in some towns, "there is no running water, no electricity, no hospital, not even a public high school . . . doctors practice only in the daytime because they are afraid they might get sick calls from Huks at night."[35]

The Defense Secretary believed that Manila must not be disconnected from the realities of Filipino life. Magsaysay had a "weekly [broad]cast called "Magsaysay

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[34] "Asks US aid Till PI Solvent, US Trip in Doubt; Will Seek Closer Ties with Asians," *The Manila Times*, November 13, 1953.

[35] "RM presses attack on rural neglect," *The Manila Times,* August 26, 1953.

calling Malacanan [the presidential palace]," where the Secretary reported from the field on the conditions he witnessed and the accounts he heard in the rural areas.[36] The "chat" transcript narrated how Filipinos in the barrios gave a full picture of local conditions. Magsaysay heard that residents tended to leave their communities due to government neglect. Residents in these *barrios* told Magsaysay and his entourage that the nearby city was monopolizing the flow of water from a local reservoir. As a result, many residents either had to walk several kilometers to the city, or to use local transportation to purchase water at expensive prices set by the city officials. A local resident, *sari-sari* store owner Constancio Bajas, had four dependents and a monthly income of 60 Philippine pesos. Bajas lamented that he had to come to the city to purchase "good drinking water" at 10 centavos per bucket. Bajas suggested to Magsayay that the solution to the water crisis was for the government to build artesian wells across the country. The store owner told Magsaysay that ". . . one artesian well in Lapasan [a town] would make 300 families happier, much more happy than a thousand reams of paper like [Manila's plans for] economic mobilization." Another resident, Julian Olango, a father of six, lamented to Magsaysay that the government's "educational assistance" was woefully inadequate. According to the carpenter, Olango, the local barrio folk had to "contribute from their own pockets to pay for the necessary repairs," so that ramshackle schoolhouses would be repaired and schoolchildren didn't have to "carry their own school benches to school." Many of the barrio residents, according to Magsaysay, were

[36] "RM presses attack on rural neglect."

concerned that the taxes collected, "for the education of the schoolchildren," were not being spent well. The Secretary added that:

> Most of the school buildings in the barrios are makeshift huts made of bamboo and grass. And it was not the government that built those traditional schoolhouses. It was the local PTAs which provided the material and the labor, and have been footing the yearly repair bills. Here the people do the job that the government should be doing.[37]

The rural folk also told the Defense Secretary that the Third Republic needed to get involved in the provision of services and infrastructure that would withstand adverse weather conditions during rainy season.[38] There may have been an element of Magsaysay playing as political candidate and campaigning to garner votes in the *barrios* in an election year. But these accounts of the local conditions were very revealing of the developmental gap between urban and rural settings.

Magsaysay also had tremendous faith in the Filipino military's ability to bridge gaps in Filipino society. The Defense Secretary believed that aside from suppressing the Huks and the warlords, the military could be transformed into an agent for national consolidation. As Defense Secretary since 1950, Magsaysay had sought to professionalize and organize the military. He also endeavored to "discipline" officers seen as corrupt, and sought to improve the military's performance and reputation.[39]

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[37] "RM presses attack on rural neglect."

[38] "RM presses attack on rural neglect."

[39] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 243.

Magsaysay later said that officers and enlisted men needed to keep in mind that they were "Filipinos first and soldiers second" in their duty to "safeguard" democracy.[40] Magsaysay believed that the Filipino military had a critical role to play in nation-state building.

Magsaysay in turn was well-regarded by the all-important officer class as the Defense Secretary made sure that the military's needs were met. As Defense Secretary, Magsaysay's trips around the country had made him familiar with the local rural, conditions across the islands. This contrasted sharply with Roxas and especially with Quirino, who gave speeches in front of assembled crowds in *barrios* and *poblaciones* around the archipelago while preaching national unity. The previous leaders were genuinely committed towards improving the lives of people through their policies but far less often mingled with the crowd or listened to the concerns of individuals and clans as compared to the simple and ordinary looking Magsaysay. Magsaysay was unique from the other politicians, in that the Secretary naturally appealed to the common folk but could also play good politics with the elites based in Manila.[41] In so many ways, Magsaysay was a bridge builder across Filipino society.

Magsaysay, the government troops, and the local governments, following Lt. Col. Lansdale's advice in the Central Luzon provinces, pursued a strategy to win local "hearts and minds" by providing for peasants' welfare. They speeded up court cases,

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[40] "Sees solons on budget for defense", says officers are Filipinos first, defines "militarism," *The Manila Times*, March 8, 1954.

[41]Renato Constantino, Letizia Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City: The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 243.

deployed army units to dig artesian water-wells and provided medical care for the poor. That Magsaysay often accompanied the troops at the frontlines of the guerilla conflict further earned him the troops' respect.[42] According to Magsaysay, the objective was not to enhance his personal reputation but to improve relations between the military and the civilian population.[43]

The government knew that development was a critical component of nation- state building. Drawing on Magsaysay's nationwide barrio tours, those who worked under him established rural health units and boosted the role of provincial agriculture in the rural nation-building project.[44] Magsaysay's programs also included the construction of "new roads, bridges, irrigation systems, community development projects, highway development, the construction of feeder and barrio roads that would link communities and rural areas to towns and markets, health centers, schoolhouses for Filipino children, new policies and laws on land tenure and land settlement," and a law to improve tenancy relations. Magsaysay also advocated food self-sufficiency.[45]

Magsaysay knew that the Philippines had a farm productivity problem. He declared in 1953 that the Philippines was "underdeveloped and badly developed," as its farms had failed to yield their full productive capacity, because "small farmers do not

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[42] Francia, *A History of the Philippines*, 207.

[43] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 243.

[44] "Scans budget problems of the gov't. Rural improvement plans eyed; pledges wise spending of dollar help," *The Manila Times*, November 21, 1953.

[45] "RM states rural policy, speaks at 36th Loyalty Day fete of UP aggie college," *The Manila Times*, October 11, 1953.

have titles to their lands," and that the current five-year program would take too long to address this. The Second World War and the Huk rebellion had also led to displaced rural farmers leaving the countryside for relatively safer but crowded cities. In Magsaysay's view, these farmers' productive labor needed to be attracted back to the fields, which would also resolve the problem of urban "squatters."[46] Rural and urban social problems were both connected.

The government also invested in the health sector. A *Manila Times* article of October 1953 lamented that the state of public health in the provinces was dismal. Diseases such as pulmonary tuberculosis, malaria, influenza, measles, beriberi, typhoid, diphtheria, and dysentery plagued the people. A lack of accessible hospitals compounded the problems, and contributed to a high child-mortality rate. For Magsaysay, a solution lay in attracting "medical graduates to the barrios, to establish medical centers in strategic and geographical places outside Manila, and building more postgraduate medical schools."[47] He knew that people in the barrios needed access to good medical care, even if the training centers and the most advanced medical facilities were to be found in the big cities.

Magsaysay knew that bringing Manila to every barrio home endeared him to the people. But all was not well in Manila. Conflict was brewing within Magsaysay's *Nacionalista* Party, especially between Magsaysay and the ultranationalists Claro M.

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[46] "RM states rural policy, speaks at 36th Loyalty Day fete of UP aggie college."

[47] "Mag assails health policy; Pledges more funds for dep't in major talk," *The Manila Times*, October 16, 1953.

Recto and Jose Laurel. Magsaysay enjoyed the support of Carlos Romulo, particularly in his policy on effectively suppressing the Huks.[48] And even after Magsaysay was sworn in to the presidency late in 1953, Magsaysay retained control over the Defense Ministry portfolio. Romulo, in a lecture tour across America, sought to shore up support for the new President. Romulo mentioned to the Americans he encountered that Magsaysay, unlike many others, was more immune to political pressures, because when Magsaysay held the Defense portfolio, Magsaysay knew how great the political pressures could potentially get.[49]

After taking office late in 1953, Magsaysay looked at expanding beyond his predecessor's vision of a "strong state," to a "strong people." The new President believed that "strong people are what a country needs today." In a graduation speech in April 1954 where Magsaysay spoke in the local Ilocano dialect, Magsaysay urged young graduates to help improve "barrio conditions," to prevent further "communist infiltration," since the war was being waged in "both the battlefield and the rice field." According to the new Filipino President, the war could not be conducted in an "orthodox way," and that there was "no time" to train formally the "teachers, doctors and health workers for the country's almost 20,000 barrios."[50]

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[48] "Call of General Romulo of the Philippines on Mr. Bonzal," Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, March 3, 1954, Folder- Carlos P. Romulo, Box 002, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

[49] "Call of General Romulo of the Philippines on Mr. Bonzal."

[50] "Nation needs strong people-Magsaysay," *The Manila Times*, April 7, 1954.

People in the barrios responded to the government's call for "community organization," and "self-help." A *Manila Times* article dated January 1954 documented how Filipino schoolteachers developed a "community school program through public schools." The account narrated that "hundreds of functioning, arguing, energetic community councils in the barrios," with the help of "selfless" teachers, taught "democracy" to Filipinos. The program stressed "group decisions, group planning and group effort," for "thousands" of projects. These projects involved reforestation programs, upgrading of livestock, the teaching of "interesting histories written in the vernacular," in provinces such as Iloilo in the central Visayan Islands, cooperative business enterprises, and garden and sanitation projects. What made the overall community school program effective was the emphasis on "greater flexibility in the creation of school curriculum so as to relate subject matter to community problems required.[51]" Community schools were a pioneer project in the barrios during the Magsaysay years.

The Filipino government had further ambitions to expand rural-based projects like community schools. The government promoted the "Philippine Community School movement" to neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan and Indonesia. The report applauded this regional vision, arguing that these experiments could "destroy any chance for mass support of Communism in Southeast Asia." The experiments also encouraged community councils and government agencies to "integrate" their activities in the islands. Even private civic organizations were urged to support government

[51] "Barrio folks band, find profit, security in it," *The Manila Times*, January 16, 1954.

agencies in these projects.[52] Apart from suppressing communism in the islands, these projects consolidated the big cities and the barrios. Government and ordinary townspeople worked locally and understood one another. Magsaysay evidently believed in starting small.

Many Peoples, One Nation: A New Nation-State Building Ideology

As President, Magsaysay articulated a straightforward philosophy of Filipino nationalism in early 1954. Magsaysay believed that a "strong nationalism" could only take root if it embodied the best of the Filipino people's "traditions, customs, ideals and aspirations to greatness." The new President attributed Filipino nationalism's evolution to the "native ancestries" present in the archipelago, and the colonial influences of the Spanish and the Americans. Magsaysay also lamented that many Filipinos had developed the habit of relying on America for "paternal protection and generosity." He implied that Filipinos could not make it on their own if they were unable to start small and from within. Magsaysay's speech also exhorted Filipinos to "express and broaden" their cultural heritage, which included taking pride in the Filipino people's "racial" talents, by which Magsaysay meant the multiracial Malayan, Spanish, Chinese, and

[52] An interesting exchange took place between Magsaysay and a wealthy Manila-based civic leader. The civic leader let Magsaysay know that he (the civic leader) "did not believe in people (other Filipinos)," while Magsaysay did. The man stated that Magsaysay was "willing to trust them to act as they should." But the man let the Filipino President know "that they must always be forced to do the right thing.," "Barrio folks band, find profit, security in it."

aboriginal heritage of the Filipinos.[53] Magsaysay believed that a multiracial and a multicultural Filipino nation possessed unique strengths that could be used effectively for the betterment of Filipino society, and the expression of Filipino indigenous agency overseas.

This new approach manifested itself in the issue of US bases in the islands. US-Filipino relations during the Magsaysay period have often been assumed by outsiders to be that of a Cold War superpower-Third World "client" state arrangement. But Americans knew that the Filipinos were becoming sensitive to US military deployments in the islands. According to a letter written by US Ambassador Raymond Spruance, "the Philippines is now an independent, sovereign country and should be treated as such." The ambassador disagreed with the other American policymakers regarding:

> United States officials (having) the authority to permit third-power aircraft unlimited right to overfly the Philippines [and] the United States Navy (having) the authority without reference to anyone else to bring into its bases here foreign public vessels-- a right which it does not possess with respect to naval stations in the United States.[54]

Spruance reminded American officials such as Philip Bonsal that "with respect to both third-power public vessels and aircraft, we are already, as you know, on record with the

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[53] "RM Urges Nationalism, Tells NU graduates that key to peace is faith in democratic processes," *The Manila Times*, March 22, 1954.

[54] From Raymond A. Spruance to Philip W. Bonsal, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, March 10, 1954, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Assistant Secretary, Department of State, Box 3202, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Decimal File 1950-54, NARA.

Philippine government contrariwise."[55] The United States was trying to be careful not to offend Filipino sensibilities since the Philippines was no longer an American colony but a treaty ally.

American officials observed that passions amongst Filipinos were beginning to run high, especially over the status of US bases in the islands. Ultranationalists such as Leon Maria Guerrero and Claro Recto argued that America was not treating the Philippines, as it did its other allies such as West Germany and Spain. The United States believed that Magsaysay could not support the US Navy's position without engendering "vicious attacks" from the Filipino ultranationalists. Spruance also advised the United States to prepare for a future time when a "less friendly government" would come to power in the islands.[56] State Department officials also believed that the United States needed to extract concessions from a friendly Filipino government under Magsaysay in a way that would not weaken Magsaysay's domestic position. But what Americans did not realize was that even Magsaysay was sympathetic to the Filipino nationalists' public stances and the public's outcry over the US bases. The debates over the bases was an issue which united all Filipinos.

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[55] From Raymond A. Spruance to Philip W. Bonsal, The Foreign Service of the United States of America.

[56] According to Spruance, "Article III of the Bases Agreement stated that (the American military operating in the Philippines were to be) given "all rights, power and authority we need which are necessary to provide access" to US forces." But Spruance feared that Guerrero and Recto might interpret this to mean that "As we have no certain means of identifying US planes, it is necessary for our protection and security that all planes approaching Clark Field come in along a designated corridor and at certain heights, such as by way of Subic or the Gulf of Lingayen." This would then potentially place more constraints on the scope and access through which the US Air Force could operate above the islands. From Raymond A. Spruance to Philip W. Bonsal, The Foreign Service of the United States of America, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs.

A major point of contention and of Filipino resentment was the American desire to expand its base operations to service increasing US military operations in Indochina. The Magsaysay administration and the Filipino public did not raise any strong objections to American requests until February 1954, when Eisenhower's Attorney General, Herbert Brownell, argued that the United States held legal title over the lands where the US bases were sitting on in the islands.[57] The official Filipino stance was to affirm the status quo "on the lease of the military bases," instead of the "outright sale to the United States government in order to safeguard the sovereignty of the Philippines" in the lands containing bases, training facilities and other installations.[58] Filipino officials knew that the public would not allow the return of US legal sovereignty over any part of the islands after independence in 1946.

The Philippines also participated in regional security and defense. A *Manila Times* article, dated August 1954, outlined the Filipino position regarding the emerging regional security arrangement that would be called the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The Philippines specifically "affirmed the right of free Asia nations to self-determination and [went] on record as [being] opposed to any form of

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[57] Progress Report on NSC 5413/1, "United States Policy Toward the Philippines," OCB Progress Report, August 11, 1954, in Nick Cullather (ed.), *Managing Nationalism: United States National Security Council Documents on the Philippines, 1953-1960* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992).

[58] "Stand Pat on Base Ownership, Form All-Party Body to Consult on SEATO; 'Point 4' Unrevealed," *Daily Mirror*, August 20, 1954.

imperialism in the region."[59] The Philippines was a founding member of SEATO, hosting the first conference in Manila on September 1954.

