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THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND NATION-BUILDING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Felipe B. Miranda

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The Political System and Nation-Building in the Philippines

by Felipe Miranda*

Prologue

A challenging situation confronts scholars writing on the Philippines. The current volatility of Philippine politics has qualified analyses of contemporary developments as extremely provisional in character. Still, since these developments are often constrained by their historical roots, the exploration of current conditions is facilitated by a sense of the past and scholars do well to be conversant with Philippine history. At the same time, precisely because much of this history is one of mass exploitation and suffering, scholars need to exert themselves in reading prognostically the desirable course or courses which current developments might undertake. However improbable the preferred futures might be, scholarship has a sworn duty to clarify it for those who are forced by circumstances to at least console themselves with dreams. At times, as in February of 1986 in the Philippines, "the power of a dream whose hour has come" becomes undeniable and dictators with their military auxiliaries are reduced to impotence.

Practically all of the materials and the analysis in this paper were put together about a month before the fall of Marcos. The author has been most fortunate in that, when events overtook much of his analysis, those events largely proved the analysis as regards the dynamics and prospects of the Marcos government to be correct. Part 5 of the paper, dealing with liberalization of the Philippine state, was written on the basis of historical evidence up to the time of Marcos' authoritarian regime. The author has retained the original write-up for two reasons: first, to preserve the sentiments strongly underpinning this part of the analysis in January, 1986; and second, despite the overthrow of Marcos and the rise of Mrs. Corazon Aquino to political preeminence in a new government, it may be simply a matter of time before the same arguments which dampened the prospects for liberalization under Marcos once more, unfortunately, gain saliency.

*Professor of Political Science, University of the Philippines and Vice-President, Social Weather Stations. The final revision of this paper was undertaken while the author was a Visiting Research Scholar at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University. The Center provided the author with an excellent environment where he could work on this revision with the least distraction.

Even as he remains skeptical concerning the imminent rise of a liberal regime in the Philippines, the author would welcome being proved wrong by events on this issue. He believes the progressive regime envisaged by many is only improbable, not impossible in the Philippines. After all, as before the fateful February '86 Revolution, enough Filipinos, scholars included, still continue their efforts to disestablish historical trends supportive of inequity in the Philippines. Committed, organized and faithfully-led, these people and their "people power" can transcend historical givens. The improbable to them should really be only a matter of time.

1.0 Introduction

In most developing countries, nation-building has assumed the character of a quest for the holy grail. Whoever the political authorities might be, in whatever political regime they might be situated, nation-building and national development are the favored justification for political strategies which maintain the authorities in power and consolidate their preeminence in regimes which are presented as at least democratizing if not quite democratized yet.

It is the objective of this paper to outline the historical evolution of the Philippines towards a nation-state and the general features which characterized the various regimes during this process of evolution. Furthermore, this paper seeks to clarify some dimensions of the current political crisis in the Philippines and, in particular, the Filipinos' perceptions of their current conditions. Finally, the prospects for regime liberalization in the Philippines within the 1980s are looked into.

The main thesis of this paper is that even as a political community has evolved in the Philippines, a truly national state still needs to be effected. This requires a transformation of a current oligarchic political system into one where indeed the interests of the vast majority of Filipinos are demonstrably served by the political regime. This political condition, to date unattained in the Philippines, can only be described as a democratized nation-state.

Time is of the essence in the successful quest for this political ideal if violence is to be avoided. Certain things have to be undertaken now by Filipinos and their political leaders. The current situation indeed represents a crisis, a turning point in the political life of Filipinos. The choice will soon be made, for better or worse, by a people whose interests have been violated, ironically even as they have been seduced with political strategies which emphasized the creation of new societies and new republics.**

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2.0 Some Conceptual Considerations

It is important in any discussion of political systems and nation-building to be clear about these lead concepts. However, one must not mistake the ability to analytically distinguish one from the other as necessarily a capability for divorcing the dynamic operations of political systems from those of nation-building and vice-versa. Historically, among the developing countries, politics has often been represented as nation-building and nation-building has been primarily seen as a political process. The creation of political order, indeed, in many developing countries, has been also equated with the function of nation-building. (Young, 1982: 71-98; Zolberg, 1966: passim) As to which is the independent variable, political and social scientists could continue to contend, but one suspects that the question is of the same epistemological quality as which takes precedence: the chicken or the egg.

Simply and conveniently analytically then, one may understand the "political system" as an effective subset of society which authoritatively allocates values within society. It is often understood as the state and its governmental machinery, with its operational regime properties and functional authorities executing command, control and coordinating functions over its subject territory and population. (Easton, 1965a and 1965b)

The "nation", on the other hand, is best comprehended in the fashion of Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities. (Anderson, 1983) In his phraseology, the nation is an "imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." (Anderson, 1983:15) It may be useful to quote extensively from this insightful work to further clarify the substance of his definition. (All underscorings are Anderson's.)

"It [the nation] is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them. Yet, in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."

...

"The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind."

ASEAN," Hotel Oberoi Imperial, Singapore. A month later the February 1986 Revolution toppled the Marcos government.

. . . .

"It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state."

. . . .

"Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings."

(Anderson, 1983:15-16)

In 1985, with economic and political crises rivening the country and actual civil conflicts with the Muslims in the South and the communist rebels practically nation-wide threatening to expand daily, Filipinos would have found it difficult to measure up to the criteria of nationhood set by Anderson.

