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**U.S. BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES:
A FOREIGN POLICY PARADOX**

BY

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growth of the Philippines. This paper analyzes this foreign policy paradox and makes recommendations to resolve it. These recommendations retain the forward presence concept but at dramatically reduced levels in the Philippines. Relinquishing five of the six U.S. bases is advocated by September, 1991, while Subic Bay would be retained until 1996. Facilities in Guam would be gradually expanded and the U.S. would increase access in Singapore, Malaysia, and other Pacific nations. Continued use of facilities in the Philippines would be converted to a commercial process and the United States would continue to provide substantial economic assistance to the Philippines. This approach would increase the peace and stability of not only the Philippines, but also the region as a whole.

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A FOREIGN POLICY PARADOX

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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Relations between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines are currently at a critical juncture in their history. The key issue impacting this relationship is the presence of U.S. military bases in the Philippines. The cornerstone of our foreign policy in the Southeast Asian region, this forward deployment of U.S. military forces is viewed by the U.S. as essential if the peace and stability of the region is to be maintained. However, in the Philippines, the continued presence of the bases is viewed as a remnant of colonialism and has been a catalyst for increased insurrection and internal instability. Questions of sovereignty and nationalism have elevated the base issue to a level that has polarized the nation and made the prospect of continued U.S. presence in the Philippines questionable. The United States desires to retain the bases in the Philippines to meet national security requirements. Alternatively, retention of these bases may be detrimental to the continued democratic growth of the Philippines. This paper analyzes this foreign policy paradox and makes recommendations to resolve it. These recommendations retain the forward presence concept but at dramatically reduced levels in the Philippines. Relinquishing five of the six U.S. bases is advocated by September, 1991, while Subic Bay would be retained until 1996. Facilities in Guam would be gradually expanded and the U.S. would increase access in Singapore, Malaysia, and other Pacific nations. Continued use of facilities in the Philippines would be converted to a commercial process and the United States would continue to provide substantial economic assistance to the Philippines. This approach would increase the peace and stability of not only the Philippines, but also the region as a whole.

Although overshadowed by the crisis in the Persian Gulf, the special relationship that has evolved throughout the last century between the United States and the Republic of the Philippines is at a critical juncture. United States bases in the Philippines have been a cornerstone of a successful national security policy of forward deployment that has ensured the peace and stability of the region. The Military Base Agreement (MBA) that granted the U.S. the right to operate those facilities expires in September, 1991, and there is widespread opposition to any renewal in the Philippines. The issues involved are complex and negotiations will unquestionably have significant impact on both countries as well as the region as a whole.

For the Philippines, questions of sovereignty, adequate compensation, and the costs and benefits of the bases for national security are at issue. For the United States, the contributions the bases make to strategic interests and to bilateral relations need to be weighed against the limits imposed by operational and budgetary requirements, anxieties over the future of the insurgency in the Philippines, concerns over corruption, and constraints on the U.S. ability to meet other demands of the Philippine side. The precedent for basing arrangements in other countries will also be of vital importance to Washington.¹

As shown by the above quotation from a study done by the Council on Foreign Relations in 1988, the issues that must be resolved through negotiation are both diverse and difficult. Perhaps even more important, however, is the rising nationalism in the Philippines that has increasingly frustrated the negotiation process and that may in fact make any continued U.S. presence after 1991 impossible. The U.S. National Security Strategy dated March, 1990, stated our policy toward the Philippines as follows:



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We support the Philippines' democratic institutions and its efforts to achieve prosperity, social progress, and internal security. We will negotiate with the Philippines in good faith on the status of our military facilities there. These facilities support a continued and needed American forward presence that benefits the U.S., the Philippines, regional security, and global stability.²

On the one hand, the U.S. desires to keep bases in the Philippines to fulfill forward basing requirements deemed essential to our national security policy. On the other hand, however, our continued presence may serve as the catalyst for increased insurrection and political instability not only in the Philippines but in the region as a whole.

The purpose of this paper will be to analyze this foreign policy paradox and determine if there is a better approach to achieving U.S. objectives in the region. To do so, it is essential to briefly review the history of the MBA and the relationship between the United States and the Philippines.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The U.S. military presence in the Philippines is based on provisions of the Treaty of General Relations that was signed in 1946. This document is primarily remembered as the instrument that established the Republic of the Philippines as an independent nation but it also guaranteed U.S. access to military bases. This provision was expanded and formalized by an executive agreement in March, 1947. The seeds of discontent that are now being voiced are not new and were also present at the time of this agreement.³ The MBA specified that basing rights were rent free and extended for a period of 99 years. The U.S. commander was given complete jurisdiction over not only U.S. personnel, but also Filipinos who were employed on the base. Inherent in this total control

of the bases was the right for the U.S. to use them in any manner deemed militarily advisable.⁴

In 1959, the Bohlen-Serrano Agreement amended the original MBA in response to growing Filipino criticism and demands. This amendment restricted the use of bases for combat operations other than those conducted in accordance with the U.S. - Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty or with the explicit agreement of Philippine authorities. In addition, the time frame of the MBA was dramatically reduced from a 99 year period to an expiration in 1991.⁵

The jurisdiction issue was changed in 1966 to more closely parallel the status-of-forces agreement that was in place in NATO. In 1979, the MBA was substantially altered in many areas in direct response to growing criticism from within the Philippines. These changes directed a Philippine commander at each base but allowed the U.S. to retain operational command over U.S. facilities located on the larger military reservation. This action substantially reduced areas directly under U.S. command and control. For example, at Clark AFB the U.S. relinquished control over 130,000 acres formerly under their jurisdiction and retained control of slightly more than 10,000 acres. Similarly, much of both the actual base and waters at Subic Bay reverted to Philippine control.⁶

Under these new arrangements, the Philippine government assumed responsibility for base security. This concession came in direct response to highly publicized charges of excessive use of force by American security personnel against Filipinos attempting to enter base facilities and grounds.