Security was a major issue in Filipino nation-state building. The Magsaysay administration knew that it could not build weapons and military transportation on its own. The government therefore sought to work with the US government for training, operational enhancement, and arms purchases. A "Philippine-American Council" was created, which involved exchanges between the US and the Filipino Departments of Defense, "for strengthening the Filipino armed forces." Manila also asked the United States for the sale of "destroyers, jet powered aircraft," and for "help to increase the size of Philippine ground forces to four divisions.[60]" These were felt to be especially urgent given the threat posed by the Chinese in the archipelago.

The Chinese-Filipinos: A Security Dilemma?

Efforts to consolidate the state extended to the Chinese-Filipinos in the islands. Quirino, staunchly anti-communist, proved conciliatory to the Chinese-Filipinos in the islands, due to his sympathies with Nationalist China. In an address which the Filipino President made to the "National Convention of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Manila," Quirino remarked to the delegates that that this:

[59] "Stand Pat on Base Ownership, Form All-Party Body to Consult on SEATO; 'Point 4' Unrevealed."
[60] "Recent Philippine Developments."

> community or individuals have identified themselves in the constructive work of building this nation . . . you have identified yourselves with us and these have borne fruit in the closer association and cooperation between the Chinese community and the government to such an extent that we now regard the Chinese community here almost not as a foreign element . . . You have identified that your life in this country has been made part and parcel of our own community lives. The Chinese permanent residents . . . have stayed long enough to be identified with us permanently and may be called Chinese-Filipinos.[61]

Quirino viewed the Chinese-Filipinos as potentially assimilable. The Chinese-Filipinos, who were widely viewed as "lawbreakers" by many in the islands, organized "civic enterprises." These included launching civic drives such as the "Peace Fund campaign," and the "Community Chest Drive," to cooperate with the Third Republic's commercial and economic activities.[62] The Third Republic recognized that the Chinese-Filipinos also possessed the financial resources to contribute to national economic development. But it was also true that the Chinese-Filipino communities needed to be monitored, due to their numbers and their potentially conflicted loyalties.

According to the scholar George Taylor in *The Philippines and the United States*, Filipinos were "concerned about the same old problems of the overwhelming economic influence of the Chinese and their potential threat to the national security." Taylor argued that security and economics were interrelated in the eyes of many Filipinos. Many of the Chinese-Filipinos in the islands were suspected by the Filipino authorities

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[61] "EQ urges Chinese to obey PI Laws," *The Manila Times*, December 2, 1952.

[62] "EQ urges Chinese to obey PI Laws."

of being "political agents" for Maoist China. The fear, as Taylor argued, was that communist Peking might "use the overseas Chinese for its own purposes," by appealing to transnational ethnic, historical and ideological linkages between the mainland and the overseas Chinese.[63]

Filipino nationalism had a strong anti-Chinese-- and anti-communist-- component. The Huk rebellion, coupled with the fall of mainland China to communism and the outbreak of a Korean War, fueled Filipino concerns. Many Filipinos remained suspicious of the Chinese-Filipino economic influence, which dated back to the Spanish and American colonial period. But many could not avoid dealing with the Chinese-Filipinos, whether in borrowing money, taking goods to market, or in buying large and small articles.[64] A *Manila Times* article mentioned how meat vendors such as Mrs. Florencia Sunga at the *Divisoria* general market in Manila complained about "Chinese middlemen . . . controlling the meat trade."[65]

Taylor argued that the dilemma with regards to the Chinese-Filipinos could also be traced back to the economic structure of the archipelago. The Filipino middle-class was small, relatively unsophisticated, and had to compete with Chinese-Filipinos and American businessmen operating in the islands.[66] Chinese-Filipino economic power was

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[63] George Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership* (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), 275.

[64] Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 129, 130.

[65] "RM revisits Divisoria", pays surprise call on vendors, recalls his days as a mechanic," *The Manila Times*, March 5, 1954.

[66] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 175.

widely viewed as potentially dangerous. After independence in 1946, the Filipino Congress enacted legislation against Chinese-Filipino access to the "mineral and natural resources" of the islands, as well as against Chinese-Filipino entry into Filipino professions. It was only a combination of US and Nationalist Chinese pressure which prevented the Filipino government under Roxas and Quirino from acting against Chinese-Filipino control of retail trade.[67] Government policies over control of retail trade was to change under Magsaysay.

Magsaysay was far less optimistic than his predecessors about Chinese contributions, viewing many of them as "overstayers" prone to local extortion. Magsaysay urged the Chinese-Filipinos to have "more courage and civic spirit," not to "take bribes," nor "yield to demands," promising the Chinese-Filipinos the full protection of the government.[68] Magsaysay's administration also stressed "morality." The Filipino President believed that the Chinese-Filipino community must "not be instrumental in the corruption of government personnel." Magsaysay also believed that there were "bad elements" in the Chinese-Filipino community that needed to be rooted out. [69]

But Magsaysay left the Chinese-Filipino community an opening to participate in Filipino life in the islands. Nick Cullather, in *Illusions of Influence*, documented how the

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[67] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 129, 130.

[68] "Told by RM not to "buy" extension, Sugar groups want representation in Bell Trade Mission," *The Manila Times*, July 16, 1954.

[69] "Asks aliens not to abet corruption, Sets standard of gov't morality in conference with Sino ambassador," *The Manila Times*, December 25, 1953.

Chinese-Filipino community donated money to the Filipino military to install artesian wells in many peasant barrios.[70] According to a *Manila Times* article, dated December 1953, the soon to be inaugurated President let the Chinese-Filipinos know that they needed to "extend their fullest cooperation in the task of nation-building . . . help in combatting bribery, extortion, illegal smuggling of aliens and guns, and tax evaders." Magsaysay also believed that "the Chinese . . . should consider it a duty to fulfill their financial obligations to the state in the matter of taxes." Magsaysay also sought out the help of the Nationalist Chinese (ROC) ambassador in helping out with the "bad Chinese" in the Philippines.[71] Many Filipinos remained suspicious of the Chinese-Filipinos, who for the most part had not assimilated into mainstream Filipino society, or had become full citizens. The rise of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) as the third largest communist party in the world, after the USSR and China, also led the Magsaysay government to become suspicious of Sukarno's leadership in Jakarta and the potential transnational influence of overseas Chinese communists across Southeast Asia.[72]

Filipinos used Cold War language for their nation-state-building objectives. According to the scholar Masuda Hajimu, in *Cold War Crucible*, the Filipino

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[70] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 102.

[71] "Asks aliens not to abet corruption, Sets standard of gov't morality in conference with Sino ambassador."

[72]Ang Cheng Guan, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory," in Christopher E. Goscha and Christopher E. Ostermann (ed.), *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Washington DC and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Press and Stanford University Press, 2009), 313.

government portrayed the communist Huks as Soviet and Chinese puppets.[73] This appropriation of Cold War language provided a fig leaf for the indigenous objective of promoting the Third Republic as the ultimate expression of and as the legitimate vehicle for Filipino nation-state building. The oligarchy, which owned land throughout the islands, feared that the Chinese-Filipinos would use their wealth to buy land and eventually to exercise political power across the country.[74] Elite Filipinos, particularly the oligarchs and the *caciques*, generally associated Chinese-Filipino economic power in the islands with the potential expansion of communism. Anti-Chinese-Filipino agitation also had an immigration dimension. There were local fears that the entry of more overseas Chinese in the islands potentially led to greater Chinese-Filipinos control over key sectors in the Filipino economy. There were also those, such as the aforementioned Committee on Un-Filipino Activities, who tied national loyalty with being "opposed" to "communist propaganda," believing in "God" and "morality," and fervent opposition to those working towards the "attainment of a classless society."[75] The resolution of Chinese-Filipino involvement in the Filipino economy and fear of communism were a source of unity for both elites and non-elite Filipinos alike.

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[73]Masuda Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 275.

[74] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 130.

[75] Hajimu, *Cold War Crucible*, 274, 275.

The nationalization by the government of retail trade in favor of Filipinos was widely interpreted in American reports as a move "aimed at the [local] Chinese."[76] The Retail Trade Naturalization law of 1954 stipulated that foreigners could not own land and excluded the Filipino-Chinese. Many Filipinos had feared that the Chinese-Filipinos would use their economic clout and the Filipino kinship system, since many Filipino Chinese had intermarried with other Filipinos, to acquire their own *haciendas*. Chinese-Filipino landownership meant holding the keys towards political power, which many elite and non-elite Filipinos were not willing to tolerate. One little-known facet of the 1953 presidential election was that Magsaysay and the *Nacionalista* Party had won their landslide victory in part by campaigning against potential Chinese-Filipino domination of economic and political life in the country, which the vast majority of Filipinos had conflated with communist infiltration of the islands. Magsaysay, like Quirino and the *Liberals*, was known for his dislike of Chinese-Filipino control of sectors in the economy such as retail trade, and campaigned for nationalization in favor of other Filipinos to prevent monopoly.[77] But even Magsaysay knew that he also needed to incorporate the Chinese-Filipinos into his nation-state building project. The Chinese-Filipinos had been very much a part of economic life in the islands for centuries.

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[76] From James D. Bell to Mr. Bonsal, "Recent Philippine Developments," August 12, 1954, Folder G-21-General Survey of Conditions in the Philippines, Box 002, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

[77] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 131.

Magsaysay, like many of his countrymen, was a staunch anti-communist, but still believed that it was possible to wean the Chinese-Filipinos away from collectivist influences and sympathies. Like Quirino, Magsaysay extended an olive branch to the sizable Chinese-Filipino community in Manila. He told the Chinese-Filipinos in Manila that they could show their loyalty to the Filipino state by "uniting in the struggle against communism," through exposing communists amongst members of their own community. Magsaysay reassured the Chinese-Filipinos that the Third Republic would not harm Chinese-Filipino interests as the government's objective was to "provide employment and a decent standard of living for all." Magsaysay also believed that the Chinese-Filipino community had the potential to contribute to the Filipino economy. But Magsaysay also did not view the Chinese as full-fledged "Filipino" citizens, at least until the Chinese-Filipinos could purge communist influence within their communities that might be harmful to the Filipino nation-state project. Magsaysay argued that differences between Chinese-Filipinos and the other Filipinos could only be resolved when the Chinese-Filipinos found ways to suppress the "misbehavior" of a "small faction" within their community.[78] In the same way that Magsaysay suppressed the peasant-based Huk uprising, the President evidently hoped that any possible danger of communist influences and sympathies emanating from members of Filipino society, such as the Chinese-Filipinos, needed to be rooted out. It did not appear to matter to Magsaysay whether the state, the elite, the non-elite Filipinos, or even the Filipino-Chinese

[78] "PI Chinese Asked to Fight Redism," *Daily Mirror*, March 26, 1954.

themselves were to be the ones suppressing communism-- but Magsaysay believed that it needed to be done for the sake of the national unity.

Conclusion

By the mid-1950s, the Filipino economy was showing signs of good health. Quirino's earlier "import and exchange controls" resulted in economic improvement. Local manufacturing flourished under Magsaysay. International events, such as Japan's recovery and the Korean War, stimulated overseas Filipino exports of timber, sugar, and coconut. The government, to raise further money, imposed higher taxes on both foreign and private corporations operating in the country. This was seen as a sign of growing economic nationalism and protectionism. Magsaysay also inherited a budget surplus of 655 million pesos, which had not been enjoyed by the Filipino economy since 1946. But many Filipinos remained discontented by their share in the country's economy.[79] The debates over Filipino nation-state building during the 1950s were evidently tied up with an evolving national identity, an ongoing process after independence in 1946.

There were also two different strains of "nationalisms" that existed in the archipelago during the Third Republic. Elite-centric nationalism saw nation-state building in terms of using instruments of state power, the preservation of entrenched interests, and gathering Filipinos together, but with state structures as the locus of power. What characterized elite nationalism was its emphasis on institutions, as well as national

[79] Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005), 178.

and local leaders as the main agents for unifying the nation-state. Non-elite Filipino nationalism, which tended to be more grassroots-oriented and inclusive, sought to integrate the urban and the rural. Non-elite nationalism also concerned itself with the self-improvement of, and the well-being of all Filipinos. Non-elite Filipinos, who comprised the vast majority, expressed themselves, participated in public life, worked with others, and voluntarily contributed their energies towards nation-state building. The non-elite Filipinos recognized that they and the elite Filipinos shared a common vision, a common identity and common interests, as seen with issues such as development, the threat of communism, economics, trade, and the presence of US bases in the archipelago. Both strains of nationalism also sought to unify all Filipinos even if the means they employed varied. But the end result they envisioned was the same. Assuming that it was only American power or a revolutionary class struggle would foster indigenous nationalism is to misread the expressions of indigenous agencies in the archipelago from multiple Filipino perspectives.

Magsaysay's Third Republic played a key, visible role in unifying and reconciling all these forms and expressions of indigenous Filipino agency. The Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos, despite suspicions directed towards them, began to see themselves as stakeholders in the Filipino nation-state building project, unlike under Spanish, American, Japanese, then briefly again American colonial rule. By the mid-1950s, Filipino nation-state building was at an advanced stage. The state was busily building bridges and consolidating linkages between the urban and the rural, across ethnic groups, and between the elites and the non-elites across the islands, with anti-communism as a

unifying glue. New actors from the grassroots were also beginning to play roles. In all these, Magsaysay played an outsized role in promoting these forms of unity.

Magsaysay embodied the more inclusive, non-elite strain of Filipino nationalism, even as he enjoyed huge support from elite Filipinos. The Filipino press gave Magsaysay glowing reviews as President, from the very beginning of his term. But A *Manila Times* article of November 1953 painted him in a more realistic light. In the article, the Filipino President was depicted as wanting to make democracy work "in a Far Eastern setting," but also conceded that there were "deep-seated problems" such as "land distribution, unemployment, trade and investment." Magsaysay knew that drastic reforms were needed but the President knew that he could not afford to alienate any sector of Filipino society. Magsaysay knew that he would need broad-based support to pursue his objectives in achieving a united Filipino nation and in pursuing the Republic's goals.[80]

Magsaysay valued his linkages with the United States, from which he knew he could obtain much needed support, money, aid, advices, expertise and technical assistance. But Magsaysay was a Filipino, first and foremost. Magsaysay knew that many ultranationalists were bitterly opposed to continued American involvement, even in security matters. *Time* correspondent John Osborne reflected American policy-makers concerns when he stated that should something like Claro Recto's views prevail in the islands, Filipino foreign policy could turn "uneasily neutralist," as opposed to a

[80] "Business Week lauds Mag election," *The Manila Times*, November 24, 1953.

"firm alliance," should Magsaysay continue to prevail.[81] But Recto's views did not appear to have fertile soil in Filipino nation-making.

Americans possessed the tendency to view any local anti-communist strongman, such as Magsaysay, as a suitable Cold War ally. US policymakers also often misread the difference between American objectives and Filipino objectives. Magsaysay initiated campaigns to ruthlessly crush the Huk rebellion, but he was very much in favor of reintegrating the ex-Huks as fellow Filipinos who would participate in nation-state building. Magsaysay also possessed a keen insight, unlike Roxas or Quirino, into the plight of non-elite Filipinos and saw the necessity of looking at the root causes of agrarian unrest that gave rise to the earlier Huk rebellion in central Luzon.[82] Painting Magsaysay as an American puppet, as Constantino *et al* do, mischaracterizes the critical role which Magsaysay played in Filipino nation-state making.

Magsaysay also knew that the adept use of government power, which encouraged volunteerism, the harnessing of the productive energies of members of the communities across the islands, and a message of multi-sectoral inclusiveness, was effective for all Filipinos in the long run. Magsaysay knew that these measures were a much stronger antidote to any unrest such as the Huk insurgency than any ruthless, military-oriented pacification campaigns, such as under Quirino, or any informal deals made with local leaders and warlords, such as under Roxas. Magsaysay's methods were unconventional, as he sought to circumvent the urban-based elite Filipinos, and brought his candidacy

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[81] Karnow, *In Our Image*, 354, 355.