It must be reiterated that the attempt to analytically distinguish the concept of "political system" from that of "nation" is essentially for heuristic purposes. There is perhaps even more urgency in integrating these analytical categories into a singular concept, the "nation-state", to focus on the inextricably meshed relationships between political system and nations. The author adopts this integrative sense of "nation-state" in this paper. Thus, "nation-state" and "political system", while not conceptually fully equivalent, are interchangeable used in this discussion. The integration reflects the operational difficulties involved in determining (in the case of the Philippines as well as other countries where political order has already largely cohered and thus is no longer to be "created" by de facto political controllers) which of the two concepts may be considered the salient determinant of the other; indeed, this method of integration avoids false problems of concept saliency and perhaps more judiciously acknowledges the interdependency or even outright permeability of concepts like nation and state or political system whenever these concepts are related to each other. This appears to be most prudent in analyses of developing countries, where analytical categories, largely Western-inspired, cannot be drawn sharply without oversimplifying or outrightly distorting the political and social realities they are supposed

to embody.*

3.0 Evolution Towards a Philippine Nation-State

Several types of analyses have been attempted in tracing the evolution of the Philippine nation-state. Traditional historians and political scientists usually provide a chronological record of the rise of political associations and groups starting from about the 16th century, progressing through the conquest by Spain and the establishment and consolidation of a colonial political community from the 16th to the late 19th centuries; an abortive attempt at Filipino revolution witnessing the creation of a short-lived Philippine Republic with Filipino ilustrados (the better educated, often European-trained, economically generally better-off and socially better-placed Filipino notables) as leaders; the conquest and annexation of the islands by the Americans and American colonial administration, initially through American military and civilian governors, but progressively with greater participation by Filipino ilustrados, and finally with mostly Filipino administration during the Commonwealth period; the Japanese occupation and the establishment of a puppet Philippine Republic during the Second World War; the post-war grant of independence by the Americans and the rise to formal statehood of the Philippines in 1946. The political history of Filipinos since then is often presented as having essentially two phases: the post-war Philippine Republic from 1946 to 1972, when martial law administration was declared by President Ferdinand Marcos, and the post-1972 period which is characterized by the rise and persistence of "constitutional authoritarianism." (Agoncillo, 1969; Agoncillo and Guerrero, 1977; Aruego, 1977; and Zaide, 1982)

Conventional histories have often been undertaken within nationalist and anti-imperialist frameworks. Thus in the most popular history textbook used in the Philippines, much of the concern is with chronicling the various struggles by Filipinos (more precisely by various ethnic groups under local leadership) against Spanish abuses. The high point in this treatment is the 1872 mutiny by Filipino workers and soldiers in Cavite which led to the implication and execution of three Filipino priests, an act which the historians dramatize as the catalyst for Filipino nationalism. "It may well be," the authors remark, "that nationalism among the Filipinos emerged on that fateful morning of February 17, 1872." (Agoncillo and Guerrero, 1977: 137) This incident eventually led to the 1896 Philippine revolution against Spain, a widespread Filipino effort which the Spaniards could no longer control and which was stopped only by American arms after the United States annexed the Philippines in 1898.

*In a workshop on "Concepts and Methods in Asian Social Sciences" sponsored by the UNESCO and the Institute of Oriental Culture, Tokyo University last April, 1984, the participants commended many Asian analysts for an orientation which acknowledges analytical rigour even as it recognizes that some holistic

The idea of national struggle is sustained in nationalist-anti-imperialist treatments of Philippine political history during the American period. However, since the American military was conceded to be invincible, the nationalist struggle is portrayed as taking a legal form, a campaign for political independence primarily through the demonstration of the Filipino capability for self-government. The Philippine Commonwealth, an experiment in self-government under American supervision, becomes the high point of this account. (Agoncillo and Guerrero, 1977:280-281; 303-399)

The brutal experience of Filipinos under the Japanese Imperial Army's administration is portrayed as yet another factor which consolidated the sense of Filipino nationalism. (Agoncillo, 1965)

If one were to make a single generalization regarding Filipino nationalism on the basis of these accounts by nationalist, anti-imperialist scholars, it would be that the experience of common suffering and their common efforts to subvert the oppressive alien political orders helped mold Filipinos into a nation. Thus, ironically, it may be claimed that Filipino nationalism has been induced by the very forces which sought later to abort its birth and, when abortion was no longer feasible, to simply destroy it.

Anti-imperialist treatments of the Philippine state go farther in exploring how even the independent post-war Philippine Republic could evolve a political system which betrays the interests of the Filipino people. From Spanish times to the present, the collaboration of native leaders with imperialist agencies and agents, a theme of treason, is offered by some scholars. Ilustrado collaboration with Spanish, American and Japanese authorities, undertaken for personalistic and class gains, for political and economic advantages, is presented as a recurring phenomenon in Philippine history. (Abaya, 1946:77-109; Abaya, 1967:139-150; Constantino and Constantino, 1978:1-3) Steinberg's comment on what he calls "the web of Filipino allegiance" is worthwhile recalling: "...the Philippine oligarchy had a historic tradition of flexibility toward any metropolitan power which would legitimate its position. Expediency in the face of force rather than idealistic consistency in the face of risk was the historical heritage of the elite during the late Spanish, American, and perhaps Japanese eras." (Steinberg, 1967:13)

concepts (which Western analysts might perceive as "fuzzy") could be more viable than analytically clear procrustean constructs. The Chairperson initiated the idea in her welcome address as she alluded to Oriental or Asian, Japanese or Southeast Asian thought thus: "These kinds of thoughts take for granted the existence of ambiguity. From such subtle thought, rigid categorization of dichotomous concepts do not emerge. What one finds instead is a total procedure, the material extension of things, not separation of parts." (Nakane, 1984:3)