Despite these significant changes, the United States still had

virtually total control and use of the bases since the actual facilities were under the direct control of a U.S. commander who had the authority to "exercise command and control over military operations involving U.S. forces." Moreover, use of those areas returned to Philippine control was not "allowed to interfere with U.S. military operations". As will be detailed further in subsequent pages, the U.S. continued to "be assured unhampered military operations involving its forces in the Philippines."⁷

The issue of compensation was also addressed for the first time in 1979 when the U.S. agreed to pay \$500 million for a five year period. This was subsequently increased to \$900 million in 1983 for the next five years of U.S. use. This \$900 million consisted of \$125 million in military assistance, \$300 million in foreign military sales credit, and \$475 million into an economic support fund.⁸ In 1988, President Aquino agreed to \$481 million per year for FY 90 and FY 91 but made it clear that future negotiations for continued use of the bases would require substantial changes.⁹

The remainder of this paper will examine not only the issues involved in the negotiation process but will also show their impact on the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States in both the Republic of the Philippines and the region as a whole.

The global strategy outlined previously in National Security Strategy is manifested in several military objectives (ends) primarily executed under the forward basing concept. The basing (ways) of approximately 17,000 American military personnel (means) ensures this

objective is realized. Although there are six U.S. bases or facilities in the Philippines, Subic Bay and Clark AFB are the only two bases that are considered essential for U.S. strategic interests in the region.

Richard Armitage, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs now serving as the special negotiator for the ongoing military base agreement discussions, very aptly summarized our overall interests in the Asian region.

First among these national interests is the survival and preservation of the United States as a free, healthy, and independent nation. This encompasses the concepts of self-defense and maintenance of alliances. It requires a stable Asia and Pacific Ocean. Second, we want to ensure the vitality of a prosperous and growing U.S. economy. Within this objective is the need to keep open essential sea-lanes and oceanic trade routes between East Asia and the United States. Third, we will encourage respect for political freedom, democracy, and human rights. Fourth, we want to maintain cooperative, vigorous, relations with allies and friendly nations.¹⁰

United States military bases in the Philippines contribute directly to both our political and military goals in the Pacific as a symbol of our commitment to our Asian allies. Additionally, this forward deployment of forces affords the U.S. the ability to rapidly respond to any crisis in the region as well as provide logistical support, repair facilities, and the training areas necessary to accomplish sixty five percent of the U.S. training conducted in the region. They also provide the forces necessary to ensure SLOCs remain open and provide stability throughout the region by counter-balancing Soviet air and maritime forces. Admiral Huntington Hardisty, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, characterized the importance of the Pacific region to the United States in his keynote address to the 1989 Pacific Symposium.

The importance of the Pacific to the United States is indisputable. Seven of our ten mutual defense treaties and seven of the world's ten largest armies are in the Pacific. U.S. trade with Pacific nations has exceeded trade with the European economic community for seventeen consecutive years. One third of U.S. total foreign trade is in the Pacific, versus only a fifth in Europe. By the year 2000, the Pacific's gross regional product will double. The overall importance of the region to us continues to grow daily. The economic future of the U.S. is inextricably tied to the prosperity of the Pacific and is dependent on our ability to successfully maintain our economic and security leadership roles in the Pacific. America has a vital interest in the continued growth of prosperity and democratic institutions in the Pacific. U.S. security is based upon collective security arrangements. Our forward deployed forces are the glue that binds those alliances together. ¹¹

As Admiral Hardisty stated, the forward deployed forces and bases have been an integral part of the growth of stability in the region. With this background, it is essential to focus on the specific issues that must be resolved in the MBA negotiations if the bases in the Philippines are to be retained after 1991.

MILITARY BASE AGREEMENT ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

Compensation: Philippine officials are seeking a significantly higher compensation package than has been previously given. Indeed, there is a great deal of resentment that the U.S. did not pay any compensation for use of the bases until 1979. In addition, the 1987 Philippine constitution requires that any new agreement be in treaty form. As will be detailed later, this could create problems in the ratification of such a treaty in not only the Philippine Senate, but also in the U.S. as well. ¹²

Operational Controls: Negotiators are seeking to increase Filipino control over base operations. Alternatively, U.S. officials argue that operational freedom is required and that too much control (perimeter

defense) has already been relinquished. Perhaps one of the biggest irritants is that the U.S. can invite other nations to participate in military exercises within the Philippines with no Philippine control other than customs.¹³

Criminal Jurisdiction: Philippine officials want to extend their primacy in criminal jurisdiction over military personnel. Again, U.S. officials feel that too many concessions have already been granted.¹⁴

Nuclear Weapons: The Philippines is pressing for an absolute ban on the storage or presence of nuclear weapons on Philippine territory.¹⁵

Defense Commitments: The U.S. has consistently stated that the Mutual Defense Treaty in-place since Philippine independence in 1946 is adequate. Philippine negotiators, however, have consistently pointed out that this arrangement lacks the automatic aspects of the U.S.- NATO commitment.¹⁶

Although each of the above areas are important, the overriding issues of Philippine sovereignty and the growing impact of nationalism are unquestionably the most significant forces in the MBA negotiations. Neither is a new phenomenon. Early in the post war period, there were many individuals such as Senator Claro Recto that argued that the government of the Philippines needed a foreign policy based on their own national interests, not those of the United States. Many Americans since that time have mistakenly understood this nationalism in narrow terms of domestic conflict rather than the desire to establish an Asian identity and be accepted as an independent Asian country in regional politics.¹⁷ Colonel William E. Berry, Deputy Chairman of National Security Policy at the National War College, discussed the impact of nationalism on the base issue in his book, U.S. Bases in the Philippines.