[82] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 99.

and personality directly to the rural *barrios*. Magsaysay also cultivated non-elite technocrats and military officers. While Magsaysay detested the Huks and the Filipino-Chinese, he knew that these sectors also needed to be treated like the other Filipinos for the nation-state building project to become successful. Magsaysay's campaign in the countryside also enabled the Third Republic to define itself as the collective popular expression of Filipino nationalisms. Magsaysay was willing to use state power and his popular appeal to encourage grassroots involvement in pursuing the goal of unity.

The challenge of building a united Filipino nation entailed the transcendence of personal, familial, clan, tribal, ethnic partisan, organizational, and ideological interests. As the islands progressed into the mid-1950s, the sources of nationalism that served to unify (and divide) would increasingly become more heated and more pointed. These would be true over issues such as Afro-Asian unity, US bases, trade treaties, agitation directed at foreign control over sectors of the national economy, and the separation of Church and State in debates over the school curriculum. With Magsaysay at the helm, Filipino nation-making efforts would reach a culminating stage.

CHAPTER 5

ONE NATION, ONE PEOPLE, UNDIVIDED: THE AGE OF MAGSAYSAY, 1953-1957

"To know what we want to be as a nation, we need only ask ourselves what we want to be as individuals."[1] -Ramon Magsaysay

Magsaysay and the Filipinos have often been viewed as passive, dependent puppets of American power in the midst of a Cold War between two superpowers, which had just spread to Asia. Scholars such as Stanley Karnow focused on nation- state building during the Magsaysay years as a successful joint US and Filipino project, with Filipinos subscribing to the American perspective. Others such as Renato Constantino treated the period as an exclusive product of collaboration between elite Filipinos and the United States, superficially focusing on the heavy involvement of the CIA and ignoring the participation of other members of Filipino society in nation-making. Often lost in the mists was the evidence that Filipinos by this period were a rapidly uniting nation of individuals and groups, with their own visions, missions, and agendas. Filipinos were anti-communist not because they were a Cold War satellite of the United States but because Filipino society in the islands had a natural aversion to collectivism.

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[1] "RM urges nationalism, Tells NU graduates that key to peace is faith in democratic processes," *The Manila Times*, March 22, 1954.

This chapter argues that US anticommunism led many outsiders to overlook Filipino anticommunism. The islands' anti-communism, critical to the consolidation of government in the barrios and the integration of various ethnicities such as the Filipino-Chinese and the aboriginal tribes, was left out of many outsiders' narratives of life in the islands. Undetected by Cold War-obsessed decision-makers and policymakers in Washington DC and in the US embassy in Manila, Filipinos all over the islands were busily making a nation-state and expressing indigenous agency. This was true even if American and Filipino objectives dovetailed at times due to shared interests.

The Magsaysay era saw a renaissance in indigenous Filipino nation-making, both internationally and domestically. Filipinos expressed indigenous agency overseas, through participation in regional security organizations such as SEATO and by espousing opposition to all kinds of colonialism (including communism) at the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference in 1955. Contentious debates over trade agreements such as the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1954, and Filipino sovereignty over US bases also showed common issues that united all Filipinos across society. Filipino culture was also changing by the 1950s. New textbooks were required to promote patriotism amongst school children. These also sparked contentious disputes over the separation of church and state. Tagalog, the national language, became more widely used in society as another potential source of unity. A plurality of Filipino voices and indigenous modes of expressing agency existed, where none was previously assumed to be.

The intense "nation-making" period of the 1950s sparked an impulse for political reform. Magsaysay, at the outset, enjoyed the support from a broad range of groups,

including the "professional military officers, the CIA, the Catholic Church, professional associations, anticommunist labor and peasant organizations." Magsaysay knew that Filipinos were looking for a reform-minded figure who could get things done, that the so-called non-elite professional class was staunchly anti-communist, and that the public had hoped for "clean and honest government." Magsaysay was personally popular and could draw upon American support. His *Nacionalista* party also controlled the majority of both houses in the Filipino Congress.[2] That Magsaysay himself switched parties, from *Liberal* to *Nacionalista* to run against Quirino, did not presage any departure from the Filipino two-party political system since personalities and factions mattered more than formal structures like these parties.[3]

Even a reformer like Magsaysay knew how to play the political game. Under Magsaysay, the Filipino military, and the National Movement for Free Elections

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[2] State reform extended from laws passed dealing with executive power, management of the state budget, and a five-year economic development plan that would generate jobs. He also provided government assistance to farmers through the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD), which worked together with other government agencies such as the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Philippine Rural Improvement Society (PRIS). Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005), 179, 181.

[3] On this, scholars on the Philippines generally agree that political parties in the Philippines were just vehicles for political ambition by individuals. Whether one belonged to the *Liberal* or the *Nacionalista* party, the leaders and members of those parties possessed similar beliefs. See William Pomeroy, *The Philippines: Colonialism, Collaboration and Resistance* (New York: International Publishers, 1992), 208. For a more thorough explanation of how family, patron-client networks and patron-client relationships played a role in Filipino elections and in politics, see Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contested Meaning of elections in the Philippines," in R.H. Taylor, *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1996), 136-163.

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(NAMFREL) safeguarded the ballot and prevented voter fraud during the 1951 parliamentary elections and the 1953 presidential elections. These institutions were well-regarded by the Filipino public.[4] According to Karnow, in *In Our Image*, Magsaysay governed as a "strongman of the people." Magsaysay espoused a presidency that genuinely cared for the well-being of ordinary folk.[5] What made the Filipino President useful to the nation-state making project was not just his charisma or his connections with the United States; it was his ability to build bridges and establish connections where there were none previously.

Seeking competent people with sound policies, Magsaysay placed business executives in charge of economic projects. The President appointed non-elite technocrats and military officers to government posts in education, public health, and road construction in the countryside. Magsaysay-appointed military officials were put in charge of the Bureau of Customs and of Mindanao resettlement programs.[6] Magsaysay

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[4] Kerkvliet's article entitled the "Contested Meaning of elections in the Philippines," argued that "NAMFREL may have served some Americans' interests, but also articulated the concerns of tens of thousands of Filipinos. Kerkvliet, "Contested Meaning of Elections in the Philippines," in Taylor, *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia*, 155.

[5] Ordinary Filipino citizens were encouraged to air out their grievances by wiring a designated Palace official, Manuel Manahan, at a rate of one Philippine peso a telegram. Manahan's office received 30,000 complaints from Filipino peasants, who wanted to express their grievances. This helped contribute to Magsaysay having won over the peasants to his side over the Huks. Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House Inc., 1989), 353, 354.

[6] Alfred McCoy, *Policing America's Empire: The United States, the Philippines and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 383; Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 179.

was also greatly helped by the participation of non-elite volunteers. For instance, to support Magsaysay's quest to build more artesian wells in the barrios, a group of "public minded citizens" formed what they called the "Liberty Wells." This project resulted in the construction of thousands of new artesian wells within two years. [7] Magsaysay knew that to complete the nation-making project, the state needed to make itself felt not only in the big cities, but also in the countryside.

The government encouraged people in the rural areas, sending government workers and community leaders to the barrios. Magsaysay used state power to circumvent local leaders since he thought that the local bosses and the landed elite were not effective in nation-state building.[8] State laws promulgated between 1955 and 1963 devolved power to local *barrio* councils as "official organs of local government," and promoted local autonomy and local self-reliance. These barrio councils taxed, collected license fees, and enacted local laws in their areas. The Magsaysay administration also established the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD), a "unified state agency," under veteran community organizer Ramon Binamira, to promote local initiative. As far as the PACD was concerned, barrio councils promoted democracy and community living, since people were encouraged to pursue their own self-interest.[9]

The PACD's mission was to promote "self-help." People in the barrios voluntarily contributed their energies towards the building of artesian wells and feeder

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[7] Carlos P. Romulo and Marvin Gray, *The Magsaysay Story* (New York: The John Day Company, 1956), 260, 261.

[8] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society*, 181.

[9] Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 111, 113, 114.

roads. Their labor complemented government-provided funds, technical services, and equipment. The PACD-- a lasting Magsaysay legacy-- sought to circumvent, and replace whenever possible, the traditional networks controlled by local leaders on one end, and by congressmen in the capital on the other.[10]

A *Manila Times* report of July 1955 showed that these rural programs were implemented extensively. There were 18,000 to 20,000 barrio workers who were trained to "guide and assist rural communities in self-development." These workers were among "the first multi-service rural reconstruction workers" to receive training through the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), which was among the first non-governmental organizations to operate in the islands.[11] An example was in the town of San Luis. According to the Executive Director of the project there, these workers were "little Magsaysays . . . getting people to work more, produce more, and save more, so that they would become better producers, better businessmen and better citizens, stomach full, mind clear and heart loyal to democracy." These barrio workers were with the people all day and all night, working on what needed "fixing," and did not mind the "risks involved." This town held symbolic value; San Luis was former Huk chief Luis Taruc's hometown, and was now the site of a "social laboratory, where mass education techniques, old and new, of this and other lands, were being tested and developed for later nationwide application." The PRRM worked as a "subsidiary" to government

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[10] Amando Doronila, *The State, Economic Transformation, and Political Change in the Philippines, 1946-1972* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992), 132.

[11] "RM wants more workers, Bares plan to train 20 thousand during San Luis folk's visit," *The Manila Times*, July 17, 1955.

agencies such as the PACD to "mobilize" the rural constituents, and to "promote rural democracy."[12]

Community development did not just consolidate the state. It opened the eyes of many urbanites to the challenges of democracy amidst rural life.[13] A *Bataan Magazine* article, dated August 1956, observed that "many Philippine towns are isolated, and a farmer may have to walk twenty miles or more with a 100-pound sack of coffee on his back to take his product to the black market." The magazine believed that a national road network would help to relieve this isolation, and Manila sought the help of US aid missions to achieve this end.[14]

Many rural folk saw the central government as a source of redress for local concerns involving patronage and corruption. In one of Magsaysay's sorties, local councilors, who were representing a district with many fishponds, sought an audience with the Filipino leader. According to the councilors, small fishermen were encountering difficulties in "earning their daily subsistence." This was because small businessmen, who were well-connected, had secured government permits allowing them to control the operations of "almost all the fishing grounds." The councilors representing the small fishermen told the President directly that the fishermen needed help from the Department of Agriculture, since these rural fisher-folk lacked the connections that elite

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[12] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 181.

[13] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 115.

[14] "President Magsaysay cites Needs of Filipinos," *Bataan Magazine*, August 1956, 5, Folder-Philippines, Harry S. Truman Library and Institute.

Filipinos possessed. Magsaysay sympathized, believing that if the thousands of small fishermen were denied their livelihood, the specter of another communist uprising was never too far-fetched.[15] Government thus sought to alleviate the condition of the fishermen by "cancelling outright all permits to establish fishponds and salt beds in the shore areas," and made these disputed areas open to "free enterprise of the sea-folk."[16] Magsaysay knew that rural discontent, which led to the rise and the spread of the Huks, was linked to issues such as corruption and livelihood. Government listened to the voices of ordinary Filipinos.

Magsaysay's administration pushed for Filipino unity. In a flying trip to Naga City in early 1956, the President said that if Filipinos would "forget their political animosities and banded together" with the government, economic and agricultural projects could be realized. Magsaysay expressed this appeal in Tagalog, saying that with the elections over, "it was imperative that the leaders and the people irrespective of political persuasions should put their shoulders together in pushing the country towards progress." Magsaysay further believed that the government "should indulge in less politics," according to the *Manila Times* article.[17] The state encouraged officials to settle

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[15] "2 Bulacan Men complain: Tells President of plight of small fishermen," *The Manila Times,* June 22, 1955.

[16] Magsaysay actually had sent a directive last June 21st which cancelled the permits of big fishponds in Bulacan province. This was done after the fishermen had let the President known that the order had not been implemented well. "RM acts to protect Bulacan fishermen, Cancels fishpond permits, opens sea resources in the area," *The Manila Times,* July 9, 1955.

[17] "Makes plea at induction of Trivino, Says all should now help carry out plans for rural improvement," *The Manila Times,* January 3, 1956.

disputes and to focus on solving the city's problems. The objective was "good and efficient government."[18] The *Bataan Magazine* article also described Magsaysay's natural gift as a communicator. The President self-deprecatingly joked that while he was not reading technical and complicated "economic treatises," he knew that the Filipino economy was similar to a "*sari-sari store,"* as he had run one himself when he was young.[19]

Magsaysay used his charisma and his presidential powers to directly intervene in local affairs. For instance, a contract between the government-owned National Development Company (NDC) and with landowners in Mindanao for cotton planting was deemed "inadequate" by the latter. The landowning settlers argued that they were having trouble making a living, since tenants working their land had to pay debts to the government. Magsaysay sought out these landowners to listen to their grievances. One of the settlers, an old hand named Brigido Geronimo, mentioned that he owned 10 hectares for cotton cultivation, with a contract under the NDC. Geronimo said that his lease with the government only gave him 10 pesos per hectare. The landowners' profit was not enough, in his eyes, to "improve his living." For Magsaysay, as reported by the *Manila Times*, the solution to Geronimo's dilemma was to change the contract "in such a

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[18] "RM pleads for unity among city officials," *The Manila Times*, January 2, 1956.

[19] Apparently, Magsaysay valued competent people around him. The President sought to appoint in his administration "the best economic minds in the country," and those who possessed "down to earth ideas" who apparently shared his inclinations in bridging the gap between the elite and the non-elite Filipinos. "Official Report: President Magsaysay's Economic Development Program," July 1956, 5, *Bataan Magazine*, Folder-Philippines, HSTLI.

way that after the tenant had paid his debts" to the NDC, "what remained of the amount should be given to the landowner as his profit."[20] In many such cases, government arbitration had become necessary to get things done at the local level. Exposure to the field exposed the limits of nation- state building from the top, since locals saw and experienced problems far more vividly than the view from ventilated offices in Manila.[21]

According to Immerwahr, the Filipino state found that building the nation through communities actually "worked," and that the solution lay in "encouraging bonds" amongst the people. This finding was observed by the government in its training programs for the barrio workers who worked in these rural communities. These workers, alongside the PACD, shifted emphasis away from "technical skills" such as soil analysis, animal husbandry, or agricultural economics. Instead, they focused on more generalist approaches that stressed sustaining "social harmony" through "group dynamics, rural sociology, and community organizing." These barrio workers used a novel tactic through the use of "T-groups," discussion groups that were without any particular theme but the ultimate goal of which was to foster and illustrate various forms of cooperation, instill familiarity and comradeship-- critical facets of Filipino culture. Immerwahr also cited

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[20] "RM clears obstructions, Visit to Mindanao cotton project bares roadblocks to program," *The Manila Times*, January 15, 1956.

[21] This was especially meant for the coming school year, when 1,000 new students have enrolled. In the northern Philippines, ten regional governors launched promotional projects such as "model barrios," which exhibited the improvement programs sponsored by the national and the local governments. The Confederation of Professional Organizations, composed of "various technical groups" across the archipelago, sought to work with the state by offering technical expertise in various fields to benefit the administration. "Sulu settlement farms for outlaws planned," *The Manila Times*, February 15, 1955.

PACD chief Ramon Binamira, who said that their on-the-ground training ultimately helped leaders recognize the magnitude of local concerns, as these community workers interacted daily with ordinary Filipino families. These experiences made the workers determined to solve problems in their localities.[22] Hence, the July 1955 *Manila Times* article was very revealing of the Third Republic's visions and objectives when the article referred to the phenomenon of "little Magsaysays" across the islands.

Indigenous Agency Expressed through Foreign Relations

Diplomacy presented another opportunity to express Filipino indigenous agency, through international alliances and through participation in regional conferences. Scholars such as H.W. Brands, in *Bound to Empire*, noted that "Washington and Manila have never got along better than during the years of the Magsaysay administration."[23] But an American National Security Policy Statement NSC 5413/1, dated April 1954, showed that Magsaysay also expressed interest in promoting closer diplomatic relations with other Asian countries. The Filipino President believed that there needed to be "Asian non-communist unity."[24]

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[22] Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, 116, 117.