The more radical strands of historical exegesis since the turn of the century have been increasingly woven into Marxist analytical frames. The Philippine state is still an artifact of international imperialism, with Filipino authorities functioning in a political regime that depends for its maintenance on the continued oppression and exploitation of the majority of Filipinos. (Amado Guerrero, 1971; Magno, 1983)

Liberal analysis has also been applied to the question of the emergence and evolution of the Philippine nation state. The best treatment is offered by the political scientist, O.D. Corpuz, whose The Philippines (published in 1965) remains the standard by which liberal interpretations of Philippine political history must be judged. (It bears noting that Corpuz' stature as a liberal thinker has become the subject of controversy among Filipino scholars as he argued for constitutional authoritarianism upon the declaration of martial law in 1972.)

Corpuz traces the development of the Filipino political community to pre-Spanish times when, except among the Muslims in the South, the natives were organized into little communities, the " 'barangay,' which was essentially a group of extended families." As such, the natives had no "political society [so much as] a kinship group." Spanish conquest consolidated the natives into "one administrative entity," with towns and provinces as local government units. The Church, driven by its mission to Christianize the natives, was largely instrumental in this task of political consolidation. By requiring the natives to live in town settlements (pueblos) for purposes of more systematic and efficient Christianization, the Church, according to Corpuz, moved the natives away from kaingin (slash and dibble) into sedentary agriculture, the first significant step towards the eventual development of significant surplus production and consequently commercial trade. (Corpuz, 1965: 21-43)

A local aristocracy (the principalia) developed in the towns, and collaborated with Spanish civil and ecclesiastic authorities in the colonial administration of the Philippines. This class of Filipinos originally consisted of the heads of barangays (which social organization was maintained and integrated into the towns). From this class of local, collaborative elite would later emerge the 19th century ilustrados, the better-educated, economically well-off, even socially prestigious, but politically weak Filipinos. In the last quarter of Spanish rule, these ilustrados became purveyors of liberal and nationalist ideas, bound to argue their cases in reformist language often emphasizing their cultural and political linkages with Spain, but eventually driven to join in active struggles to overthrow Spanish rule. Corpuz' description of the 19th century ilustrados who had gone to Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, Britain, Hong-kong or Singapore bears citing in full:

[While in these countries,] they felt for the first time, the exhilarating air of freedom. They learned languages, read history, discussed politics, and joined

the lodges of freemasonry. Most important of all was their discovery that they, as Filipinos, were not inferior to other peoples, certainly not the Spaniards who accepted them as friends and equals. The inevitable happened. The aura of authority and the halo of grace that had bound the Filipino leaders to the ecclesiastical and political regimes of the colonial order evaporated in their midst, and they felt a strong sense of the injustice of the polos y servicios [forced labor by the natives purportedly for public purposes], the numerous burdens imposed on Filipinos, and the denial to them at home of the rights that the republican philosophies of Europe proclaimed as every man's due.

(Corpuz, 1965:61)

The ilustrados took over the leadership of the Revolution of 1896, initially headed by Andres Bonifacio, a plebeian who took his inspiration from ilustrado propagandists like Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar. Graciano Lopez Jaena and others. But the ilustrado-led revolution was an abortive one, facing as it did not only the impotent Spanish forces, but with American take-over of the Philippines from Spain, the aggressive American military.

Despite the proclamation of the 1899 Philippine Republic, nothing by way of political institutions developed to survive American imperial conquest. The contribution of the "unfinished revolution," as the revolution of 1896 is often adverted to by nationalist scholars and politicians, was primarily in the realm of ideas. Institution-building was aborted by American conquest, but the dissemination of liberal, republican ideas took place and liberal democracy became part of the core of the nationalist campaign for independence during the American period. (Majul, 1957:193-194, 197)

Ilustrado nationalism was, to use Corpuz' language, coopted nationalism. The defeat by the Americans of the Philippine Revolutionary Army, together with the American policy of relatively "moderated imperialism", induced most of the ilustrados to collaborate with the American authorities. American colonial administration, unlike that of the Spaniards, allowed for ilustrados economic and political interests to be pursued and entrenched. Filipinos were allowed to form political parties, progressively take over higher positions in the civil service, and eventually gain control in a largely autonomous government (the Philippine Commonwealth from 1935 to the outbreak of the Second World War). With liberal democratic institutions of government (established through the Philippine Constitution of 1935), growing enfranchisement of Filipinos, active elections and political parties, American colonialism was reconciled by Filipino leaders with Filipino nationalism. Any sense of betrayal of the nationalist ideals of the 1896 revolution was effectively minimized. (Corpuz, 1965: 65-75)

The political system which emerged after the grant of independence by the Americans in 1946 manifested all the formal institutions of a liberal democratic state. A government with the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances, regular local and national elections, functional although highly permeable political parties (inducing some analysts to refer to the system as not a two but a one-and-a-half political party system) and even a hypercritical press characterized the political system up to 1972, the declaration of martial law and the institution of constitutional authoritarianism.