Foreign bases are seldom popular in any country, especially among the political elites sensitive to issues of nationalism and sovereignty. They are likely to be critical and unappreciative of American efforts to take account of local sensitivities. Attitudes in the Philippines are no exception. An upsurge of nationalism has resulted in the determination to assert sovereign rights over U.S. base facilities, and it underlies much of the Philippine thinking on the base issue.¹⁸

In fact, many Filipinos still view the U.S. bases as a vestige of continued colonial rule. Similarly, many argue that America has so influenced cultural norms that the Philippines is still searching for its own identity after over forty years of independence. Similarly, critics quickly point out examples of U.S. involvement in internal Philippine politics. Continued support of Marcos until the very end, U.S. military action to aid Aquino in coup attempts in both 1987 and 1988, and the use of warnings that all aid would be immediately cut off if she was overthrown, are but three examples of what is perceived as U.S. meddling in domestic politics.¹⁹

Opposition leaders frequently point to concessions made in the MBA as evidence that the existing leaders are serving U.S. versus Philippine interests. As an example, in December 1984, Corazon Aquino published a statement of principles that was designed to unify the anti-Marcos moderates. The resulting principles of unity included a commitment that "foreign military bases on Philippine territory must be removed and no foreign military bases shall hereafter be allowed".²⁰ Aquino.²⁰

In today's highly charged political environment, nationalist groups, intellectuals, professionals, and government officials, as well as all of the various underground groups and insurgents, are very vocal in their criticism of the bases as a violation of Philippine

sovereignty. They will certainly have the prevailing voice in any media debate or popular referendum on this issue. It is inconceivable that Aquino could retain her enormous personal popularity if she actively campaigned for retention of the bases.²¹

Unfortunately, the economy of the Philippines can ill afford to lose the revenue that the American presence generates. Employing over 80,000 Filipino workers, second only to the government as the nation's leading employer, Pentagon spending, payrolls, and aid pump an estimated one billion dollars into the Philippine economy annually, nearly three percent of the GNP.²² An already weak economy is now suffering from the dramatic increase in oil prices as a result of the crisis in the Middle East. Plans to convert Clark AFB to civilian use have been designed, but according to some analysts, may be unrealistic and would not even begin to replace lost revenue.²³

Although recent polls indicate that most Filipinos do not oppose the bases, the opponents are largely the elite of society capable of significantly dominating any discussion.

Such is this country's colonial history that no major politician dares openly to advocate keeping the bases. To do so would bring ridicule as an Amboy, Philippine shorthand for American Boy, a political kiss of death. Beyond this attitude is the belief that this former U.S. colony will never be truly independent and sovereign until it gets rid of the American military presence, a symbol of domination for nearly a century.²⁴

As negotiations opened in May, 1990, the United States came under attack from virtually every quarter. On the left, communist rebels claimed responsibility for gunning down two American airmen outside Clark AFB and promised to continue to execute Americans until

they had "driven all U.S. aggressors from Philippine soil." On the right, a group of mutineers from the military vowed to launch military attacks unless Washington agreed to remove the bases voluntarily. Labor leader Crispin Beltran told thousands of demonstrators in Manila that "the Americans must be driven away and those who refused must be buried here". The communist led New People's Army, or NPA, issued a statement that could be interpreted as an open declaration of war: "Go home immediately or suffer the agony of attrition."²⁵

These unlikely partnerships are not uncommon and may even overcome other differences in these widely varied groups.

The rise in nationalism may also broaden the guerilla's appeal. Political analysts point to signs of intense ideological debate within the communist movement. "As time goes by", predicted a western diplomat in Manila, "the rebels' Marxist - Maoist coloring will fade and their nationalist coloration will deepen."²⁶

Nationalist groups have been quick to point out that the country's 1987 constitution calls for the removal of all foreign troops by 1991 unless a treaty or referendum extends their stay. Any such treaty would have to be approved by the 23 member Senate that faces reelection in 1992 and where anti-base sentiment is very strong.²⁷ For some Senators, the vote could be perceived as an historic opportunity to follow in the footsteps of those revered as heroes of independence.²⁸ Senator Wigberto Tanada, a leading opponent, stated that the U.S. bases "are the worst part of our national problems and not the solution."²⁹

Just prior to the negotiations conducted in September, 1990, President Aquino set the tone for the meetings by calling for a negotiated, orderly withdrawal. U.S. special negotiator Richard

Armitage in his opening statement acknowledged publicly for the first time that the days of a large American presence were coming to an end but appealed for an appropriate time to make the changes. This stance was further defined by U.S. State Department officials who said that the U.S. desired to negotiate a phase out period of up to ten years that would also leave open the possibility of the U.S. retaining access to the bases well into the 21st century.³⁰

Although it is understandable how one could feel that the U.S. position detailed above is essential for national security interests, it is also very easy to see that such a proposal could also go far toward undermining the existing government and unifying virtually every oppositional force. To analyze this contention, it is necessary to validate the forward deployment concept as well as possible alternative basing options that could fulfill this requirement.

FORWARD DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Prior to considering alternative basing options in the Pacific region, one must first evaluate the strategic requirement for such forward presence. As will be shown, the recent apparent demise of the Soviet Union has rendered the situation open for widely varying perceptions of this requirement.