[23] According to Brands in *Bound to Empire*, ". . . In foreign affairs, the Philippine government consistently supported American initiatives, from the Manila pact through the Taiwan Strait crisis and the Bandung Conference and other lesser issues . . ." H.W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 265.

[24] NSC Policy Statement, NSC 5413/1, April 5, 1954, in Nick Cullather (ed.), *Managing Nationalism: United States National Security Council Documents on the Philippines, 1953-1960* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1992), 17.

Magsaysay's Philippines hosted the founding conference of SEATO partly in pursuit of that unity.[25] The organization's mission was to maintain "peace" in the region, albeit, by working with the United States.[26] The Philippines under Magsaysay also participated in the April 1955 Bandung Conference, sending a delegation led by Carlos Romulo. But Third World leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru of India saw Romulo as a mouthpiece for American-led international Cold War security alliances, such as SEATO.[27] Romulo, for his part, knew that Washington was apprehensive about the upcoming conference. According to the scholar Robert McMahon, in *Limits of Empire*, in the run-up to the Bandung Conference, the United States had feared that the rise of the Third World as a united force ultimately benefited Soviet interests by taking advantage of Asian (and African) resentments against the potential return of "colonial domination and economic dependence."[28] But Romulo persuaded American officials that if the United States were to "block the Afro-Asian Conference . . . it would cause huge embarrassment" for America and backfire to "the benefit of the Communists." According to the US Department of State, Romulo therefore argued that it would be best for countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, and Pakistan to participate in the

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[25]Amy Blitz, *The Contested State: American Foreign Policy and Regime Change in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2000), 97.

[26] Virgil Pinkley, "Magsaysay: An Appraisal, American editor-publisher, recent visitor, lists his impressions of the President," *The Manila Times*, March 20, 1956.

[27] Augusto Espiritu, "To Carry Water on Both Shoulders": Carlos P. Romulo, American Empire, and the Meanings of Bandung, *Radical Historical Review*, Issue 95 (Spring 2006), 176.

[28] Robert McMahon, *Limits of Empire: The United States and Southeast Asia Since World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 73.

Conference, so as to ”resist Communist attacks,” and to effectively counteract “allegations that Nehru and the other neutralist” leaders might make.[29]

At the same time, Romulo believed that Filipinos needed to join emerging articulations of African and of Asian voices. Romulo argued that the Philippines needed to participate in the upcoming Bandung conference. According to Romulo, “the mere decision to hold that meeting was a Communist victory,” and might attract new states to that side. If the “anti-Communist” countries did not attend, Romulo feared, this would “represent a further defeat for the anti-Communist nations.”[30] Romulo knew that even if the US and the Philippines both had an aversion to communism, Filipinos, being Asians, possessed common ground with the other conference participants.

Romulo let U.S. officials know that “Asian nationalism is going to continue its growth, and that the only way to prevent it from being perverted is to have friendly Asians present at such Asian meetings.” Otherwise, “extremists” could “obtain a wide audience for their views.” Romulo argued to the American officials before Bandung that the conference was ultimately a good thing, since it “is (was) a second step towards developing nationalism and anti-colonialism in Asia which is completely hopeless to try

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[29] Charles F. Baldwin, “Subject-1. Revision of the Philippine Trade Act, 2. Afro-Asian Conference, 3. Pacific Charter, 4. Restrictive Philippine Legislation, Department of State- Memorandum of Conversation, January 7, 1955, “Limited Official Use,” Folder G-7, Carlos P. Romulo, Box 002, Record Group no.59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

[30] James Bell, Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, “Views of Romulo on Afro-Asian Conference and Pacific Pact,” January 3, 1955, Folder G-7, Carlos P. Romulo, Box 002, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Officer of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files 1948-1957, NARA.

and eliminate." The Filipino diplomat also suggested to the United States that the best course of action that would be beneficial to the anti-communist cause was to "make the voice of the more moderate Asians heard."[31] Filipinos also knew that the United States wanted to maintain its credibility as an anti-colonial power with the new nations of Asia and Africa.

During his opening speech at Bandung, Romulo expressed his reflections that Filipinos shared "historical elements" with other Asian countries, such as the experience of "subjection" by a foreign power, and belonging "to a group of poor, less economically developed countries with relatively low standards of living." In Romulo's eyes, moreover, these newly independent countries shared an "abhorrence" of any form of imperialism, whether by the West or by the Communists. In Romulo's view, the colored peoples, of which the Philippines was a part, needed to articulate their collective voices together.[32] Romulo further argued that "white supremacy" had always been central to "all the versions of Western colonialism," and that racism served "as a driving force in the development of the nationalist movements in our many lands."[33]

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[31] Bell, "Views of Romulo on Afro-Asian Conference and Pacific Pact."

[32] The renowned African-American author Richard Wright, who served as a private observer during the Bandung, even described the country as "linked to the West by treaties, and to Asia by what fear of the future would bring." Espiritu, "To Carry Water on Both Shoulders:" Carlos P. Romulo, American Empire, and the Meanings of Bandung," *Radical History Review*, 179, 180; Jeffrey J. Folks, "Last Call to the West": Richard Wright's The Color Curtain, *South Atlantic Review*, Vol. 59, no. 4 (November 1994), 77.

[33] Interestingly, Romulo referred to Jim Crow in the US, and apartheid in South Africa as the "albatross" that hung in many necks. Nevertheless, Romulo also noted that there was some goodwill in the United States as a result of the *Brown vs Board of Education* decision in 1954. Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold*

Augusto Espiritu's article demonstrated that Romulo knew that Filipinos needed to express that they could speak for the "anticommunist alliance," and also show that African and Asian unity could be a powerful global force. Filipinos, often mistakenly seen by outsiders as heavily Westernized Asians, wanted to dispel the notion that the Philippines was simply an American puppet and therefore actively pursued an agenda of preventing the spread of communism in the Third World.[34] According to Romulo, the conference organizers believed in fighting colonialism, and obtaining political freedom, "racial equality," and "peaceful economic growth."[35] Romulo admonished afterwards that the United States needed to avoid branding Asian and African nationalist movements as "communistic," whenever these countries did not appear to conform to American interests.[36] Romulo also tackled and responded to the criticism that the Philippines was a "stooge" of the United States:

War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 95.

[34] According to Espiritu, in Romulo's work "I Walked with Heroes," Romulo criticized the United States for "preaching freedom and human rights," but had supported colonial powers such as the French in Indochina, among other things. Romulo also questioned American "reliability," since the United States had preferred to invest "billions of dollars" in Europe but only a little in Africa and in Asia. This was despite Filipinos fighting with the United States against the Japanese during World War II, as far as Filipinos were concerned. Lastly, Romulo also criticized the United States for its sense of superiority, owing to its nuclear weapons and its status as a superpower. According to Romulo, America used these forms of power to press smaller nations to adopt "US-style democracy." Espiritu, "To Carry Water on Both Shoulders:" Carlos P. Romulo, American Empire, and the Meanings of Bandung," *Radical History Review*, 183, 184, 185.

[35] Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 23.

[36] Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung*, 46, 47.

> To turn towards Asia for friends and allies is a natural impulse, in the view of Filipino nationalists, and the more success the Philippines has in building up its relations with Asian countries, the more valuable it will be, so it claims, both as a friend of the United States and as a potential bridge to Asia . . .[37]

A *Bataan Magazine* article, written in 1956, narrated how Bandung also captured Magsaysay's views on Filipino participation in the spread of Asian nationalisms during the President's term. Magsaysay stated that the Filipino role was to play the "free world in Asia." The three considerations guiding Filipino foreign policy included "national security," "economic stability," and "political and cultural relations with the free world."[38]

Magsaysay also revealed his desire for the Philippines to take an active role in Third World leadership. The Filipino leader said that many countries in the Third World tended to "view the present world tension as the result of competition between two power blocs-- one headed by the United States of America and the other the Soviet Union." Magsaysay argued that Filipinos held a "different view of the situation"-- that:

> first, we do not view communism as just another world force to be satiated with territory and gold. We have learned from our communist Hukbalahap revolution that communism is not just some distorted nationalist ambition . . . to be satisfied with land or riches, but an

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[37] George E. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership* (New York and London: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1964), 255, 256.

[38] Diosdado M. Yap, "Program and Policy of President Magsaysay," *Bataan Magazine*, December 1956, 5, 6, HSTLI.

> unremitting universal campaign to rule the earth, to eradicate individual liberty, to destroy God and the souls of men.[39]

Magsaysay viewed Filipino participation at Bandung in a highly positive light. In the President's Third State of the Nation address in January 23, 1956, Magsaysay said that "We have strengthened our friendship with other free countries. In the Bandung Conference, we forged closer ties with Asian and African nations and effectively collaborated with them [these countries] in achieving unity. "[40]

Meanwhile, Washington's fears about Bandung proved unfounded. Historian Jason Parker described how Bandung, instead of being used by the communists to their advantage against the United States, emerged as a "Western win" thanks to anti-communist non-Western participants such as the Philippines. Filipinos criticized American support for the European colonial empires, but they also conflated European colonialism with Communist colonialism, arguing that they are one and the same.[41] Filipinos actively participated in Bandung not because they were acting as American agents, but as an international expression of their indigenous agency.

Magsaysay was viewed very well overseas. A *Manila Times* article of March 1955 showed that the charismatic President was viewed more favorably than any other

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[39] "Program and Policy of President Magsaysay."

[40] "Address of His Excellency, Ramon Magsaysay, President of the Philippines, to the Congress on the State of the Nation," January 23, 1956, *Official Gazette*, http://www.gov.ph/1956/01/23/ramon-magsaysay-third-state-of-the-nation-address-january-23-1956/, Accessed last August 15, 2016.

[41] Jason Parker, *Hearts, Minds, Voices: US Cold War Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 86, 87.

head of state in the American press. Clippings were compiled by the US-based "Philippine Association," which "kept a running check on the state of editorial opinion on the Philippines in the United States." This outfit was a "civic organization which conducts a campaign in the US to build confidence in the Philippines."[42] Americans viewed Magsaysay very favorably, although they expressed concern that other *Nacionalista* leaders around the Filipino leader were seeking to reduce cooperation with the United States to establish that the Philippines was "truly independent."[43]

An American editor, Virgil Pinkley, sought out Magsaysay and toured the country with him. The President mentioned to the American writer that "everything can be accomplished in a democracy through constitutional means that can be achieved under a dictatorship or through communism and without loss of human rights and dignities or a revolution. "[44] Magsaysay also believed that to attain economic development, a leader must be "fanatically honest," and his administration must "strike vigorously" against graft and corruption.[45] Pinkley wrote that Magsaysay knew that Filipino "national economic strength must be built from the base up . . . Our (Filipino) present economy is agrarian and 75% of our people derive their livelihood from agrarian

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[42] The findings further indicated that 200 editorials from Europe during the past year all viewed Magsaysay favorably. Also, coverage of the Huks dropped from 85 percent coverage to just 0.1 percent by 1954, indicating that the Huk threat to the islands has since passed. "US paper commend RM: President gets more favorable news than any other state exec," *The Manila Times*, March 10, 1955.

[43] Operations Coordinating Board, National Security Council, "US Policy towards the Philippines," April 5, 1954, LOC, 1.

[44] Pinkley, "Magsaysay: An Appraisal."

[45] Pinkley, "Magsaysay: An Appraisal."

activities." This, in the eyes of the Filipino President, was "the broad base that must be modernized and strengthened to support a sound program of industrialization."[46]

American appraisals of Magsaysay, both in government and in the press, tended toward the positive. A 1954 US National Security Council report took stock of Magsaysay's achievements. The report found that his administration had improved the "status of the peasant," and had undertaken steps to raise "political morality." The report also described his appointments as a motley mixture of those with "political backing," reformists, and "capable administrators."[47]

In a 1955 interview with *Bataan Magazine*, Magsaysay described the US-Filipino relationship as a "partnership in the building of democracy-- democracy in the broadest sense and on a world scale." Magsaysay believed that this produced a society where the "the interests and the welfare of the individual" would be the primary concern of the government. Magsaysay believed in the ideal of a "world community," where each nation, regardless of its size and material strength, possessed "a voice and acknowledged rights." For Magsaysay, the global struggle was over the challenge by "communist imperialism," which sought "a world of Red colonies," and posed a threat not only to the American but to the Filipino ways of life. Internally, the problem was communist agents embedded in society; externally, the problem was communist "threats

[46] Pinkley, "Magsaysay: An Appraisal."

[47] "US Policy towards the Philippines," 22.

and aggressions." This, Magsaysay believed, was "the common problem facing all Asians."[48]

There were disagreements. Filipinos were becoming discontented with the current state of their trade agreement with the US.[49] Many ultranationalist Filipino leaders had long resented the Parity Rights clause in the Bell Trade Act, which conferred equal advantages to Americans and Filipinos in the ownership, exploitation, and use of Filipino resources in the islands. Well into the mid-1950s, as high as two-thirds of Filipino exports from the islands flowed to the United States. Copra and sugar, which together comprised half of the islands' dollar revenues, were sold at artificially high prices in the American market. American consumers were also said to have been subsidizing the "sugar barons" in the islands. Increasing tariffs imposed by the United States since 1946 on Filipino exports to the United States would have done away with this form of subsidy. What the barons wanted Laurel and the delegation to do was to find a way to obtain a "longer period of free trade for Philippine exports." Filipino industrialists on the other hand, wanted Laurel to "eliminate free trade for US imports," since 69% of the Filipino imports came from the United States. Filipino manufacturers preferred "tariff walls, in addition to import controls already restricting the flow of American goods." Magsaysay was said to have supported the industrialists' view. The President believed that supporting Filipino industry would help speed up the transition

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[48] President Ramon Magsaysay, "An Analysis: The Philippine-American Relations," *Bataan Magazi*ne, July-August 1955, 7, 8, Folder-Philippines, HSTLI.

[49] "Progress Report on United States Policy Towards the Philippines," 2, 3, 4.

from a predominantly agricultural economy in the islands to an industrial one. Industrialization would helpfully lead to the "development of an indigenous market." [50] Magsaysay therefore sought to press for revisions to the Bell Trade Act of 1946, which was due to expire in 1954. The government sent a Philippine Economic Survey Mission team to Washington, D.C. to renegotiate. Jose Laurel served as Magsaysay's chief representative in the Filipino delegation to the American capital.[51] The other members of the delegation included "Cuaderno, furniture manufacturer Gil Puyat, Lorenzo Sumulong and other sugar-bloc Liberals, as well as many "old guard" Nacionalistas."[52]

Laurel wrote Magsaysay from Washington, explaining his strategy in dealing with the Americans. According to the chief representative, Filipinos must cater to those sympathetic to Filipinos in the US Congress. Laurel prescribed that the Filipino delegation must avoid getting entangled with lobby groups in Capitol Hill.[53] In the course of the negotiations, Laurel pressed for more free trade and for American investment in the islands, mindful of the factions who lobbied him and his delegation before departing for Washington, D.C. But it was important in Laurel's view to connect the issue of free trade with Filipino independence. For Laurel, "parity rights" was a very contentious matter. US Ambassador Spruance also asked Laurel whether the Philippines

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[50] Nick Cullather, *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 145, 146.

[51] Blitz, *The Contested State*, 96.

[52] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 253.