3.1 General Features of the Philippine Nation-State up to 1972

Whatever the framework used for tracing the development of the nation-state or political system in the Philippines, whether it be nationalist anti-imperialist, Marxist anti-imperialist or liberal, several features appear to be prominently present:

1. Through Spanish, American and Filipino regimes up to 1972, the political system may be seen as integrating more and more Filipinos under an increasingly centralized national government authority; (Corpuz, 1965: passim.; Abueva in Abueva and de Guzman, 1969:61-62)
2. Through time, from the 16th century to 1972, even as more and more Filipinos became effective subjects of the political system, the leadership or controller function has remained limited to a small sector of political influentials, whether foreign or native; (Agoncillo and Guerrero, 1977: passim; Abueva and de Guzman, 1969:24; Crouch, 1985:14, 43)
3. Through time, the effective participation of most Filipinos who did not belong to the political and economic elite had been largely limited to formal participation in elite-dominated, intra-elite-competed-in elections, resulting in what an observer has called "arithmetic majorities" as distinguished from functional electoral majorities which indeed reflect organized interests or bodies of opinion; as such, they had little say in the effective choice of candidates running for elective office or the determination of election issues and even less influence in the actual policies which government might effect; such concerns were effectively within the realm only of the leaders; (Corpuz, 1965: 135-136, 139; Abueva in Abueva and de Guzman, 1969:62; Agoncillo and Guerrero, 1977:546-547; Constantino and Constantino, 1978:42)
4. The non-formal or informal participation of most Filipinos in the political system largely placed them in a superordinate-subordinate, or "vertical" "dyadic alliance" situation as they tried to influence elite political actors for specific, largely personalistic boons; (Agpalo, 1972; Lande, 1971)

5. The extralegal, even illegal, means resorted to by a significant number of non-elite Filipinos to protect themselves from deteriorating economic and socio-political conditions were indicated by fairly high levels of social unrest and significantly recurring, outrightly subversive activities conducted against government authorities. (Mangahas and Miranda, 1986: 6-14, 15-18; Sturtevant, 1976: 61-74)

3.2 The Post-1972 Authoritarian State

On September 21, 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippine, invoking emergency powers in order to confront rampant lawlessness and dangerously resurgent communist activities. Furthermore, he justified martial law declaration by citing an extraconstitutional ground, the urgent need for social engineering towards a New Society, one where there would be a regime of justice, freedom and democracy, with special emphasis placed on ameliorating the conditions of the poor. (Marcos, 1973: passim)

With the help of the military, the government was reorganized to reflect the Chief Executive's unchallengeable pre-eminence in the Philippine political system. Congress was abolished, the judiciary was deprived of its independent status and all public officials served with no clear security of tenure. National referenda and plebiscites substituted for regular elections and were used to provide the formal trappings of legitimacy to constitutional amendments tailored to serve an imperial presidency. Up to 1984, elections suffered lack of credibility as an exercise where the popular will could be expressed. Political parties were emasculated, with even the President's own party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, or New Society Movement, being no more than a personal movement dedicated to his political advancement. The press was brought under the control of people well known for their support of the President and intermittent attempts at some independent journalism summarily quashed. Labor organization was discouraged (up to 1980, less than 10% of all workers belonged to unions, most of which were company or sweetheart unions) and labor strikes forbidden to promote industrial peace, supposedly a key factor in the strategy to attract foreign investments into the country. Political dissent was effectively suppressed, with most critics arrested under presidential commitment orders (PCO's), later replaced by preventive detention actions (PDA's), and detained in jails indefinitely without relief being available through the courts. (Abueva, 1979: 65-76, 80; Rosenberg in Rosenberg, 1979:160-162, 172-176; Hernandez, 1984: 15-25; Carino, 1984: 14-21; Doronila, 1985: 200-201)

Between 1972 and 1981, when martial law was formally lifted, the President succeeded in concentrating effective legislative, executive and judicial power in the Presidency, facilitating the rise of a more pliable set of oligarchs, politicizing the military, setting up a political party completely malleable to his will

and a press whose critical function had been largely dissipated.

During the same period, government intervention in and even take-over of traditional private enterprises maximized. Monopolies in sugar and coconut were created. "Political" banks, owned or controlled by reliable supporters of the President, at times even classified as "quasi-governmental banks," gained in influence. Each of those "political" banks became "heavily involved in the finance of a traditional export crop -- sugar and coconut -- and each [received] huge, rapidly growing deposits of export levies on these crops rather than going to the Treasury." (Patrick and Moreno, 1982: 35, quoting Edita Tan; De Dios, 1984: 40-51) The extractive ability of government, as indicated by accrued government income from both tax and non-tax sources, grossly increased. (Sta. Romana, 1985: 11-25)

With no possible institutional check on government, run-away spending facilitated by government access to foreign borrowing took place. Massive infrastructure projects, public buildings, expensive energy projects, and hotel construction used up public funds most of which were raised through loans. With neither political nor financial accountability to be much concerned about, government authorities permitted and abetted fiscal irresponsibility. (De Dios, 1984: 10, 61-62) Government deficit spending needed to be covered by borrowings. From 1975 to 1980, foreign loans increased from \$2.6 billion to \$10.5 billion. (By October 1983, the Central Bank Governor would publicly admit to a foreign debt of \$24.6 billion, incidentally about \$11 billion more than acknowledged by his agency only a month earlier!)

The period 1972 to 1981 also witnessed perhaps an irreversible development in Philippine politics: the politicization of the military. With the declaration of martial law, many senior military men became junior partners of civilian political controllers. Assuming positions usually reserved for civilians in government and private firms taken over by government, many military officers learned fast to wield political influence and to make use of legal as well as other perquisites of their new positions. (Miranda in May and Nemenzo, 1985:90-95; Tesoro, 1986:passim.)