Captain Ernest H. Joy, a member of the faculty of the Strategy Department of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, D.C., very aptly summarized the opinions of one camp in an article for Strategic Review:

U.S. military bases in the Philippines contribute directly to our political and military strategies in the Pacific. They demonstrate a solid commitment to our Asian allies and they enable the U.S. to respond promptly with military power in the event of a crisis. Units deployed to Clark AFB and

Subic Naval Base directly support missions in Northeast and Southeast Asia and in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf areas and provide stability throughout the region by counterbalancing the Soviet air and maritime forces based in Vietnam. In addition to outstanding ship repair and logistic facilities at reasonable operating costs, these bases offer unmatched training opportunities for all elements of U.S. forces in the western Pacific. Regrettably, with the current base agreement due to expire in September, 1991, there is good reason to believe that the United States will be forced to close its Philippine bases in the near term. U.S. force planners must therefore have a fall-back plan ready to implement should this occur.³¹

In this article, Captain Joy delineated certain assumptions.

First, he assumed that the United States would maintain the same level of commitment to its military strategy of forward defense in the Western Pacific, and that there would be no significant increases or decreases of deployed military forces in the region.³² As will be shown, these assumptions are not universally shared but there is widespread support for a continued significant naval presence in the Pacific. Captain Dick Diamond, head of the Strategy and Concepts Branch at the Pentagon, characterized the problems facing U.S. force planners.

Right now all we're seeing is a change in Soviet naval intentions. A stroke of the pen can order all the ships to stay in port, to be less aggressive, to not deploy forward, but a stroke of the pen could just as easily change that around overnight. So we as prudent military planners have to play against the capabilities, not against the intentions, and so far the capabilities are still in place.³³

From a purely military perspective, the presence of U.S. bases in the Philippines are a vital aspect of the forward defense concept. The combination of both sea and air capabilities and facilities afforded by the bases would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate at other locations in the region at an affordable cost.³⁴ In a

broader perspective, however, the question of requirements remains to be answered.

First, are the political, economic, and military costs associated with efforts to retain the bases beyond 1991 worth the effort? Second, are the military bases in the Philippines essential to the continued American military presence in East Asia and the Pacific? Third, what will be the effects of future negotiations on Philippine-American relations and the continued growth of democracy in the Philippines? It is essential that the distinctions between short-term and long term objectives be foremost in the minds of those U.S. officials involved with future negotiations as these officials attempt to answer these and other questions. ³⁵

Within these questions and the answers are the very heart of the paradox facing U.S. foreign policy planners. In an attempt to focus on the long term objectives, the chief negotiator for the U.S. in MBA process, Richard L. Armitage, authored a very forceful argument in his paper, "U.S. Security in the Pacific in the 21st Century," published by the U.S. Strategic Institute. He stated that U.S. policy in Asia and the Pacific has been a remarkable success story since the Korean War and has resulted in the evolution of the region into an economic powerhouse with great potential for democratic growth. However, he also pointed out that the U.S. continues to face as many risks in the Pacific and Asia as it does opportunities. Despite these risks, he argued that it was critical for continued U.S. security and overall regional stability for the United States to remain a Pacific power. ³⁶ This opinion is also shared by former President Richard Nixon:

The Philippines are a critical interest for the United States. Our Subic Bay naval base and Clark AFB are the two largest military installations outside the U.S.. They are indispensable for our presence in the Pacific and our capability to project power into the Indian Ocean and

Persian Gulf and there are no suitable locations for those bases anywhere in Southeast Asia. The United States cannot afford a defeat by anti-American forces in the Philippines.³⁷

On the other extreme, there are those that argue against continued overseas basing not only in the Philippines, but throughout the world. James Blaker, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, succinctly summarizes these arguments in his book, United States Overseas Basing.

Paul Kennedy, for example, suggests that tenacity toward overseas bases is a cause of declining national power and wealth, and as the United States renegotiates its base access agreements with the Philippines, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, and Spain over the next several years, at least four arguments for continuing to reduce overseas bases will be made; namely that overseas bases are a drain on resources that could be better used elsewhere, are lightning rods for anti-American sentiment, provide excuses for nations in which the bases are located to do less in their own defense, and can become a quagmire of involvement in regions that are peripheral to U.S. interests.³⁸

Although evidence presented in previous pages would seem to support some of these assertions, the majority opinion is that overseas basing is a necessary and vital part of our national military strategy. However, the size of the forces that are forward deployed is very often the subject of much debate. Although delayed by Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the level of U.S. military forces will be significantly reduced in the future in response to a perceived decline in the Soviet threat. For most of the post-World War II period, overseas basing decisions were largely based on the policy of containment. The assumptions and priorities that supported this policy are no longer universally accepted because of a belief that the U.S. won the cold war and can now realize a peace dividend by significantly reducing force structure.³⁹ According to Mr. Blaker however, this reduction does not necessarily correlate to decreased overseas basing.

Even if the containment assumptions on which the current overseas basing system is built turn out to be invalid or no longer necessary, this does not mean there will no longer be a need for a widespread overseas basing system. A more benign Soviet Union does not equate directly to a more benign world. We do not know what the future holds. But it is too soon to reject the notion that the United State's interests require the capacity to move, use, and sustain military forces throughout the world with dispatch and effectiveness. The rationale for the basing structure that gives that capacity may be changing and the forces that use the overseas basing system may be smaller in the future.⁴⁰

This reduced force has also been advanced by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell. His base force concept is founded upon a vision of the post Cold War world and affords strategic planners two essential benchmarks. First it identifies that level between enduring tasks and shrinking fiscal and manpower resources below which forces may no longer be adequate to meet vital strategic objectives. Secondly, the key purpose of the base force concept is that it has been carefully tailored to strategic reality.⁴¹

Although some would argue that this reduction is more fiscally than strategically driven, the reality is that the reduction will occur. As a result, U.S. national military strategy will most probably change from a reliance on forward deployed forces in places like the Philippines to a strategy of forward presence supported by power projection from a CONUS based military. General George Butler, formerly the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate, J-5, and now the Commander in Chief of Strategic Air Command, discussed the base force application in the Pacific in a speech to the National Press Club.