[53] Blitz, *The Contested State*, 96.

would rather have special trade relations with the United States or "be divorced and to receive most favored nation treatment."[54]

The American negotiators knew that these trade talks were a very sensitive topic for the already-inflamed Filipino nationalists. Washington wanted to strengthen Magsaysay's government, when the Americans agreed to more "liberal trade concessions" for Filipino industrialists and commodity exporters, to help aid Filipino economic objectives. Tariff autonomy would ideally have helped Magsaysay raise more money, and would enable the islands not to rely too much on foreign aid. The Philippines also pursued industrialization in the mid-1950s to help generate jobs for a growing population.[55] Filipino negotiators were looking for a better deal that would benefit elite and non-elite Filipinos alike. The negotiators knew that they had the high card, knowing that the islands' strategic value to U.S. Cold War security arrangements. The Filipino delegation was well aware that "the Philippines was an important link in [the U.S.] security system." The Filipino negotiators raised the specter of a Philippines that "weakens internally," which would also weaken American security if the United States continued to act obstinately for the sake of a few trade advantages.[56] A compromise was in the offing.

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[54] Other issues that were tackled included more war damages payments, interest on Filipino gold stored in the United States which dated back before World War II, money for Filipino veterans who enlisted in the US army during World War II, and help from the United States in obtaining reparations payments from Japan. Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 263.

[55] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 146.

[56] Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 145, 146, 147.

The Filipino negotiators won many concessions from the American officials in Washington. Laurel obtained decelerated rates for "Filipino exports subjected to American tariffs" and accelerated rates "at which American exports to the Philippines would be subject to Philippine imposts." These arrangements ultimately benefited producers in the islands, making the mission a Filipino success. In the eyes of Magsaysay and his team, the mission's outcome was big achievement for Filipino nationalism. Magsaysay described the aftermath as having accomplished a goal that was "most necessary and vital to the future of our country."[57] The resultant Laurel-Langley Agreement demonstrated that Filipinos used their connections with the United States to exact more favorable trade deals for their people. Laurel-Langley also helped defuse nationalist agitation against perceptions of foreign involvement and influence in the islands.

There were, however, other issues. The foremost related to US bases-- a source of continued friction. The 1947 Military Bases Agreement had guaranteed a permanent US military presence in the archipelago, upon Filipino invitation. But there were many questions surrounding control of the territory where the US bases were located.[58] From

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[57] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 263, 264.

[58] The questions ranged from "the nature of the American jurisdiction over Filipinos on the bases," "the nature of Philippine jurisdiction over Americans off the bases," "the flag that should fly above the installations," the nature of the compensation which the United States should "provide for the use of Philippine land and waters," whether the money given should be called "compensation or rent," Manila's "right to alter the bases agreement" should it decide that the presence of the US bases were no longer in their best interests, whether "the 1947 pact was accepted by the Philippine government under duress," and

the standpoint of the Americans, the United States "retained sovereignty over the bases" from the moment legal ownership of the rest of the archipelago was transferred to the Philippine government on July 4, 1946. For Americans, it did not matter whether they had the actual paper title of ownership or not. The Pentagon was especially enthusiastic in supporting this view since it allowed American authorities to have greater control over the bases in the islands. Brands, in *Bound to Empire*, argued that for Filipino nationalists, which American estimates at this time included "the entire population," Americans were acting like "imperialists" whenever Filipinos got "arrested, or wounded or killed" in the baselands located in the islands, regardless of pre-existing arrangements. Having recognized that these issues touched a nerve amongst the inhabitants in the islands across all sectors of Filipino society, Eisenhower thereafter conceded that Filipinos could keep the title of ownership of the land.[59] American officials more acquainted with conditions on the ground in the islands and who had interactions with Filipinos knew that their Filipino hosts were not completely satisfied with the arrangements. According to a US National Security Council Progress Report dated April 1955, the United States foresaw many political problems in dealing with Filipinos. These included the recommendation that Americans must attempt to allocate "additional land for military bases" with the Filipino authorities in ways that would not lead to "undesirable political repercussion" for US interests in the islands. The two sides came

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whether Washington should, "from a political, rather than legal standpoint," "stonewall on terms" if the Filipinos were to demand revisions to the original 1947 bases treaty. Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 271.

[59] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 271.

to a settlement, wherein Filipinos agreed that Americans needed not obtain title for the expanded baselands to continue their operations in those areas.[60] But many American officials, according to Brands, continued to view the Philippines as a "small nation" while the United States was one of the two superpowers astride the world.[61] These would put strains on the relationship between the former colonizer and the now-independent nation-state.

US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited the Philippines in 1956 to meet with President Magsaysay. In the meeting, Magsaysay explained to Dulles the scope of the challenges facing the country. A pressing concern by many Filipinos was the "unimpressive amount" of American foreign aid money, compared to what was being received by the other US allies. Magsaysay argued to Dulles that the Filipino President was "in a defensive position with my own people," which suggested implications for American standing in the eyes of the other Asian allies.[62] In a letter which Dulles addressed directly to Magsaysay after the meeting, Dulles expressed his appreciation for the friendship between the two countries, which Magsaysay was said to have "exemplified." The letter acknowledged Magsaysay's priority of using foreign aid money for rural economic development. The Dulles letter sought to answer Filipino

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[60] The Operations Coordinating Board, "National Security Council Progress Report On United States Policy Towards the Philippines," April 21, 1955, 3, 4, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

[61] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 271, 272.

[62] Ramon Magsaysay to His Excellency John Foster Dulles, untitled, March 15, 1956, Folder B6, Philippine Attitudes towards the United States, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs. Office of the Officer in Charge of Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

questions indirectly on how military and economic aid was dispensed, to dispel Filipino doubts about how U.S. aid money was going to other countries. Dulles stated in his letter that American money:

> is not dispensed on the basis of friendship . . . both because friendship does not lend itself to measurement in terms of dollars and cents, and also because our program does not represent a desire to be generous and give away presents. Rather it is a willingness to do what seems necessary to assist those countries which are endangered and which cannot do what you and I would want them to do unless we help them.[63]

The Dulles letter to Magsaysay explained that Korea, Taiwan and Indochina received the bulk of US foreign aid as compared to the Philippines and many Latin American countries in the Western hemisphere, because these places were not in any imminent danger of falling to communists.[64] The aftermath of the meeting did not go too well, with Dulles adopting a patronizing attitude towards Filipino concerns. Magsaysay, his rivals whispered afterward, listened too much to the "cheap politicians" around him, and that "the Philippines could get a lot more out of the United States if only Magsaysay would play a different game."[65]

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[63] John Foster Dulles to His Excellency, Ramon Magsaysay, untitled, April 25, 1956, Folder B6, Philippine Attitudes towards the United States, Box 1, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs. Office of the Officer in Charge of Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

[64] John Foster Dulles to His Excellency, Ramon Magsaysay, untitled, April 25, 1956.

[65] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 274.

The state of the US-Filipino relationship continued to deteriorate over the inability of both parties to resolve the issue of the status of the US bases in the islands. Magsaysay also had to intervene with American officials, to have the military checkpoints in the areas surrounding the bases removed. Also, in 1956, when a United States Air Force plane made an emergency landing at the Manila International Airport. American soldiers surrounded the plane, stopped Filipinos from getting near it and smashed the cameras of Filipino journalists.[66] What raised the ire of many Filipinos was not the landing so much as the perception that the American military police had treated the newsmen and photographers so rudely.[67] Filipino discontent was therefore beginning to sour at the American military presence and operations in the islands.

There were many other controversies involving the base areas during the mid-1950s. Many locals were never comfortable that American authorities administered nearby Olongapo town and its 20,000 inhabitants. In 1956, an incident took place involving Filipino miners near Clark Air Force Base, where American authorities challenged the right of Filipino miners to "quarry and transport manganese ore," in what many American authorities claimed was "part of a military reservation." The Filipinos argued that the American military had set up a checkpoint without the approval of local Filipino authorities, which Filipinos had to pass through to get to the mines. Moreover, the Filipino miners had to deal with what they argued were obsolete American legal

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[66] Jose Laurel, "Jurisdiction in American Bases in the Philippines," *Bataan Magazine*, January 1957, 6, 7, Folder- Philippines, HSTLI.

[67] Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 273.

claims dating back to the early 1900s. According to the ultranationalist Claro Recto, who served as counsel for the miners, Filipino sovereignty must be upheld in favor of the miners.[68] This issue came to a head in 1956 when Magsaysay sent Vice President Garcia to press the US government to allow Filipino miners to operate within the reservations. [69]

Other issues involved US military personnel in the base areas. In January 1956, a US seaman, George Roe, was accused of "driving recklessly," which was said to have caused physical injuries to a local Filipino man. According to the 1947 Military Bases Agreement, seaman Roe was supposed to be placed under Filipino jurisdiction. Instead, the American seaman was transferred to the United States mainland and subsequently discharged. The Filipino foreign office filed a note of protest to the US Embassy. There was outrage amongst Filipinos. The Filipino press also took up the issue of "pilfering," where, over the course of 10 years, 20 local Filipinos were killed while scavenging for bombs that US planes dropped at the gunnery range in the base areas, during the course of training.[70] The Filipinos demanded that the Americans "return unused base areas," that a joint US-Filipino defense council be created, that Filipino laws were to be applied within US bases, and that a "definite assurance of automatic United States retaliation in the event of an attack on the Philippines," mutually agreed upon by the 1951 US-Filipino Mutual Defense Treaty, but Filipinos wanted to ensure ironclad American commitment. Meanwhile, the negotiations between Filipinos and Americans over this issue appeared

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[68] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 236.

[69] "Tells Garcia to seek US permission, visits Tarlac deposit; Veep confers on case today with US officials," *Manila Times*, April 2, 1956.

[70] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 236, 237.

fruitless, George Taylor argued in *The Philippines and the United States*, partly due to Filipino negotiators being professional politicians while the US negotiators, except for Ambassador Albert Nufer, were military representatives. Filipino representatives therefore did not wish to be seen to their domestic constituents as compromising with the Americans.[71] The mid-1950s was a time when passions ran high in the islands.

Magsaysay's team met with the American negotiating team led by the former US Undersecretary of the Army Karl Bendetsen to go over the issues surrounding the American bases in the islands. The meeting was unsuccessful, with Bendetsen (as well as State and Defense officials such as Dulles and acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Radford) unwilling to compromise on the contentious issue of "criminal jurisdiction" over Americans on the US bases. Negotiations were postponed until after the November 1957 presidential election. The US Air Force and the US Navy ended up making "informal arrangements" with the Filipino army and thereafter provided funds to make Philippine airfields longer for American military use.[72] US Vice

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[71] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 237, 238.

[72] Karl Bendetsen, a former undersecretary of the army, was sent by Washington to Manila, with instructions to "bend over backwards" to satisfy Filipino demands. Washington had been attempting to negotiate with the Filipinos over the issue of the legal ownership of the base lands during the past, but to no avail. Magsaysay's demand was that the United States disavow the Brownell Memorandum of 1954, issued by US Attorney General Herbert Brownell and which previously claimed US ownership and jurisdiction over the bases. The main issue of the Filipinos was American recognition of Filipino sovereignty over the bases, with Filipino laws covering areas such as "taxation, customs, immigration, water, mineral, and timber resources, and criminal offenses . . ." The last was said to have been very contentious for American negotiators since they feared that compromise with the Filipinos would have implications for how other countries with the same base arrangements *vis a vis* the United States would

President Richard Nixon finally brought the matter to a close on July 4, 1956, conceding that the United States was willing to recognize Filipino sovereignty "over all Philippine territory," including the US bases.[73]

In the eyes of Jose Laurel and many Filipinos, America needed to understand that the islands were no longer American soil, including the US bases. The American bases had become a focal point for Filipino unity during the mid-1950s. For instance, Jose Laurel stated:

> The establishment of foreign military bases in any country is a serious matter, indeed, and except for the English base in Ceylon, the elimination of which is now being sought, there is no foreign base in Southeast Asia except in the Philippines. To the extent that a portion of a nation's territory is yielded, its territory is seriously impaired. It becomes a target of attack and its power to declare war is rendered illusory. Despite these inherent dangers however, we agreed to seal our fate with the United States.[74]

Laurel also studied the external security treaties into which the Third Republic had entered. Laurel described the period when the 1947 Philippine- US Military Bases Agreement would be in force as "unusually long," as it covered 99 years, though this was later reduced in 1966 under Ferdinand Marcos to 25 years and thus came to be set to expire in 1991. Laurel also said that many of the provisions were "fundamentally

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use a potential compromise with the Filipinos as a precedent to do said same. Cullather, *Illusions of Influence*, 150.

[73] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 243.

[74] Laurel, "Jurisdiction in American Bases in the Philippines," 7.

unfair," even in exchange for American "financial aid."[75] According to Laurel, many Filipinos had expressed their resentment with the US forces in the base areas during the past decade over issues such as local Filipinos being mistaken as intruders when venturing near the bases, people accidentally being run over by American vehicles, American base personnel committing property damage, and Filipino citizens expelled from the American bases for any reason. Laurel also recommended trying the errant American soldiers "as the result of a fair and judicial trial by their countrymen [who would be fellow Americans] but upon the administrative recommendation in which alien civilians, Chinese [Chinese-Filipinos], for example could sit as members."[76]

The Filipino Congress took up the "question of [Filipino] jurisdiction" over the US bases. The legislators expressed their collective stance that Filipino authorities must be allowed to enforce local laws in all US bases in the islands. The Filipino Congress declared that any violator, "irrespective of the citizenship," must be "triable in Philippine courts." The collective statement by the Filipino congressmen stressed that even if the American government was leasing the bases under a binding treaty, these lands were still part of Filipino territory. Filipinos also held "title to the lands on which these bases have

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[75] Laurel compared the Filipino base agreements with the United States with those agreements which other governments and organizations had entered into with the United States. Laurel noted the American "Agreement with Spain," which was to last for 10 years, and to be extended twice "by mutual consent." The US agreement with NATO, including ones with Germany and with Italy, was to last for 20 years, and which included a provision that, after 10 years, "any signatory can ask for a revision." The security agreement between the United States and Japan was said to have been temporary, "and was to expire whenever America and Japan agreed that international peace and security in the Japan area are satisfactorily maintained." Laurel, "Jurisdiction in American Bases in the Philippines," 6.

[76] Laurel, "Jurisdiction in American Bases in the Philippines," 5, 6, 7.

been situated." Therefore, according to the declaration, there was no "question of doubt as to who really owned them." The Filipino politicians knew that the US-Filipino defense relationship benefited Filipinos. The collective statement recognized the American right to "exercise jurisdiction over violations of its own laws by members of its armed forces within the bases." But the Filipino Congress also contended that the Philippines must have jurisdiction over American military personnel who "violated both American and Philippine laws."[77]

According to the scholar George Taylor, the disputes over the US bases formed part of the core debates over Filipino identity, Filipino nationalism and the place of the country in the world. Many Filipinos, Taylor argued, were "thinking about their national pride and the way other Asians view them as Oriental Americans."[78] Part of the upsurge in Filipino nationalism was due to a general perception amongst Filipinos that the country was relying too much on the United States. This view was summed up by Filipino Congressman Jose J. Roy, who, in 1956, declared that there were too many US technical advisers in the Philippines. Roy believed that Filipinos would need to expand their relationships beyond the United States to countries such as West Germany to help train local Filipinos "in the right fields," for domestic and national development. [79]

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[77] Laurel, "Jurisdiction in American Bases in the Philippines," 7.

[78] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 240, 241.

[79] "Re-examination of US Economic Aid program by Philippine Congress," Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, September 24, 1956, Folder D-16, Aid Programs-General, Box 1 Record Group no. 59 General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs, Office of the Officer in Charge for Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, NARA.