As the military grew, from 58,000 men in 1971 to 113,000 in 1982, with a budget averaging 15.3% of the annual national budget, command and control functions were centralized in the President himself. No other civilian official or institution, since the declaration of martial law and rivaled his influence over the military. Since July of 1983, without Presidential authorization, not even his own Minister of National Defense, could transfer or assign military men, move military contingents or be responsible for decisions of an operational character within the military. (Miranda in May and Nemenzo, 1985:93)

The growth of the military in manpower, firepower, finance and political influence has led to their greater visibility in all political functions. They sat in cabinet meetings, party

caucuses and other venues where political decision making took place. The political influence of the highest military officers often exceeded those of civilian political actors, with the exception of the President and his highly visible wife.

3.3 Indicators of Stress

By 1981, the political system was showing clear signs of stress. Spurred by economic hardships, growing unemployment, and increasing skepticism for government, the challenges to government authority building up in the latter 1970s were beginning to be more pronounced and more open.

Labor unrest intensified and strike notices and actual work stoppages increased from 1979. By 1981, the number of strikes and workers involved exceeded all previous figures since martial law was declared. Between 1980 and 1981, strike notices increased by 117%, actual strikes by 337%, workers involved by 383% and man hours lost by 656%. (Miranda in May and Nemenzo, 1985:98-99)

Multisectoral protest actions picked up, with 25 public rallies reported for 1981-82 by the Bulletin Today, a pro-administration paper. Over 140,000 students, workers, professionals. The numbers of demonstrations dramatically increased in 1983-84 to 220, involving over 1.5 million rallyists from different sectors. (Miranda in May and Nemenzo, 1985:98-99)

Peace and order conditions deteriorated nationwide. Filipinos had to live with greater fears for their personal safety. The crime rate in 1981 (287 crimes per 100,000 population) was worse than in 1972 (236 crimes), when lawlessness or criminality allegedly required the imposition of martial law. The worsening trend in peace and order condition started in 1977 (212 crimes) and did not abate. By 1985, the crime rate had deteriorated to 319 from 236 in 1972. (Mangahas, Miranda and Paqueo, 1982:85; Malaya, 12 January 1986:2)

The communist challenge was increasingly mounted in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The New People's Army, which suffered organizational and operational setbacks soon after the declaration of martial law, bounced back to life in the late 1970s and by 1982 was estimated to have as many as 6,000 regulars and at least half a million mass base. It was reputed to have penetrated or controlled as many as 20% of the country's 40,000 barangays in 1982. Operating in 71 out of the country's 73 provinces, the NPA appeared to have actively taken to engaging military units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Media-reported NPA and military encounters from 1977 to 1982 increased almost two and a half times. (Miranda in May and Nemenzo, 1985:96-97)

3.4 1983: The Crisis Breaks

On August 21, 1983 former Senator Benigno Aquino, the President's arch rival in Philippine politics, came back to the Philippines from political exile and was assassinated within minutes of his landing at the Manila International Airport.

The assassination triggered waves of public rallies and demonstrations and general suspicion focused on the military and civilian politicians who could have been involved in the crime. Public apprehension was at its highest, panic-buying for emergency provisions ensued, capital flight accelerated, the military was placed on alert and the quietly developing political and economic crisis erupted.

Given a volatile political environment, foreign investors stopped coming in and instead capital expatriation increased, foreign loans dried up, and the government was forced to declare its inability to service maturing obligations. A moratorium on loan repayment had to be requested for, an act which further triggered loss of confidence in the government's ability to successfully activate economic recovery programs in a reasonably short period of time without external supervision and even strict regulation. Loss of confidence was further abetted by admissions from Central Bank officials that there appeared to have been an understatement of the foreign debt. At the end of 1982, the reported external debt was \$16.413 billion; by the end of 1983, "corrected" figures indicated it to be \$24.845 billion. (Briones in International Studies Institute of the Philippines, 1984:6)

The economy reeled and for the first time in its history, Philippine GNP growth rates two years running, 1984 and 1985, registered on the negative side; per capita GNP growth rates indicated a worse situation, being negative four years running from 1981. (Tidalgo-Miranda and Herrin, 1986:3-4) The government could do nothing but regularly issue forcibly optimistic growth projections.

The economic crisis could not be dissociated from a more fundamental political crisis, the general lack of confidence in government authorities and government institutions. No government institution or administration personality was trusted by more than half of its constituents by September of 1985. (Philippine Social Science Council, 1985:18-21) Even people who generally were not readily impressed by political underpinnings of economic outcomes acknowledged the political basis of the current economic crisis. Economists and businessmen surveyed by their professional organization in May, 1984 already largely shared this sentiment. ((Philippine Economic Society,) 1985:66; De Dios, 1984: 59-70)

Without sufficient popular confidence, the government found it difficult to mount recovery campaigns. Agricultural loan programs had no takers. Appeals to the private sector to help economic recovery by aggressive investments were met by a wait-

and-see attitude. Foreign investors in particular refused to drop prudential strategies of temporary involvement as recommended by their risk analysts.

Public demonstrations and rallies continued, with traditional rallyists, students and workers, now increasingly joined by professionals and religious in cause-oriented organizations taking to the streets to engage in "pressure politics." Various organizations sprang representing mostly left of center and left groups since 1983. In 1985, area specialization even caught up with demonstrations. Those who were "social democrats" in orientation, mostly of the business and professional sectors, usually rallied in the Makati area of Metro Manila, amidst the high-rise buildings of big business whereas the left or left-leaning, the "national democrats" preferred the open space of Liwasang Bonifacio, where they drew inspiration from the statue of the great Plebeian (Andres Bonifacio) who started the Philippine Revolution of 1896. The "liberal (or centrist) democrats" often trooped to both Makati and Liwasang Bonifacio, as the spirit moved them.