The Base Force also comprises a Pacific element that is structured and postured to the dictates of what is essentially a maritime theater. The Pacific force places a premium on naval capabilities, backed by the minimum essential air and ground forces required for enduring deterrence and immediate crisis response. Our core judgment is that notwithstanding the dramatic growth in U.S. trade in the Pacific Basin and

thus our stake in regional stability, the U.S. military profile can be cautiously reduced as our most important security partners become more self reliant.⁴²

Although the concept of forward presence versus forward deployment does not alter the U.S. desire to maintain bases in the Philippines, it does advance the idea that these forces could be reduced. If the U.S. loses access to these facilities, alternative locations might not need to totally replicate the existing facilities and capabilities. Possible alternative bases will be considered on this assumption. This analysis will first focus on expanding facilities at existing bases and then will examine the feasibility of creating facilities at new locations.

ALTERNATIVE BASE POSSIBILITIES

Increasing U.S. support facilities in Japan, Okinawa, and Guam has unquestionably received the most study as the simplest answer to possible base closings in the Philippines. Since bases in these locations already have the required infrastructure established, they would only have to be expanded to accommodate the increased force structure and requirements. Specifically, supply and repair facilities at Sasebo and Yokosuka in Japan currently exceed those in place in the Philippines. Unlike Subic, Yokosuka has the ability to put a carrier in dry dock and could provide berths for even our largest carrier assets. The Japanese labor force is highly skilled and could easily handle the increased demand. Additionally, there are numerous air bases that could absorb the aircraft currently at Clark AFB.⁴³

The principal drawbacks to expansion of the facilities in Japan are primarily economic and political. It is estimated that labor costs in Japan would be eight to ten times greater than in the Philippines. On the political front, such a proposal would very likely meet

strong opposition in both countries. Within Japan, there would unquestionably be significant pressure from the nationalist and leftist factions against such an increased U.S. presence. Similarly, the issue of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil would once again be pushed to the forefront. In the U.S., congressional support for such an action would also be doubtful because of the already staggering trade imbalance with Japan. 44

Among the alternative base possibilities, Guam possesses one significant advantage; it is a self-governing United States territory located approximately 1500 miles east of the Philippines. Because it is U.S. territory, bases there would not be susceptible to issues of sovereignty, economic blackmail, or uncertainty about future tenure. Existing facilities include a naval shipyard, well protected harbor, large supply base, ammunition depot, naval hospital, communications center, a Naval Air Station, and the largest U.S. air force base in the world. Training areas are also available for both surface ships and aircraft live fire training. 45

Despite these obvious advantages that seemingly have made Guam the most promising alternative, there are significant problem areas that would have to be considered and resolved. Foremost among these are two distinct problem areas, location and the limitations of Apra harbor. Located 1500 miles east of the Philippines, it would take six more days for U.S. warships to reach the South China Sea or Indian Ocean than from Subic Bay. With regard to the shortfalls of Apra harbor, the current maximum depth is only thirty feet. U.S. carriers require thirty seven feet and extensive dredging of the harbor would therefore be required. Additionally, although there are substantial

facilities already in place, the repair and supply capability would have to be dramatically expanded. With only one floating dry dock, at least one more would also have to added. ⁴⁶

Guam also has a significant labor shortfall that would be inadequate to meet the requirement if facilities were expanded. Overall, however, these problems are by no means insurmountable.

Although it would be necessary to upgrade significantly the port facility on Guam by dredging it to accommodate an aircraft carrier, building new piers, and providing more electric power generation and distribution, these improvements would constitute an investment in a strategic U.S. territory. This option keeps U.S. dollars invested in the United States, thereby strengthening both the national and local economies. More importantly, this option provides a permanent forward line of defense in the Pacific on U.S. soil, the rights to which cannot be challenged. ⁴⁷

This conclusion was also reached by a 1986 Senate subcommittee for military construction and by an earlier study conducted by the Congressional Research Service. Both studies concluded that Guam could provide a valid alternative to Philippine basing. ⁴⁸

Although there are other U.S. bases in the Pacific capable of assuming at least part of the assets currently in the Philippines, none are as politically or militarily attractive as Guam and all are much farther from the South China Sea area. Pearl Harbor has significant unused capabilities, but pulling back 5000 miles to the east does very little for the forward presence concept or for regional stability. Similarly, use of facilities on the Korean peninsula are not being seriously explored at a time when the U.S. is currently scaling back forces there. Although certainly possible and feasible, shifting assets to Korea would do very little to bolster U.S. security interests in the

Southeast Asian region and would appear contrary to the U.S desire for increased South Korean self-sufficiency.

Sharing bases and facilities that belong to our allies in Singapore and Australia is also an option. Although Singapore has offered this to the U.S. and has signed an agreement that would increase U.S. visits, this possibility also has serious limitations that were highlighted by Captain Joy in his article in Strategic Review.

Operational considerations eliminate this option. Although Singapore does have extensive ship repair facilities and air base infrastructure, fuel storage and logistic warehouse capabilities, they do not begin to compare with those at Subic. Also, shipyards in Singapore are commercially owned and open to non-combatants of other nations, including the USSR, which could create security/access problems for U.S. Navy units. More importantly, there would be no way to guarantee priority of support for U.S. ships and aircraft in time of military crisis. 49

Similarly, although U.S relations with Australia are excellent, the distances involved for U.S. Naval units from key choke points in the South China Sea would be an obvious limitation. Although a significant expansion of U.S. presence there does not seem to be a particularly viable option, developing an airlift waypoint in Australia could improve the Pacific air route from the CONUS to the Indian Ocean. Additionally, if the United States could negotiate for the utilization of port facilities on Australia's north or northwest coast, it would increase our ability to defend SLOCs through the Indonesian straits east of the Philippines. 50

Prospects for obtaining use of Australian airfield and port facilities seem favorable, although permission should not be assumed. The U.S. Naval Communications Station at Exmouth, Australia, has sometimes been an object of political controversy because Australians

associate it with command and control of U.S. strategic submarines. Although Australians are friendly to Americans and are allied by the ANZUS treaty, an anti-nuclear strain runs through Australian politics as it does throughout the Southwest Pacific, and this might create problems during negotiations. 51

When considering the use of existing bases as alternative locations for the facilities in the Philippines, Guam would unquestionably emerge as the single most promising alternative. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of using a combination of these facilities, an option that will be addressed later. Prior to examining this possibility, it is also necessary to evaluate the second broad possibility, that being the creation of new bases in the region.