Promoting the Filipino

By the 1950s, state policies increasingly reflected concern over Chinese-Filipino dominance in the retail trade sector of the islands' economy. During the early 1950s, the Chinese-Filipinos only consisted of 1% of the population but controlled the retail and the wholesale trades, due to Spanish and Chinese-Filipino *mestizo* control of commercial agriculture since the 1800s.[80] With the passing of the Retail Trade Nationalization Act in 1954 by the *Nacionalista* Party-controlled Filipino Congress, retail trade was restricted to Filipinos. Those seen as "aliens"—aimed at the Chinese-Filipinos, but which also covered Americans and other foreigners-- were given 10 years to disengage from their businesses. This congressional measure was aimed at preventing the Chinese-Filipinos, among other foreigners, from amassing too much economic power in the islands. The Retail Trade Nationalization Bill was appealing to non-Chinese Filipinos, since local entrepreneurs resented domination of key sectors by the Chinese-Filipinos.[81] Filipino share in industry therefore expanded. In 1949, Filipino capital only held 55% of investments in start-up enterprises, with the Chinese-Filipino share at 37 percent, and with the American share at 5 percent. But by 1961, the Filipino share rose to 88 percent, the Chinese-Filipino share was relegated to 10 percent, while the American share dropped to below 2 percent. The Chinese-Filipino presence in the Filipino economy was reduced everywhere within a decade, except in the manufacturing industry.[82]

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[80] Doronila, *The State, Economic Transformation . . .* , 71.

[81] Doronila, *The State, Economic Transformation . . .* , 71, 72.

[82] Doronila, *The State, Economic Transformation . . .* , 72, 73.

Taylor argued that the Filipinos in 1958 also knew that for the nation-state-building project to be successful, they also needed absorb the Chinese-Filipinos into mainstream Filipino society. But the government also saw that the majority Filipinos also needed to attain "economic leadership and control," so that the majority would not resent and/or fear the Chinese-Filipinos. [83] Magsaysay believed that he had to reduce the an economic and social presence seen as "alien" by many. It was also just as true that the Chinese-Filipinos were "unwilling to give up their traditional culture," with an estimate of over 200 Chinese schools in the islands, where Chinese-Filipino families sent their children, during the late 1950s. The non-resident "overstaying" Chinese also presented a legal and security headache in the islands. But the government was making it difficult for the Chinese in the islands to obtain Filipino citizenship. The specter of the Chinese-Filipinos in the Philippines maintaining their power in sectors like retail trade, while refusing to assimilate and who were suspected of having communist sympathies, was a major challenge for nation-state building.[84] *Nacionalista* politicians such as Magsaysay and Laurel therefore used the state as the bridge between the other Filipinos and the Filipino-Chinese, and to encourage the Chinese-Filipinos to conform with the state and with the other members of society. This therefore did not mean that the Chinese-Filipinos in the islands were completely controlled or that they could not be useful. For instance, to halt rapidly rising consumer prices, Magsaysay appealed to the Chinese-Filipino press in the islands to ask the readers to cooperate with the government's price

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[83] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 276.

[84] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 276.

controls.[85] The Third Republic also established formal diplomatic relations with the Nationalist Republic of China to minimize the potential influence of communists within the Chinese-Filipino community.[86]

The state's promotion of Filipino economic nationalism encouraged Filipino production. The government appealed to all Filipinos to "buy products manufactured by Filipino brains and brawn" as a sign of "patriotic duty." For Magsaysay, such acts helped "foster the spirit of nationalism" amongst the people. Magsaysay wore Filipino-made shoes, which he described as "good as foreign ones," and believed that national industry needed to produce what was "essential" and "what the nation needs."[87] Magsaysay led the sartorial way by popularizing the use of the *Barong Tagalog*, which used to be worn by non-elites in the islands.[88]

Magsaysay's government also took into account the welfare of "non-Christian tribes" in central Luzon. The *Manila Times* published an article in April 1956, which described how the government embarked on schoolhouse construction, artesian well-digging, the setting up of health centers, the provision of work animals and farming implements for tribesmen, and agricultural instruction for "better farming techniques" in

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[85] Jose L. Guevara, "Packaging firms suffer dollar cut," *The Manila Times*, February 1, 1956.

[86] Ang Cheng Guan, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory," in Christopher E. Goscha and Christopher E. Ostermann (ed.), *Connecting Histories: Decolonization and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, 1945-1962* (Washington DC and Stanford: Woodrow Wilson Press and Stanford University Press, 2009), 313.

[87] "Buy PI-made goods, Mag'say urges nation," *The Manila Times*, February 24, 1956.

[88] Mina Roces, "Gender, Nation and the Politics of Dress in Twentieth Century Philippines," in Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (ed.), *The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2007, 2010), 30.

the region. Christian aid groups who worked with the government also helped distribute hundreds of blankets to the Negrito tribesmen.[89] Manila provided the local Negritos with *carabaos* to "till their fields," and established agricultural schools in the neighboring barrios. Government also constructed a major highway to connect the Central Luzon provinces.[90]

Magsaysay also believed in promoting local initiative. In 1956, the President supported "granting greater autonomy to provincial executives," since he believed that the "decentralization of powers and responsibilities . . . would be conducive to a more effective implementation of the rural development programs." The regional governors were receptive to the President's message, but the governors argued with the central government for greater control over local constabulary forces. The local governors agreed that the devolution of power from Manila to the provinces would lead to a "more effective collection of taxes, just and practical application of public works funds, and pork barrel funds (for local projects)," with less red tape and less government intervention in local affairs. One example of local initiative was an agreement between Surigao province in Mindanao Island and the government of West Germany for the latter to send expert scientists to process special molybdenum ores.[91] Regional autonomy thus contributed, however counterintuitively, to state and nation-building.

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[89] "RM assures aid for tribesmen," March 22, 1956.

[90] "Tells Garcia to seek US permission, visits Tarlac deposit; Veep confers on case today with US officials," *The Manila Times,* April 2, 1956.

[91] "Governors seek more autonomy," *Daily Mirror,* April 20, 1956.

Education and the Tagalog Language

Building a Filipino nation-state also involved investing in public education. The Magsaysay administration increased government funding for public schools across the country.[92] Debates opened up over revisions to the Filipino public school curriculum. But revising the educational curriculum meant going up against the Catholic Church. According to Constantino and the other scholars of the neo-colonial school, the extent of the Catholic Church's influence on the state was evident under Magsaysay. Magsaysay was heavily backed by the Catholic Church. When choosing cabinet members after his election as President in 1953, Magsaysay even reserved the position of Education Secretary for a candidate, Pastor Endencia, who was recommended by the archbishop. Endencia's successor, College of Law Dean Gregorio Hernandez, was similarly backed by the Catholic hierarchy. The Church not only had a presence in education but in politics, even fielding political candidates during elections.[93] Roxas and Quirino were Protestant Christians, while Magsaysay was a Roman Catholic, which may have accounted for the enthusiastic support he received among the Church hierarchy.[94] According to William Pomeroy, the Church was afraid of nationalism in the islands, since the hierarchy feared the independent religious movements that might take root, and

[92] "Governors seek more autonomy."

[93] Renato Constantino, Letizia Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past* (Quezon City: The Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1978), 296.

[94] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 160.

church-held lands and estates that might be endangered. The Church therefore directed its affiliated lay organizations to "actively work" for the Magsaysay administration.[95]

The politician Claro Recto believed in instilling a sense of history and of nationalism amongst young Filipinos. He therefore sought reforms of the educational curriculum and pushed through the controversial "Noli-Fili" Rizal Bill in 1956. This bill made the two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Reign of Greed), written by the patriot Jose Rizal, required reading in Filipino schools. This was despite opposition from the Church hierarchy.[96] The Filipino Catholic Church argued that "the bill would violate freedom of conscience and religion." The Church therefore used its pulpits to issue pastoral letters telling Catholic Filipinos to express their opposition to the bill. The Church threatened to "close Catholic schools" across the country. Recto believed that government should nationalize all schools in the islands to ensure that students would be required to read the two novels as part of their educational curriculum.[97] The Bill eventually passed due to a substitute measure made by other

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[95] Pomeroy, *The Philippines: Colonialism, Collaboration and Resistance!*, 206.

[96] Henry L. T. Koren, Counselor of Embassy for Political Affairs, American Embassy, Manila, to the Department of State, Washington, "Recto Makes Speech on Separation of Church and State," Foreign Service Despatch, 796.00/3-2558, Folder 796.00/1-2058, Box no. 4015, Record Group no. 59, 1955-1959, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal File, NARA.

[97] An arm of the Church, the Catholic Action of Manila, urged Catholics to write letters to their representatives in Congress so that the Rizal Bill would not push through. A priest, Fr. Jesus Cavana, argued that the novel's contents contained unpatriotic passages and "anti-Catholic statements. " A radio commentator went further on the issue, arguing that Catholics had "the right to refuse to read . . ." "objectionable matter," at the risk of endangering their "salvation." One staunch opponent of the bill, Francisco Rodrigo, argued that he cannot allow his eighteen year old son to read the two novels for fear

senators such as Laurel, who supported passing the Rizal bill into law, though took into account "the objections of the Catholic hierarchy."[98] Thereafter, through an Act of the Filipino Congress in 1956, "all schools are required to teach the life and works of Rizal," even if Rizal's novels were still in the Index of prohibited books by the Roman Catholic Church.[99]

Taylor also alluded to the presence of "a Filipino intellectual elite" present in all sectors of Filipino society.[100] Claro Recto was one of those intellectuals, even if his politics tended to alienate him from many Filipinos. According to a US Embassy Foreign Service document, Recto publicly expressed concern that the Filipino Catholic Church interfered too much on "matters of state." Therefore, the iconoclastic politician came up with a "constitutional amendment" measure that prevented any church hierarchy (whether they be Muslim, Catholic, Protestant or the breakaway *Iglesia ni Cristo* Philippine Independent Church sect), members of sectarian schools and organizations, from interfering in elections. The proposed amendment also sought to

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that "he would lose his faith," and instead proposed that only footnoted editions of the novels be made required reading. Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 296, 297.

[98] The bill provided that the students be required to read the two novels in their unexpurgated editions but that students who objected from using the two novels "on grounds of religious belief," were to be provided an "exemption" from using them. Constantino, Constantino, *The Philippines: The Continuing Past*, 298.

[99] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 160.

[100] For a more extensive discussion of the Filipino intellectual elite and their contribution to Filipino life (n the "fields of education, government service, law, politics, journalism, and religion," see the section "The New Nation," in George Taylor's work, *The Philippines and the United States*. Taylor argued that Filipino intellectuals contributed to the debates over church and the state in building Filipino society during the Third Republic. But these debates, Taylor argued, had their origins during the colonial period. Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 159-170.

prevent "bigoted instruction," and "would require every faith and denomination to contribute to the support of the state." Recto was concerned that the 1955 midterm congressional elections took place where members of the Church hierarchy gave "several candidates for the Senate their imprimatur and their blessings." A 1958 US embassy document took the view that all these propositions by Recto were simply a result of his disillusionment in the aftermath of the 1957 presidential election, which the ultranationalist politician had lost. Recto believed that the Filipino Catholic Church had conducted a whisper campaign that depicted him as a "communist" in the Filipino public's eyes, which led to his poor showing in that presidential election.[101] That Recto was defeated during the 1957 presidential election was not surprising. A vast majority of Filipinos were devoutly Catholic and had an aversion to communism. Recto was running against an incumbent President who unexpectedly succeeded Magsaysay earlier during the year. The government, especially under Magsaysay, and the Church, were staunchly anticommunist and used schools and churches as a platform to "inoculate" people from being influenced by communism.[102] Nevertheless, an ultranationalist like Recto also contributed to nation-state building.

The state also promoted cultural nationalism by requiring language education. All schools were required to teach Tagalog "for a minimum of forty minutes a day in all elementary and secondary grades."[103] According to an August 1955 article by Filipino

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[101] "Recto Makes Speech on Separation of Church and State."

[102] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 183.

[103] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 167.

linguist and writer Jose Villa Panganiban in *The Saturday Mirror Magazine*, "a national soul cannot exist where there is not a common language . . . We shall never have any genuine national pride until we have a language of our own. We shall always have that sign of inferiority." Panganiban's article also showed that in 1937, only 12% of Filipinos were speaking Tagalog. By 1955, this had increased to 35%.[104] More Filipinos were using the national language than previously both at work and at home.

A special report in *This Week* magazine also looked at the current state of Tagalog as the national language in the islands in 1958. The article noted that "12 years after Tagalog was officially declared the national language," Tagalog had indeed become so in everyday use. The reasons for Tagalog's adoption included "the prominence of Tagalog in national literature, Tagalog as the language of the majority and Tagalog as the common language of Manila."[105] The changes in Filipino linguistic habit were interesting. During the 1948 census, English and Tagalog were spoken equally by 37.1% of the population. A commentary stated that, "the fact that Manila, the capital and government center of the Philippines, is in the midst of the Tagalog-speaking region of the country was an important factor in the choice of Tagalog as the basis of our national language."[106] Tagalog also came increasingly into use in government, as compared to English, although English continued to be prized as a foreign language of

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[104] Jose Villa Panganiban, "Let's Have English and Tagalog," *The Saturday Mirror Magazine*, August 13 1955, 18, Folder-5, Language, Ortigas Foundation Library.

[105] Special Report, The National Language, *This Week*, August 24, 1958, Folder 5-Language, Ortigas Foundation Library.

[106] Special Report, *This Week*, August 24, 1958, 23, Folder 5-Language, Ortigas Foundation Library

choice by Filipinos. That more Filipinos came increasingly to use Tagalog meant that it was becoming a common language.

Tagalog also was increasingly taught in schools in the native Tagalog-speaking and non-Tagalog speaking regions. According to the Filipino educator Andrew Gonzalez, it was said that even in the Tagalog regions, "native Tagalog speakers often failed the national language class because they found the grammatical study difficult and the reading selections incomprehensible."[107] The national government knew that many Filipinos continued to use English. But Tagalog was used in schools. For instance, in February 1954, Professor Gregorio F. Zaide, teaching a class entitled "Research in Filipino Culture," had a student translate Tagalog riddles into English for his research to be turned in to class. A page of the report said "The riddle is a blossom of Filipino culture. It is distinctly native in origin, nourished by the grace of imagination, and blessed by the labor of clever ingenuity. The Tagalogs, Visayans, Ilocanos, Pampangos, Bicolanos, etc. have their own riddles expressed in their native tongue."[108] This report showed that language and literature possessed great potential for unity.

Articles from *This Week* magazine in 1959 looked at Tagalog as a means of recapturing Filipino history. Amado Inciong, in an article in the magazine entitled "Spanish and Filipinos," argued that the history of the Filipinos needed to be reclaimed

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[107] Andrew B. Gonzalez, *Language and Nationalism: The Philippine Experience Thus Far* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980), 101.

[108] A Report by Jose S. Tomacruz, History 202, to Dr. Gregorio F. Zaide, February 24, 1954, Folder-5, Ortigas Foundation Library.

from four centuries of colonialism, which supposedly erased Filipino pre-history from Filipino memory. According to Inciong:

> All the records about the archipelago before and after 1521 were virtually written in foreign languages. Only through Spanish could the Filipinos acquire a sense of history or imbibe new ideas and desires, which, because they could not be satisfied within the brutal colonial framework, might propel them to really intelligently behind the reform movement. [109]

According to Inciong, the Spanish made sure that their Filipino colonial subjects in the islands did not get the opportunity to learn the Spanish language because the Spanish colonizers feared that indigenous Filipino knowledge of the colonizer's language would enable the natives to find a way to express their agency and then unite against Spanish colonial rule. The Spanish therefore denied the learning and the use of Spanish by the colonized natives as an "anti-nationalist weapon" the Spanish used, to forestall any native uprising.[110]

The Filipinos who were engaged in nation-state building during the Third Republic therefore learned that language can be a powerful tool for unity and for expressing indigenous agency. If the Spanish used language for colonial domination, the Third Republic utilized it for nation-state building. Tagalog served to unite and to familiarize. One advantage that Tagalog enjoyed was that its words could be found in the vocabularies of the other regions. 60% of Tagalog words could be found in the

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[109] Amado G. Inciong, "Spanish and the Filipinos," *This Week*, vol. xiv no. 8, February 22, 1959, 10, Folder-5, Ortigas Foundation Library.