In the meantime, labor militancy continued unabated. records were set every year for number of strikes called, and those actually staged. The same thing applied to the number of workers involved and the number of mandays lost. 1985 was a particularly active year with 366 strikes staged (30% more than in 1984), involving about 109,000 (68% more than 1984), and representing 2.44 million mandays lost (up by 28% from the previous year). (Business Day, 13 January 1986: 1) The heightened militancy of labor reflects the increased economic pressure on workers and their families, but the effective, organized campaigns of workers for better working conditions and compensation must be attributed to the activist, politicized trade unionism pursued by workers organizations like the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU or May 1st Movement), the biggest of the militant unions.

Insurgency continued to grow. Estimates of the NPA armed strength placed it at as much as 15,000 partisans with a mass base of about a million people in 1985. (Holliday et al., 1985:5; Business Day, 14 March 1985:5) The AFP was daily featured as engaging NPA guerillas and gaining the upperhand in these encounters. Surrenderes were reported and photographed regularly. Yet, the NPA appeared to be able to operate practically anywhere they chose. In 1985, the Minister of National Defense and the Acting Chief of Staff acknowledged NPA operations in urban areas including Metropolitan Manila. (Business Day, 11 June 1985:22; Bulletin Today, 29 August 1985:10)

Within the military, no less than the President acknowledged the presence of factions. A core group of mostly Philippine Military Academy officers from class 1971 to 1984 surfaced in March, 1985 earnestly calling for a reform of the AFP. A month earlier, the group had fashioned a statement of concern, listing general grievances which the members felt needed to be attended to in the military. (Malaya, 8 February 1985:3) The

movement was subjected to praise by the general public and some retired generals. It was also censured by some very influential, active military men. (Malaya, 10 July 1985:4; 26 July 1985:5) The influence of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (or RAM as the group came to be popularly called) grew and within a year it would be crucial in spearheading a mutiny within the military against the Marcos government.

By the end of 1985, as one surveyed the authoritarian state in the Philippines, the clear sense of crisis in both the Philippine economy and polity inclined a Filipino to ask, "What is to be done?" What had been done, specially in the last two decades, already appeared to be popularly associated with what had failed and had brought about the current crisis.

3.5 The People's Experience Under Authoritarianism

In the last thirteen years, the vast majority of Filipinos suffered the terrible effects of Marcos' strategies for building a New Society and a New Republic in the Philippines. The historical evidence indicates that at no time during the post-war years did public well-being deteriorate more and faster.

*More poor people. Between 1971 and 1983 the number of poor families increased from 3.3 million in 1971 to 3.6 million in 1981, or roughly 19.7 million people in 1971 to 20.05 million people in 1981-83. This is a most conservative estimate of the number of poor people in the Philippines, using "extreme poverty" as the condition operationally indicated by a level of income equal to 16 kg. of rice per head per month. An earlier (February 1984) American AID estimate placed the poor at four million households, or about 24 million Filipinos, a more credible estimate; in a May 1986 nationwide survey, two-thirds of the respondents rated themselves as "mahirap" or "poor". (World Bank, 1985: 10; Mangahas, 1986:12)

*Poor become poorer. The gap between the poor and the rich has increased from 1971 to 1979. In 1971 the poorest 60% of total households received 25% of total income; in 1979 their share dropped to 22.5%. The richest 10% of total households got 37.1% of total income in 1971; in 1979 their share increased to 41.7%. (De Dios, 1984:20)

*More unemployed and underemployed. The unemployed increased from 5.2% of the labor force in 1972 to 5.9% in 1980. The figures for the same years for the underemployed are 10.2% and 29% respectively. From 1978 to 1983, the number of unemployed rose from 0.8 million to 1.2 million; the underemployed increased three and a half times, from 1.6 million in 1978 to 5.6 million in 1983. In 1985, the unemployment rate posted a record 7.3%. (De Dios, 1984:22; Business Day, 28 September 1986:1)

*Real wages declined as labor productivity went up. In a period of compulsory, mandated industrial peace, even as labor productivity for the whole economy rose annually by 2% and in industry by 5% during 1971-1978, real wages declined for skilled workers by 36 points from 1972 to 1980 (1972=100). It was worse for unskilled workers, who lost by 47 index points. (De Dios, 1984: 24-26)

*Inflation bit deeply into incomes. Between 1972 and 1983, consumer prices had trebled, eating more into the real income of poorer people. Although double digit inflation had been a sensitive political issue, the government had no recourse but to admit its inability to keep inflation down and by 1979 the rate of inflation was already effectively more than 10%. Within two years, Filipinos would be nostalgic for a 10% inflation rate as they battled a 50% inflation rate in 1984, and 45% in January of 1985. (Business Day, 14 January 1985:2; Bulletin Today, 12 February 1985:15)

*Greater public insecurity. As noted earlier (see section 3.3, supra.), there was serious deterioration of peace and order conditions. Even official data on crime suggested that rural and non-Metro Manila urban areas, traditionally with much lower criminal activity, were breaking down and manifesting higher crime rates. In 1985, respondents in a nation-wide survey expressed much apprehension regarding robbery on the streets (48% of respondents) as well as robbery within their houses (54%). The urban and rural proportions were generally close to each other, also indicating that the traditional image of rural areas as havens of relative safety was no longer reliable. (Mangahas, Miranda and Paqueo, 1982:84-86; Bishop-Businessmen's Conference [BBC], 1985:27)