U.S. defense planners examined a wide range of possible locations as candidates for establishing new bases. Among those countries considered were Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Australia, Saipan, Tinian, and Palau. Virtually all have been eliminated as possible locations except for the final three.

Tinian and Saipan are part of the Northern Marianas Islands, a commonwealth of the United States since 1976. Existing facilities on both islands are largely limited to World War II runways and new bases would literally have to be built from scratch. The cost of construction materials and shortage of available labor does not make this option particularly attractive. Clearly, the reason they remain as possible locations is the fact that they are U.S. territory. 52

Palau, a 178 square mile island on the western extremity of the Caroline Islands, is located 600 miles east of the Philippines. An independent republic, Palau recently entered into a new association

with the United States as a freely associated state. This agreement means that the United States is responsible for the security and defense of Palau. This agreement also gives the United States the right to establish bases but with a provision that prohibits the use, testing, or storage of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. It would allow the U.S. to operate nuclear-capable or nuclear propelled vessels and aircraft within Palau without violating the U.S. policy of neither confirming or denying the presence of nuclear weapons.⁵³ Palau has an excellent harbor and two runways, 7000 and 7600 feet long, that could be lengthened. There is, however, very little else on the island and labor and material shortages would be a problem.⁵⁴

COSTS OF ALTERNATIVE BASES

Estimates of the costs associated with shifting bases in the Philippines to alternate locations vary widely. In 1988, Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci estimated that shifting to other existing bases would cost \$2.5 billion dollars and up to \$5 billion dollars to create new facilities elsewhere.⁵⁵ By 1990, defense sources estimated that the actual costs would be twice that amount.⁵⁶ Not reflected in either of these figures are increased labor and operating costs that have been conservatively estimated to be eight to ten times higher than in the Philippines. To be fully appreciated, these figures must be considered in the context of the fiscal environment facing the military. Faced with large deficit spending and a Congress eager to realize a peace dividend from a perceived collapse of the Soviet Union, it is not difficult to conclude that funding any of these alternatives might be extremely difficult, if not impossible.

THE FOREIGN POLICY PARADOX

Having analyzed the many diverse issues involved in United States strategic interests in both the Philippines and the region, the complexity of the U.S. position is readily apparent. On the one hand, the U.S. strongly desires to maintain facilities in the Philippines to meet national security objectives and to preserve regional stability. The paradox is that because of the strong nationalist sentiment in the Philippines, the bases have become a destabilizing factor in internal politics. The democratic government of the Philippines is at a critical juncture in its history. Facing severe economic problems and a steadily increasing insurgency movement, it is in the United State's interest to ensure a stable democratic government. Although there are clearly a great number of anti-base advocates within the Philippines demanding that the government not extend any bases past September, 1991, such an immediate action could be destabilizing in not only the Philippines but in the region as a whole. Dr. Sheldon W. Simon, a Professor of Political Science at Arizona State University and the author of numerous books and articles on Asian security, discussed this concept at the 1989 Pacific symposium.

With respect to domestic Philippine politics, a precipitous U.S. exit would achieve several goals for the Philippine communist party. First, the removal of the bases would undermine the Philippine - U.S. security treaty and increase the prospects for a nonaligned Philippines. Second, it would lead to reduction in American financial support for the Philippine government, rendering the latter more susceptible to external pressures and internal challenges. Third, the blow to the national economy of the loss of its second largest employer would undermine Philippine credit worthiness, and investor and consumer confidence. Finally, the ensuing economic distress and uncertainty could polarize Philippine politics, leading either to a coalition government progressively dominated by the political left or to a military coup and a new Marcos style regime. Neither outcome would enhance regional security. 57

The Philippine government is clearly also faced with a paradox. Professor Jusuf Wanadi, the Executive Director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, was also a delegate to the Pacific symposium that was sponsored by the National Defense University. In the report that emerged, Evolving Pacific Basin Strategies, he summarized the problems confronting the Philippines.

Finally, the bases are also important to the Philippines itself. Ultimately, normal relations between the United States and the Philippines will only be achieved by the removal of the bases. Temporarily, the bases are vital to the Philippines, bringing the Philippines enough attention and the necessary economic assistance for its reconstruction. In the absence of the bases, economic relations with and assistance from the U.S., Japan, and the EC, including trade and investment, would not be forthcoming in comparable magnitudes..... 58

By September, 1990, there was very strong consensus among senior Philippine political leaders and prominent media personalities for a rapid dissolution of U.S. presence. In an address to the nation on 23 September, 1990, President Aquino summarized her country's position.