[110] Inciong, "Spanish and the Filipinos."

Pampango vocabulary, 48% of the words could be found in the Cebuano vocabulary, 40% in the Bicolano vocabulary and 31% in the Ilocano vocabulary. More interesting still, the use of Tagalog did not appear to submerge native dialects.[111]

Tagalog also spread through wider use by people across the islands over time. The provinces enjoyed access to Manila, since the "thousands of officials and employees" of the government lived in the capital but returned to their respective provinces with the knowledge of Tagalog. "Thousands of students" studied in various colleges and universities around Manila and who spent a "greater part of the year in the city." People in the trades also learned Tagalog. Professionals such as "teachers, lawyers, medical practitioners, and others" ended up "disseminating" and "propagating the Tagalog language to people they worked with, interacted with, or who were simply around them." The cities attracted job seekers who learned Tagalog, so that they would have access to more opportunities. As the language of business (and of upward mobility), knowledge of Tagalog "spelled the difference between employment and unemployment."[112] The motion picture industry, the vernacular press, and even the advertising industry increasingly used Tagalog, as did business and education.[113] The data by 1959 showed that 11 million or 50% of Filipinos spoke Tagalog; 6 million were native speakers, while 5 million had acquired the language.[114] Taylor argued that

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[111] "Filipinos and their National Language," *This Week*, August 16, 1959, 20, Folder-5, Ortigas Foundation Library.

[112] "Filipinos and their National Language," 21.

[113] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 167.

[114] "Filipinos and their National Language," 21.

Filipino leaders during the later 1950s increasingly needed to communicate in Tagalog to be understood by Filipinos.[115] Schools, educational curriculum, livelihood, business, politics, communications, sheer necessity and the myriad formal and informal interactions among people spread the language and promoted unity.

Evaluating the State as Agent: The End of the Magsaysay Presidency

An article in *Bataan Magazine*, published in 1956, evaluated the Third Republic's foreign relations during its first ten years of existence. The article piece described the Filipino experiment as a success, that its "ship of state steered its way through the difficulties inherent in young nationhood, with a foreign policy guided by the special circumstances which have made the islands an independent nation." The article also stated that, in the aftermath of colonialism, and in the midst of Cold War superpower rivalry, Filipinos "made an immediate choice to preserve her newly won freedom and to improve the well-being of her people by siding with the Western democracies." The Third Republic chose to ally with America and participate in the United Nations.[116] According to the article, the country possessed innumerable accomplishments in foreign relations. Filipinos expanded ties with other countries, having engaged in various forms of cooperation, such as SEATO. Filipinos also believed that "it is an essential organization for maintain peace in the Southeast Asia area and for

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[115] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 166, 167, 168.

[116] "The Philippines in International Affairs," *Bataan Magazine*, December 1956, 18, Folder-Philippines, HSTLI.

the security of the Philippines." Filipinos reached out to non-Western countries through the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955, "wherein nations believing in all creeds met to discuss common problems in this part of the world." The Philippines, under the Third Republic, participated in the International Monetary Fund and in the Colombo technical cooperation scheme, "to train technical men in various fields to develop the productive capacity of under-developed member countries." According to the article, Filipino international participation could be attributed to the realization that, "as a small nation, she (the islands) can only find security and peace in the support of international organizations." These expressions of indigenous Filipino agency extended to Filipino participation in the United Nations, where the country "championed the principle of anti-colonialism and has espoused the cause of under-developed people and their struggles for equal treatment with big powers." The Third Republic sent a contingent to the Korean War, and entered into treaties with many countries. The 1956 article also argued that Filipinos contributed significantly to world affairs despite its challenges as a young nation.[117] Similarly, Vice President Garcia believed that Filipino "nationalism must keep abreast with the swift advance of time. . .We cannot therefore retreat within ourselves." In Garcia's eyes, "our ten years of international relationship as an independent democracy is a record we can justly be proud of."[118]

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[117] "The Philippines in International Affairs," *Bataan Magazine*.

[118] Carlos P. Garcia, "Philippine Foreign Policy and our Relationship with the United States," *Bataan Magazine*, December 1956, 30, Folder-Philippines, HSTLI.

Magsaysay's quest to reform the Filipino military brought good results. A US National Security Council Report (NSC 5413/1), dated January 1957, listed the reorganization of the Filipino military as one of Magsaysay's major achievements. The report stated that the Filipino military was already capable of maintaining internal and external security throughout the islands. The Republic could also undertake regional defense for external threats coming from the Asian mainland.[119] This enabled the islands not to become too reliant on the United States military for the security needs for Filipinos. In addition, the Huks had been fully defeated and outlawed by 1957, with their numbers drastically reduced from "10,000 well-organized men in 1950 to just 500 scattered and disorganized individuals by 1958."[120]

Magsaysay and the people around him appeared to have had big plans for the future of the islands. The 1935 Filipino constitution then in force at the time, mandated that the Filipino President be elected to serve for a four-year term, then be eligible for re-election once to serve for another four years.[121] A *Manila Times* article dated March 1956 showed that congressional leaders proposed that Magsaysay serve for a total of 12 years as President-- extending his first term from the constitutionally-mandated 4 to 6 years, and changing the rules to allow re-election, so the President could serve until

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[119] Operations Coordinating Board, National Security Council Progress Report, "US Policy Towards the Philippines," NSC 5413/1, January 16, 1957, 2, 3, LOC.

[120]Ang, "Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Domino Theory," in Goscha, Ostermann, *Connecting Histories*, 313.

[121]"Constitutional History of the Philippines," Countries, ConstitutionNet, Supporting Constitution Builders Globally, International IDEA, http://www.constitutionnet.org/country/constitutional-history-philippines, Accessed last October 10, 2016.

1965.[122] A declassified US National Security Council report in January 1957 also observed that Magsaysay enjoyed widespread support amongst the Filipino public and had consolidated both the *Nacionalista* and Democratic parties in the House and the Senate. Magsaysay enjoyed huge support amongst the Filipino press.[123]

Magsaysay died prematurely in March 1957, in a plane crash while touring the islands to prepare for national elections later that year. Filipino economic life was booming by the late 1950s, as seen by a burst in manufacturing, and in agricultural and mineral exploitation. The Filipino share of the new investments rose to 88 percent. Industrialization and urbanization rapidly took place, with economic growth and activity in Manila and in other urban areas.[124] But the foundations of nation-state building had been built. Nation-state making took place alongside Magsaysay, who played an outsized and critical role. In many respects, Magsaysay proved to be the apotheosis of the Filipino nation-state building during the first generation of Filipino independence.

Conclusion

By the late 1950s, the Filipino nation-state building project was reached a stage of maturity. Filipino state policy and state power, coupled with voluntary participation of many actors in society, led to the formation of collective national experiences that

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[122] "Magsaysay Rejects 12-Year Presidential Term Proposal, says Proposed Tenure "Too Long", but Press Secretary Claims President Aware, However of other plans on Term, Mag has Quiet Day," *The Manila Times*, March 31, 1956.

[123] "US Policy Towards the Philippines," 1.

[124] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 181, 182, 183.

together created the Filipino nation from the energies and capacities of the Filipino people. Government and barrio workers served as critical agents in bridging the urban and the rural. Magsaysay and the instruments of the Third Republic, including both military and civilian officials, replaced middlemen who often used local power less effectively or more corruptly. The most remarkable achievement during the Magsaysay years was the fostering of unity between elites and non-elites.

Filipinos also expressed indigenous agency through international relations. Apart from becoming a member of SEATO, the Philippines promoted Asian unity by leading (and becoming part of) an anti-communist bloc of nations. Romulo demonstrated at Bandung that Filipinos could serve as a "bridge" between the East and the West. While Filipinos critiqued the United States for its unwillingness or inability to recognize Asian (and Third World) nationalism and for being perceived as supporting European colonialism, the conference ended up as a critique of Soviet expansion across the world. Filipinos added their voices and established their own imprint during conversations over the legacies of European colonialism and the dangers posed by the communists.

The 1950s was also an intense time for Filipinos where passions ran high. Magsaysay and the people around him knew that they needed to take the lead in upholding Filipino interests, when dealing with countries such as the United States. Debates over the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1954 expressed Filipino desire to increase control over their economy and to reduce reliance on outside powers such as the United States. Filipinos also took advantage of their relationship with the United States by using the Cold War as leverage to obtain economic benefits for Filipinos and obtain

concessions from the United States. The negotiations exhibited independent Filipino stances, and as a by-product, further expressed indigenous agency.

The debates over bases revealed how tenuous the military presence of the United States was in the archipelago—much more so than was often assumed. US military forces had to abide by what Filipinos wanted, as base negotiations showed. The bases in the islands became a sensitive issue, and were often used by nationalists as one of many sources of unity. Even the most pro-American Filipinos, such as Magsaysay, believed that the United States must not overstep its bounds when it came to the rights of ordinary Filipino citizens living near the US bases in the islands. That the United States eventually backed down over sovereignty in the base areas signified that it was willing to abide by Filipino concerns in the islands. The country was a treaty ally and no longer a colony.

The Third Republic also knew that opportunity should be given to all Filipinos, regardless of background. The state encouraged Filipinos to have a greater share in sectors such as retail trade at the expense of the Chinese-Filipinos, who were nonetheless given opportunities to participate in nation-state making. Despite Filipino suspicions of the Chinese-Filipinos, even the ardently anti-communist Magsaysay believed that all ethnic minorities could be integrated. The state ensured that the right and the welfare of aboriginal Filipinos, such as the Negritos of Central Luzon, were protected and that they were given the opportunity to earn a living by themselves, eventually. The promotion of local autonomy and of self-sufficiency was meant to promote initiative. The state

therefore played a critical role in bringing people together in the task of unifying all Filipinos in the islands.

The state promoted cultural nationalism in schools and in wider society through reforms in educational curriculum and through Tagalog as the national language. Reforms in the educational curriculum revealed the involvement of the state, the church, civic organizations, of ordinary Filipino families and of nationalist politicians such as Recto in shaping the society during the Third Republic. For instance, debates over the Rizal Bill demonstrated how the state and the church were bound together by a common anti-communist ideology. The ordinary Filipino, both elite and non-elite, had a natural aversion against communism and against collectivism in the islands. These collectively ensured that the islands were hostile ground where those considered "alien" ideologies did not find roots to embed themselves in. Tagalog also became a major vehicle for unification, since not only was Manila and the surrounding areas Tagalog-speaking, but all the other dialects across the archipelago had a lot more in common with Tagalog than with one another. Tagalog, therefore, was the universal language. According to a *This Week* article, dated February 22, 1959, "Tagalog . . . now possesses an adequate tradition and vocabulary for the effective expression of nationalist thoughts and urgings, as well as of progressive ideas, be it economic, political, cultural or religious. "[125] This was despite challenges, such as negative attitudes which a few elite Filipinos held towards

[125] "Spanish and the Filipinos."

the use of Tagalog, and who continued to prefer English as a matter of social status.[126] According to George Taylor, by the 1960s, not only was Tagalog, "the informal language of the home, society, school or business," but that supplanted English as the language of the nation.[127]

An American official with the US Department of State noted in 1957 that, "it is true that the Philippines is changing. Nationalism is finding increasing expression by all elements and Filipinos are becoming more self-reliant."[128] By the 1960s, many American businessmen in Manila believed that, "the Filipinos are now in control of their economy and are quite capable of running it" without US or even government interference.[129] As Taylor had written back in 1964, "he who captures Filipino nationalism captures the Philippines."[130] The initiative belonged to elite and non-elite Filipinos who were willing to seize the opportunities and work together to build the Filipino nation-state. Building unity was inherently participatory and entailed the

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[126] Outsiders such as Pakistani writer Shahid Ahmad Dehlvi, remarked that "some Filipinos seemed ashamed to speak their own language. . . " Dehlvi gave the advice to Filipinos that "You must have a strong national language to develop a strong nationalism." The Pakistani writer also noted that the Philippines "has more English than Tagalog literature." "Filipinos and their National Language," *This Week*, August 16, 1959, 21.

[127] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 168.

[128] "Statement for use by Mr. Murphy in reply to Senator Humphrey's letter on the Philippines," 2, January 31, 1957, Record Group no. 59, General Records of the Department of State, Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, Office of Southwest Pacific Affairs. Office of the Officer in Charge of Philippine Affairs, Office Files, 1948-1957, Box 1, Folder B6, Philippine Attitudes towards the United States, NARA, Declassified No. NND897210.

[129] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 295.

[130] Taylor, *The Philippines and the United States*, 170.

expression and articulation of multiple Filipino voices, issues being discussed and debated in the public forum by all, the state using its power to enjoin citizens to participate in public life, and encouraging people, regardless of background, to harness their creative energies for the good of the nation and its members.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: UNEARTHING AGENCY

People had grown accustomed to thinking of Filipinos as lacking agency, due to Cold War-based assumptions. The re-told narratives and experiences of Filipinos of various backgrounds changed all that, especially by the Magsaysay years, which served as the culmination of all these early efforts. The big questions in all of these included: Where were the Filipinos in the narrative of Filipino nation-state building after independence? Why were Filipinos often submerged in Cold War literature that also covered the Philippines? Perhaps an answer lay with what the diplomat Carlos Romulo said in the aftermath of the Bandung Conference. Romulo explained that there was often a tendency amongst Americans to assume that what was often good for the United States was automatically good for Asians, such as Filipinos.[1] Filipinos believed that even if American and Filipino objectives and undertakings dovetailed, Filipinos are doing it to ultimately benefit all Filipinos. Many outsiders often could not discern the differences between American and Filipino agency due to their fixation with the Cold War. Works by writers such as William Pomeroy, Renato Constantino, Benedict Kerkvliet, and even Daniel Immerwahr had often depicted Filipinos as helpless, passive subjects who were subject to overwhelming American power, with the CIA, US bases, and the Cold War as the favorite acronyms, buzzwords, and strawmen. These scholars also had often assumed

[1] Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 44.

that only through artificial categories such as class could one express agency. More pressing issues such as integrating the various ethnicities, Tagalog, Filipino foreign policy, and a domestic aversion to communism in the islands, were often lost in the mists as a result. The multiple voices of Filipino state and society across the islands that lay submerged underneath needed to be unearthed to include and restore Filipinos as part of a wider struggle of the "darker peoples" in their struggle against colonialism and communist expansion.

The nation-state-making narrative during the first decade of Filipino independence exhibited how Filipinos expressed agency in the islands. The sources of Filipino unity included-- a natural aversion to communism in the islands, integrating the Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos, recasting Filipinos as Asian and belonging to the Third World through SEATO and Bandung, opposition to corruption and incompetence, an emphasis on economic development, rural self-help, Filipino control of its own economy, the Tagalog, and the revision of educational curriculum. Debates surrounding the US bases and the Laurel Langley Act served as sources of Filipino unity. . Personalities such as Ramon Magsaysay and Carlos Romulo played critical roles in articulating Filipino nationalism.

The main challenges to Filipino unity domestically centered on how to integrate the Huks, the Filipino-Chinese, and the non-elite Filipinos. The state-- through Magsaysay, the government, the PACD and PRRM programs, and the military-- helped bridge the gap between elite and non-elite Filipinos. Government and barrio workers replaced local officials as middlemen in integrating the barrios with the big cities.