*Poor administration of justice. Judicial administration continued to deteriorate. Citizens waited unreasonable periods for cases to be decided on. The backlog of undecided cases piled up, with 244,986 undecided cases in 1972-73 increasing to 438,573 cases in 1980. The disposal rate of cases in Philippine courts went down from an already low of 61% in 1972-73 to 46% in 1980. Public confidence in the fairness of the courts showed great skepticism. In 1981, only 37% of survey respondents polled in Metro Manila said that the courts extended fair treatment to both rich and poor alike. Close to half (48%) disagreed and a significant number (16%) avowed indecision. (Mangahas, Miranda and Paqueo, 1982:89)

3.6 People's Perceptions of Philippine Conditions

As their objective conditions deteriorated, Filipinos continued to hope for the best, patiently keeping faith in their political system and their government. Survey findings over a

period of twenty years testify to the inherent reluctance of Filipinos to press radical demands on their authorities and yet, as conditions became more and more intolerable, signs of mass desperation became manifest. A Tagalog saying, Ang taong nagigipit, kahit sa patalim ay kakapit (A desperate man would hold on to the edge of a knife), reflected a popular attitude by 1985, when indeed, in the midst of multiple crises, the desperate Filipino would not rule out the use of violence in attempting social change.

Still, Filipinos responding to survey probes have generally been optimistic as regards their living conditions, whether they be poor or not. Thus in 1974, the analysts of a survey undertaken by the Institute of the Philippine Culture and the Philippine Social Science Council, in comparing their findings with earlier studies done in 1959 and 1970, noted how respondents in the three studies generally saw themselves as "in the middle of an upward progression" in life. (Porio, et al., 1975:82) Subsequent surveys done in 1981, conducted by the Development Academy of the Philippines' Research for Development Department tended to be confirmatory. (Mangahas in Development Academy of the Philippines [henceforth cited as DAP], 1981:5; Miranda and Romero in DAP, 1981:11)

The 1974 study, however, already noted that their respondents were already "much less optimistic about [their] personal future than were respondents in earlier studies." Even as they believed in their progress in life, they manifested as strong belief that the nation would improve its condition more. This understatement of personal progress in relation to national progress represented "a reversal of a pattern found in . . . two earlier [1959 and 1970] studies, in which the respondents had higher hopes for themselves than for the country as a whole." (Porio, et al., 1975:83)

The 1974 analysts continued to note, "It is as if in earlier days people thought they could advance despite the national problems, whereas now [1974] they are of the opinion that the nation will advance regardless of the declining condition of its citizens. This could be symptomatic of a detached form of patriotism, or alternatively, a manifestation of political alienation." (Porio, et al.:83-84)

The analysts could have added that "detached patriotism" was precious capital for the martial law government, increasing as it does the range of political options which an activist government could have undertaken in its avowed goal of social engineering.

In 1981, one of the Development Academy of the Philippines' [DAP] Metro Manila studies noted a remarkable finding too. Even as the pattern of general optimism still prevailed among survey respondents, 22% could not imagine what a 1984 future might bring. (Mangahas in DAP, 1981:28) It was as if these respondents had a premonition of hard, even dangerous times lurking just around the corner. This finding becomes all the more significant

as one recalls that survey to have been conducted soon after martial law was formally lifted. If anything such an event should have normally buoyed up people's optimism.

As late as 1981, the balance of opinion of Filipinos regarding the performance, capabilities and intentions of their government in relation to its political and economic functions might have continued to be positive. Nevertheless, a 1981 DAP Metro Manila survey of Filipino political well-being, conducted by this author, already indicated sources of political stress. The author cautioned that "Government will have to be sensitive to people who are potential sources of stress in the political system," and, on the basis of survey findings, drew a "profile of the sensitive sector..." as follows:

This sector will be comprised by poor, fairly senior, household-head respondents whose perceptions of living standards and general quality-of-life over the past years bespeak deterioration. The critical poor living in Class E residences, sharing negative evaluations of government's performance with other respondents, could well be easy targets of negative organizational work. Those inclined to undertake this work would probably come from the group of people with greater awareness of opposition groups, the primarily younger, male, college-educated and residential Class AB people. We may refer to this latter group as the probable organizer group (POG).

The POG could expand their target respondents beyond the poor, fairly senior, household head, negative evaluators of life conditions and government performance. The younger respondents more cynical of a government which they identify as serving a minority, could be added to the target group.

An even bigger potential target group is indicated by survey findings which appear to be equally shared by all respondents regardless of demographic groupings. Those who consider government performance since 1972 inadequate, those who manifest a low sense of political participation and those who reflect a low sense of leader elite-directed political efficacy are also potentially responsive subjects which the POG could attract.

... This brief identification of potential sources of stress in the political system, as indicated by this survey of Metro Manila adults' perceptions, is but a prelude to the more serious task of the politically concerned, that of stress management. Metro Manila's (and possibly the Republic's) discontents pose a critical challenge to government. Clearly, to the politically creative, the imperative is how to transmute the discontent, negativism or marginalism of citizens into popular confidence in and active support for the legiti-

mate political regime, its institutions and, ultimately, its authorities. Political surveys may provide the data for those who would interpret the world. The politically concerned remain the ones who must change it.