With regard to the issue of the U.S. military facilities, the Philippine panel confirmed its position that sovereign control over Clark Air Base, Wallace Air Station, Camp O'Donnell, Camp John Hay, and San Miquel Naval Communications Station should revert to the Philippines by September 17, 1991, as mandated by the Constitution. The Philippine panel also received the U.S. proposal for Subic Naval Base, which included a phasing-down and a commercialization of some aspects of its operations. The Philippine Government shall consider this proposal carefully and shall make its response at the proper time. 59

Although her remarks indicated that a continued U.S. presence at Subic might in fact be negotiable, the chief negotiator, Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus, quickly responded the following day in response to

criticism of this possibility in the press: "U.S. forces will have only commercial access to their bases in the Philippines after the lease expires in 1991. 60

Despite this very strong rhetoric, immediately following the next round of negotiations in November, there was a softening in the Philippine position with regard to Subic. Many factors contributed to this apparent change. Perhaps foremost among these was the impact of the Persian Gulf crisis on the Philippine economy. Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislio stated that "the bases' pullout in the country would cause tremendous economic harm." He attributed this to the fact that the country now required an additional two billion dollars because of the Gulf crisis that substantially increased oil prices. Compounding this was the loss of revenue from Middle East workers driven out of their jobs by the invasion of Kuwait. Economic problems were further aggravated by a major earthquake, drought, and flooding that had devastated the country in recent months. 61

As has been mentioned previously, the Philippine government had developed plans to convert both Clark AFB and Subic Bay to commercial operations beginning in 1991. The government contracted Swan Hunter Limited, a Singapore based firm, to evaluate this commercialization concept. In their report presented in October, 1990, they indicated that the project could only succeed if the U.S. provided substantial economic help and also agreed to leave key equipment in-place at both Clark and Subic. 62 They further indicated that only a five-to-eight year phaseout of U.S. personnel at Subic would prevent a severe economic dislocation. 63 This report clearly aggravated the conflicting desires of the Philippine government.

By mid-November, 1990, the competing factions within the Philippine government and the dilemma facing them in the base negotiation process was very succinctly summarized in an editorial in the Philippine version of Business Week published in Manila.

Defining the national interest has been complicated, Legislative Executive Bases Committee chairman Dr. Jose Abueva indicated, by "our leaders and our people being divided on the issue of an outright U.S. withdrawal from the bases or a phaseout. We're looking for a political formula which would satisfy both sides of our polarized nation". His remarks reveal the rifts and indecision which characterize the Philippines' position on the bases. Recently, Philippine panel vice-chairman Alfredo Bengzon said pressure was being exerted by "the country's leading economic managers and the military" toward retaining the U.S. presence after the current agreement expires next September. ⁶⁴

This reconsideration of the Philippine position was also reflected in the previously heavily anti-base Senate. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairperson, Leticia Shahani, was quoted in this same article indicating that "security concerns, recent earthquakes, and the deepening economic recession was forcing a more sober reappraisal of the bases issue among her colleagues." ⁶⁵

Perhaps sensing this softening of resolve, key U.S. government officials were quick to assess the effect of the loss of U.S. bases in the Philippines on both Congressional and public support. U.S. Senate minority leader Robert Dole was widely quoted in the Philippine media when he stated that "the status of the bases will condition our overall view toward the Philippines and will shape all aspects of our policy, our diplomacy, our economic policy and our aid. This is not a threat or a club. It is a fact." ⁶⁶

This strong position was also expressed by the U.S. spokesman, Stanley Schrager, at the opening of the January, 1991, negotiations. Mr. Schrager said that "if the Philippines wished to accelerate the progressive reduction of U.S. forces in the country and make it an exercise in confrontation, it is clear it is in your right to do so." ⁶⁷ He continued by further cautioning the Philippine negotiators:

If you choose to close your doors now, please do so deliberately, measuring carefully your own needs and the impact your decision will have on U.S. public opinion. If you wish to keep the doors open, you will find no shortage of goodwill and cooperation on the U.S. side. ⁶⁸

Although the United States received very bad press in Manila about what was described as a threatening stance, the U.S. delegation felt that it had made all the concessions in the negotiations to that point. They had already substantially agreed to remove all fighter aircraft from Clark AFB by September, 1991. They had also agreed to relinquish control of the four other minor installations at that time in exchange for a 10-12 year phasedown at Subic and guaranteed access on a commercial basis to both Clark AFB and the Crow Valley training area. Substantial disagreement remained between the two sides over operational control, compensation, terms for access, as well as the more fundamental issue of the length of the phasedown period at Subic. ⁶⁹

No significant progress was made on these issues in December and the scheduled January, 1991 negotiations were postponed because of the war in the Persian Gulf. Although the issues are complex and negotiations are ongoing, by the end of March, it seemed likely that the United States would retain the bases at both Subic and Clark for a period of time ranging from seven to ten years. The question that must be answered is

what will be the long term cost of this action? Will retention of these bases increase the likelihood of peace and stability in the Philippines and the region or serve as a catalyst for widespread unrest and anti-American sentiment? The latter possibility seems more probable as up to fifty thousand demonstrators took to the streets in Manila in late February demanding that President Aquino resign. Senator Wigberto Tanada spoke to the demonstrators and stated that Aquino and her foreign affairs advisors had "betrayed the national interest" by allowing the U.S. to retain bases in the Philippines. ⁷⁰ Similarly, although it appeared in March that the negotiations were getting closer to resolution, more than half of the country's Senators openly challenged President Aquino by vowing to vote against any new treaty. ⁷¹

Having analyzed this foreign policy paradox, is there a middle ground that would better serve the seemingly conflicting national security goals of forward presence and regional stability? In my opinion, there is, but it will involve a slightly increased, but acceptable, level of risk.

As has been shown, there is no single viable alternative that could replicate existing capabilities at Subic either operationally or economically. Many have used this argument to insist that Subic is essential and must be retained for as long as possible regardless of the impact on U.S.- Philippine relations. In my opinion, this premise is at best invalid, and responds only to a narrow short term focus.