Subaltern voices came to the fore and shaped public consciousness with images and conditions of rural community life reaching homes in Manila. The rural played a role in shaping the big cities, laying bare the divides amongst Filipinos. The Third Republic also looked for ways to coopt the Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos. The Huks laid down their arms, surrendered to the government, and became peaceful farmers. The Chinese-Filipinos contributed economic resources to state projects, and sought to integrate their thoughts and actions, such as by weeding out perceived and actual sympathies with communism and other forms of social disorder, such as crime, prostitution and extortion, which dated back to the colonial period. These groups ended up self-identifying as Filipinos with a stake in the collective visions of Filipinos. Magsaysay played a critical role in using the State and its agencies to integrate these groups. Magsaysay, a staunch anti-communist and anti-corruption leader, opened spaces for the ex-Huks and the Chinese-Filipinos. In so many ways, Magsaysay was indeed a transformational figure, who enjoyed massive support from broad swathes of Filipino society not only because he was personally charismatic but because his government articulated Filipino visions, and attempted to realize them effectively.

Much had been made regarding the role of the Moros in Filipino nation-state building during the 1900s. The Moros, apart from local clan rivalries and internecine warfare, did not pose a problem to Filipino nation-state building, until the end of the 1960s. Mindanao scholar T.J. S. George argued that Magsaysay's supposed "lack of appreciation of the Mindanao problem" lay with Magsaysay's tendency to sometimes conflate Filipino security aims, and American Cold War objectives. The Filipino

President's "anti-communist campaign," which dovetailed with Washington's "missionary anti-communism," did not see clan rivalries and warlords in the Moro South as a threat, as opposed to the Huk guerillas and the Chinese-Filipinos. As far as Manila and Washington were concerned, George argued in his work, the Huk peasant rebellion in the north was a far graver danger to Filipinos.[2] Agreeing that communism was the foremost threat to all Filipinos was where Filipinos used the Cold War to suit their purposes.

The state was a critical instrument in the expression of indigenous identity and unity. Filipino nation- state building had always involved the challenges of dealing with ethnicity, power, and nationalism. These practices dated back to the colonial legacy of dividing Tagalog lowlanders and hill mountain tribesmen, the Chinese, the Moros, and the non-elite Filipinos. These groups were somehow viewed as "less Filipino" than those who were in Manila and in the surrounding lowland provinces. The inability to resolve questions of unity would have led to questions regarding the "authenticity" of the Filipino national project, and would have cast doubts on the "official nationalism" expressed by the Third Republic.[3] Prasenjit Duara, in his work *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, argued that the exercise of "disciplinary power," by entities such as the Filipino Third Republic, needed to be seen as "authentic" by the people. The nation-state building project, according to Duara, only worked if it involved various "social

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[2] T.J.S. George, *Revolt in Mindanao: The Rise of Islam in Philippine Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1980), 117, 118.

[3] Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15.

organizations" that "mobilize the social or the national body" to exercise authority.[4] This form of state-centric nationalism was said to have been the only way for "individuals to attain a self-conscious unity" that enabled a nation to obtain "mastery over the future."[5] The government therefore involved other sectors and members of society such as the Huks, the Chinese-Filipinos and the non-elite Filipinos, to legitimize the Third Republic as the ultimate expression of Filipino indigenous agency.

The notion that it was impossible for Filipinos to be unified because of the disparate regions, ethnicities, religions, kinship ties, the business and personal interests involved, therefore lacks validity. Filipinos saw the need to reclaim history, as seen in cultural debates over Tagalog and over the separation of Church and State, in debates over revisions of the educational curriculum. Duara argued that "history becomes the history of a people or nationality and a territory"—in this case, only when the Filipinos themselves collectively asserted their own identity and vision. These could only be done after independence since Filipinos needed a "historical claim arising from the idea of a sovereign people evolving within a delimited territory." Duara argued in his work that, a "three-way relationship between a people, territory, and a history produces the rights of nations and distinguishes nationalism from other types of movements that preceded it."[6] State-building and nation-building therefore could not occur without all Filipinos

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[4] Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003), 24, 25.

[5] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 26, 27.

[6] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 27.

coming together. This was what many scholars of the American Exceptionalist or the class-oriented neo-colonialists have often overlooked.

Elite Filipinos, despite being much maligned, played a critical role in Filipino nation-state making. Sociologist Julian Go, in *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*, argued that not only did postcolonial entities, such as the Third Republic, inherit the geographical confines of the former colony. The elites and the interest groups working with them used patronage networks and kinship ties across the islands, such as their control of "elite newspapers and journals," to articulate an "imagined community."[7] With Filipino sovereignty over their own territory after 1946, elite Filipinos used patronage networks to promote their own versions of official Filipino nationalisms from the top. But the elites saw that without the non-elite participation, any nation-making project would have been untenable. Magsaysay was crucial since he co-opted the elites and brought the non-elite Filipinos to the center stage of public participation.

The divide between elite and non-elite Filipinos was just an arbitrary construct. In reality, little separated the elite Filipino from the non-elite Filipino. Each group, when they self-identified as Filipino, were aware of their common destiny. Personalities such as Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Romulo, Recto and Laurel, among others, defined Filipinos as a people who needed to collectively strive for national unity and development. From "making people to "awakening them into being" had always been

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[7] Go, Julian. *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning: Elite Political Cultures in the Philippines and Puerto Rico during US Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 279.

the age-old question in nation and state building, argued Duara.[8] These provided an interesting counterpoint to historians such as Constantino, who tended to obscure indigenous agency in societies such as the Philippines that tended to reduce non-elite Filipinos to playing roles as supposedly passive, helpless victims of elite Filipinos and of the United States after independence.

Many Filipinos also found that the Americans tended to conflate American interests with Filipino interests. But as works such as Cullather's *Illusions of Influence* had illustrated, Filipinos had their own visions of unity and were after their own interests. When Filipinos negotiated for, or signed security and trade treaties with powers such as the United States, Filipinos were asserting their interests. When Romulo articulated his criticisms of American support for European colonial powers, and the dangers coming from all forms of colonialism, including communist expansion, Romulo had Filipino interests in mind. Filipinos possessed their own agency and were not acting as mouthpieces for the United States, a distinction often missed.

Filipino nation-state building also evolved over time. During the Roxas administration, Filipino nation-state building took on a character of a weak center with strong peripheries in the provinces. Milton Walter Meyer, in *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, observed that "it was remarkable that [Roxas] succeeded the way he did," given the damage the islands suffered in the immediate postwar environment and despite that fact that Roxas only served as President for a little over two years. Roxas was to be given credit for obtaining economic assistance from the United States to

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[8] Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 26, 27.

benefit Filipinos. Another great accomplishment was Filipino membership in the United Nations in 1946.[9] The Military Bases Agreement of 1947 was a form of a voluntary agreement between the two countries. It must be remembered that American policymakers had rated the islands as a "low security" risk, and were considering other basing areas in the Pacific. Filipinos invited the United States in because it benefited Filipino security in the islands.

Quirino, whose administration was viewed in a negative light due to images of corruption and mismanagement, was guided by a coherent nation-building ideology. Quirino's foreign policy centerpiece, the Pacific Pact, which was a regional union with anti-communist Asian countries such as Nationalist Republic of China, helped establish the Philippines as a regional Asian leader. It also showed that Filipinos were not necessarily "subservient" to American interests.[10] The Philippines sent troops to the Korean War, and also desired Indian involvement in Asian affairs.[11] Quirino helped pioneer a growing neutralist "Third Force" that established the foundations for anti-communist regional Asian unity, even if the proposed Pacific Pact of 1950 was ultimately unsuccessful. Domestically, the Third Republic weathered the crisis years and warded off the Huks not only by winning in the battlefield but by bridging the gap amongst the various sectors in Filipino society.

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[9] Milton Walter Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic* (University of Hawaii Press, 1965), 79, 80, 81.

[10] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 159, 160, 161.

[11] Meyer, *A Diplomatic History of the Philippine Republic*, 160, 161, 162.

The economy was beginning to turn around by the early 1950s. Quirino's appointment of Magsaysay to the Defense Ministry had helped turn the tide against the Huks, organized clean elections in 1951 and in 1953, and brought Manila to the barrios. Nation- state building domestically was by no means the monopoly of the state or of Manila. Filipino opinion was decidedly supportive of state and nation-building efforts, and concerned by the specter of the "twin evils" of communism and of corruption. Electoral watchdog groups during the 1951 congressional and the 1953 presidential elections such as the NAMFREL, even if they were funded and initiated by the Central Intelligence Agency, manifested the desire of Filipinos for honest and clean elections. Benedict Kerkvliet argued that Filipinos did not expect much from their politicians and had a cynical view of provincial and of national elections, even if they were clean. But elections were part of nation-making. Elections enabled the voting public, even if they were motivated to obtain something for themselves and their families, to have a stake in nation and government. Filipino election campaign and the results reflected how personalities and connections, rather than issues, mattered more in Filipino political culture.[12] As Defense Secretary, Magsaysay knew that for the state to be an effective vehicle for nation-making, non-elite Filipinos needed to take an active role. Magsaysay's contribution to Filipino nation-making was to strengthen key government agencies and

[12] Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, "Contested Meaning of elections in the Philippines," in R.H. Taylor, *The Politics of Elections in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge and New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144, 145, 146.

institutions, and to reach out to local, rural communities. Magsaysay knew that the Filipinos *were* the nation.

Magsaysay's presidency was sustained by his ability to promise reforms and to deliver them when they mattered. Magsaysay enjoyed close ties with the United States and was an ardent anti-communist, in line with the sentiments of the vast majority of Filipinos in the islands. The 1950s was a highly nationalistic time and there were many controversies, such as the US bases and the Laurel-Langley Agreement, which served as sources of unity. Despite the best efforts of the United States to negotiate favorable terms for America, the American negotiators found Filipinos holding their ground. Filipino foreign relations had changed dramatically in the decade since independence.

There were questions as to whether Magsaysay was too much of a centralizer, even if he worked to unite all Filipinos. Abinales and Amoroso, in *State and Society in the Philippines*, had looked at the pitfalls of relying too much on one person to supposedly guide the nation-state. Their work argued that Magsaysay wanted to "strengthen the state, as well as his stature as a leader," through social mobilization of Filipinos from both the cities and the rural areas. They also argued that his ability to implement reforms was too invested in his person and in his position.[13] In short, the ability to obtain national unity and to implement reforms, appeared too dependent on one strongman's rule. But scholars may have been misreading Filipino political culture. Any

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[13] Patricio Abinales and Donna Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005), 181, 182.

"strongman of the people," no matter how popular or how competent, found that he needed the support of all the other participants of the nation-state building project.

This project to define and express Filipino identity through nation-state building continued on beyond Magsaysay. Carlos Garcia was an old-style Filipino leader. Garcia further promoted Filipino control of key economic sectors. Garcia's policies further reduced the involvement of Chinese-Filipinos and the Americans from retail trade. They enabled a large number of Filipinos to build up small and medium enterprises. These government efforts enabled the majority of the Filipinos to increase their share of dollar allocations.[14] What came to be called Carlos Garcia's "Filipino First Policy," resulted in Filipinos possessing 51 percent of foreign exchange allocations by 1959, "liberalized credit to new businesses," and in an increase from 55 percent of new investments in 1959 to 88 percent by 1961, by the end of Garcia's term.[15]

The Garcia administration, like its predecessor, heavily involved itself in the home and community life of the ordinary Filipino. The Third Republic stressed the family "as a stronghold against the threats of communism," and as the "last refuge of property." Drawing on foreign examples, Garcia illustrated how families were eradicated in Bolshevik Russia "as a means of uniformly rearing and conditioning the youth at an early age."[16] The communist threat also lingered on at the fringes. Despite the demise of

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[14] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines*, 182, 183.

[15] Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 215.

[16] "Garcia lauds PI families, Tells meet delegates filial unity strong weapons against Reds," *The Manila Times*, December 8, 1957.

the armed Huk units, there was an increase in the number of peasant and urban groups that agitated for social reform. But any potential unrest coming from "lower class" Filipinos, in cooperation with a "political intelligentsia," was headed off by government and by all sectors of Filipinos society. Abinales and Amoroso argued that it was only massive corruption under the Garcia administration that actually hampered effective Filipino state and nation-building.[17] Communism, seen as a threat by the vast majority of Filipinos to the Filipino way of life, was practically dead and buried in the islands by the end of the 1950s. But there was discontent over corruption, which posed new challenges for the next generation of Filipinos.

The Garcia administration, like the previous ones, also possessed its own ideas on nation-state building. Its policies included a war on graft, economic development, land reform, industrialization, research and modernization. Garcia's administration also believed in the "moral and spiritual reformation and strengthening, especially among the youth, and building of a clean, formidable, national character as the best challenge to communism," or at least its re-emergence. The Garcia administration possessed a foreign policy oriented towards stopping Japanese rearmament, "to enhance historic relations with the United States based on equality, mutuality of interests, and community of ideals," to "preserve friendship with Spain and the Latin American republics with whom we are tied by indissoluble cultural, spiritual, and historic bonds, "to follow-up the good-neighbor policy with Asian friends for the mutual benefit of the Philippines and friendly neighbors," as well as "strengthening" both the United Nations (for peace) and the

[17] Abinales, Amoroso, *State and Society*, 183, 184.

SEATO regional defense organization.[18] Filipino state and nation-building during the time of Garcia further built on the efforts of earlier administrations.

The Garcia administration discouraged Filipinos from relying too much on the government to solve the "country's present economic ills." Garcia would have preferred that Filipinos had emulated Americans, "where people resolve their own difficulties and think of ways to help the government." Garcia believed in "hard work as the key to success." The Filipino President believed that Filipinos needed to develop some form of detachment and courage in the face of adversity.[19] What Garcia had in common with Magsaysay, was the belief that indigenous agency lay not only with the state but with the people, which suggested an increasing turn towards inclusiveness and non-elite participation. The earlier Magsaysay administration must be given credit for having laid the groundwork in nation-state building for succeeding administrations to build on.

The Filipino diplomat Carlos Romulo articulated a coherent, all-encompassing Filipino ideology. Romulo's addresses, delivered in Tagalog in January 13, 1960, laid out a new doctrine for Filipino nationalism for a new generation of Filipinos. The address stressed points such as modernization, industrialization, and the attainment of security in freedom. In Romulo's view, the most important aspect of nationalism entailed Filipinos learning to act in their own land for the well-being of their people. Romulo believed that Filipinos must not rely solely on the presence of the US bases for

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[18] Vicente F. Barranco, "Will war on graft, promote ties, Lists 8-point plan for home front, will rally PI to free peoples," *The Manila Times,* December 31, 1957.

[19] "Filipino burden government with their problems-Garcia," *The Manila Times,* April 2, 1958.

their security, and of favorable free trade terms with America, for Filipino well-being. The objective of Filipino nationalism, in Romulo's eyes, must be to "build" national self-reliance, eventually. Filipinos needed to mobilize their resources well and that it must be the goal of Filipinos to seek the "good life," through "democratic institutions."[20]

In another speech, Romulo called for the unity of small nations such as the Philippines to collectively exert "great influence." The diplomat argued that Filipinos and the other Third World peoples all shared a similar "nationalist history" of fighting against colonialism, but that their disparate "national interests" could pit them against one another. Romulo recognized that great powers tended to be "selfish" and that the "bargaining power" of "small nations" had always been weak. Romulo believed that Filipinos needed to develop "strength" and "self-reliance," because enjoying the "protection" of a great power, such as the United States, was unsustainable in the long term, as all nations have their own interests in mind.[21] Romulo, in another speech, believed in the realization of ". . . strength and unity born of common interests and of common aims . . . "[22] The diplomat might have been referring in this speech to Asian unity, but knew that these challenges could also be applied domestically. Only by uniting all the ethnicities and by taking advantage of the diversities amongst them did Filipinos

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[20] H.L.T. Koren, "Ambassador Romulo on Nationalism," Foreign Service Dispatch, January 13, 1960, 1, 2, Microfilm Room, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

[21] "Ambassador Romulo on Nationalism," 2.

[22] Carlos P. Romulo, speech before the Manila Rotary Club, Manila, January 27, 1949, Archives Section, Ayala Museum.

realize the strengths they possessed, and their capacity to realize a common vision and destiny for all Filipinos.

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