Although it certainly must be recognized that the Soviet Union still has a substantial and highly credible military that must be considered, it can also be effectively argued that the political and economic

will essential to making this a viable threat is in a rapid state of decline, if not dissolution. If one accepts this premise, then a shift of U.S. forces from forward deployment to forward presence emerges as an acceptable risk. Withdrawal of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia to Hawaii or the CONUS, although fiscally attractive, would portend too much risk and would significantly decrease regional stability. The goal, therefore, is to find an overriding foreign policy that fulfills the military requirement of forward presence and contributes to the overall peace and stability of the region while ensuring the continued growth of a strong and democratic Republic of the Philippines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the facilities at Subic Bay cannot be realistically duplicated at any single alternative location, they could be substantially retained through a collective approach. The cornerstone of this concept would be the expansion of the facilities in Guam. Efforts should be initiated to gradually upgrade these facilities over the next five years. Although this process will be expensive, limiting the scope of the expansion and shifting removable assets at Subic such as one of the floating docks, could minimize total expenditures required. Additionally, any investment in Guam would be more politically and economically feasible because of the fact that it represents a strategic investment in United States territory.

The second, and perhaps even more important aspect of this approach would be to continue to expand bilateral military agreements within the region. Specifically, the U.S. has already signed a memorandum of understanding with Singapore to increase both military presence and access to existing facilities. Similar access arrangements have been offered

by the governments of Brunei and Malaysia.⁷² These arrangements should be actively pursued and expanded to other nations in the region. This will unquestionably be a deliberate process that should begin with very limited requests for port calls or the offering of small scale military training teams. In addition to seeking increased access, the United States should attempt to expand joint military training exercises wherever possible. Building on the bilateral agreements already in place, the ultimate goal should be to expand to multi-national exercises at the earliest opportunity. Encouraging the Philippines to invite other ASEAN nations to participate in joint air exercises in the Crow Valley training area could be one approach toward reaching this goal.

Although lacking the permanence of an established U.S. base, this increased commercial access, and military and economic interdependence, could not help but prove advantageous for all parties and would contribute directly to the overall security and stability of the region.

With regard to U.S.- Philippine relations, objectives should be viewed within the perspective of regional stability versus operational military requirements and measured against the benefits of this proposed alternative. With this fundamental premise established, it is in the United State's interest to ensure the continued democratic and economic growth of the Philippines. Recognizing and accepting the strong nationalism in the Philippines as a powerful force that can only increase, the United States cannot continue to negotiate for the short term goal of maintaining military bases for an extended period of time. Specifically, threatening to cancel economic aid or loan guarantees in order to extend the base agreement at Subic for another ten to twelve years, will only provoke increased anti-American sentiment

and provide insurgent elements a powerful propaganda weapon.

Alternatively, if the U.S. were to agree to a withdrawal from all bases except Subic by September, 1991, and a phased withdrawal from that location over the next five years, it would provide the Philippine government with a powerful political weapon and apparent victory in the highly political negotiation process that has polarized the nation and is viewed as a battle between nationalism and the last vestiges of colonialism. Although it appears that the United States might be able to retain Subic, and perhaps Clark, for at least seven more years, in my opinion, agreeing to voluntarily shift to commercial access at the five year point could diffuse much of the anti-American sentiment and bolster U.S./ Philippine relations in the long term.

In an effort to minimize the economic impact to the Philippines and the military impact to the United States, we should also negotiate for commercial access to both Clark AFB and the Crow Valley training ranges. This commercial access would ensure that Clark AFB would remain as a vital waypoint for military transport aircraft. Similarly, access to the base and nearby Crow Valley bombing ranges for not only U.S. fighter aircraft, but also for the aircraft of other Pacific nations, would not only ensure that these excellent training facilities would not be lost, but would also provide excellent economic aid to the Philippines. This commercial process would obviate questions of sovereignty and would be beneficial to both parties. As was stated previously, this shift toward commercial access should also be initiated at Subic not only to aid the economy of the Philippines but also to ensure commercial access for U.S. shipping after the new agreement expires.

The most problematic aspect of this approach to ensuring both the security of the Philippines and the region as a whole is the

realization that the United States must continue to provide substantial economic aid to the Philippines. Coupling escalating deficits and shrinking budgets with Congressional resentment caused by the base issue may make the continued approval of adequate economic assistance difficult. With this in mind, perhaps the most effective approach would be to press for partial debt relief to forgive a portion of the \$28 billion dollars owed to the U.S., an approach recently exercised toward both Israel and Egypt. Additionally, the U.S. should encourage other regional allies such as Japan to not only provide aid, but to encourage substantial investment.

The multi-faceted approach outlined above would, in my opinion, offer the best hope for resolving the foreign policy paradox that confronts the United States at the present time. The special relationship and friendship that has evolved between the Philippines and the United States over the last century should not be placed at risk. The long term national security interests of the United States are much better served by a policy that is guided by a overriding desire for the security and stability of the region as a whole. Although this strategy may perhaps increase the level of risk in the short term, the benefits derived would seem to make this approach not only acceptable but prudent. This sentiment seems to be reflected in the following quotation from Mr. Armitage.

While negotiating in good faith to maintain the ability to use the facilities in the future, the U.S. should diversify rapidly and think about dispersing the capability of our Philippine facilities to other appropriate and politically feasible locations. We won't stay in the Philippines if we are not wanted, and money alone, even if the U.S. were willing to pay what the Philippines may ask for the bases, cannot cement friendship or confirm

alliances. For the U.S., however, much more important than the use of the Philippine bases is the continued development of this country as a democratic nation. If we cannot live together as strategic partners, we should part as good friends. It is imperative that whatever decision is reached fully reflects the will of the Philippine people and is conducive to the continued development and westward orientation of the nation.⁷³

ENDNOTES

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5. Ibid., p. 42.
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7. Ibid.
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