(Miranda in DAP, 1981:16)

(The author's own survey findings are extensively reproduced in this paper because they appear to be the only ones available since 1972 reflecting identifiable sources of political stress in the Marcos regime. There is obviously a need to continue conducting similar probes. Without identifying and monitoring the distressed in the Philippines, the probability is high that they would cyclically reach critical mass and contribute to the inherent volatility of political systems built on foundations of sand.)

Three other studies were done in 1984-85 inquiring into the perceptions and sentiments of people regarding government and other political issues. All were done after the assassination of Aquino in 1983 and manifested much deterioration of popular confidence in their political system and its government. Since there is much agreement in the findings of these studies, the discussion presented here would be largely of the most recent, the Measuring the Public Pulse Project of the Philippine Social Science Council [henceforth cited as PSSC] conducted in September 1985.

Five of the lead findings of this 1985 survey also bear quoting in full:

1. The data indicate minimal levels of public trust in government institutions. Less than half feel that the elections in the last few years have been generally clean and honest, and only about a third believe in the value of future elections as a means for solving the country's current political and economic ills. Moreover, low proportions of the population report trusting government instrumentalities. The highest trust ratings reach only 36 percent for local government, 32 percent for the Supreme Court and 28 to 29 percent for the Batasang Pambansa and the local judiciary; even lower proportions of between one-fifth to one-fourth of the population say they trust the Sandiganbayan, the police, the Comelec, the military and tax collection agencies.

2. The minimal confidence in government is also evident in the low trust accorded government officials, including the country's President. Less than half, and more realistically, a lower third trust and would support the President in another bid for the country's leadership. Even among top government officials

reputed for their integrity and capability, trust ratings do not exceed the 35 percent mark. Other government officials, particularly those involved in recent national controversies, are expectedly accorded even lower ratings.

3. The low levels of public trust in the current government however, is not matched by a clearly emerging confidence in the then leading figures of the opposition in September. Whether in open-ended or forced-choice questions, none of the opposition parties and their prospective candidates individually emerge with substantial followings. Neither are trust ratings for individual opposition figures high or notable. There are indications that the then non-unified state of the opposition, and their limited party machineries and visibility constrained their popular support, as respondents continued to withhold their decisions on the parties and candidates they would vote for in an election.

4. High levels of uncertainty and anxiety are noted in questions bearing on possible economic and political developments in the country in the near future. Although respondents foresee as more likely a deterioration in the economic and a Marcos reelection in the near term, substantial numbers in the population are also not ruling out entirely the possibilities of either a military takeover, and intensified U.S. domination over the Philippines in the future.

5. On the presence or growth of the NPA [New People's Army], larger proportions of between 28 percent to 39 percent admitting to NPA activities in their areas are noted in Southern Mindanao, Bicol, Western Visayas, Cagayan Valley and Northern Mindanao, where there have been reported increases in military clashes with the NPA. Large "don't know" replies to the NPA questions are noted in the other remaining regions of the country.

(PSSC, 1985:35-37)

These five findings were even more remarkable as less than a third (32%) of the respondents could definitely rule out their countrymen resorting to violence as a means of solving national problems, given increasing political and economic difficulties. The other two thirds split into 37% who considered violence as a possibility and 30% who said they "don't know" or refused to answer. (PSSC, 1985:29-30) Given Filipino cultural values which generally deplore violent resolutions as well as considerations of prudence which might have biased responses towards "Don't Know" or outright refusals to answer, it was ominous that so few Filipinos in 1985 could categorically rule out violence in their

political and economic life.

In summary, one may say that survey results over the past twenty five years project Filipinos who by 1970 reflected much optimism about themselves and their country's capability to progress in life; who in the early years of martial law administration were ready to see national welfare being achieved more than their personal welfare; who even by 1981 were liberally granting their political system and government the benefit of the doubt and, on balance, were still supportive of government and other political institutions; who, by 1984-85, had largely lost confidence in their political institutions and ruling authorities and, in crisis, anticipated with great uncertainty and anxiety more threatening economic and political developments.

Finally, for the first time in post-war history, Filipinos, by a plurality (even a majority, if certain cultural and political assumptions were made in analyzing the responses), were admitting to the distinct possibility of violence being resorted to in the resolution of their economic and political crisis.

3.7 General Features of the Post-1972 Authoritarian State

In section 3.1 of this paper, five main characteristics have been noted of the Philippine political system up to 1972. The thirteen years of Marcos rule failed to drastically change these political features. Still it would be a mistake to think that the political system had simply remained completely unchanged. By the end of 1985, as earlier discussed (in sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6), there were indicators of political stress and popular willingness to organize for some kind of political change. The simplified problem was how the change might be effected; Filipino political calculus by ~~the end of 1985~~, as shown by public opinion surveys discussed above, had been complicated by the possibility that a critical mass of disenchanted and desperate citizens would no longer patiently and peacefully work for change.

The authoritarian state, as Marcos and his auxiliaries reconfigured it after declaring martial law in 1972, manifested the following characteristics:

1. Centralization and concentration of political power had continued and even intensified. Constitutional authoritarianism developed towards an imperial presidency, with all other branches of government and extra-governmental institutions like the press and the political parties domesticated in its service. With consolidated and singular control over a largely politicized military, the President managed to gain clear supremacy within the authoritarian state since 1972.
2. Subordinate to the President, a pliable elite had helped to exercise political controller functions which in

the past were exercised in a more liberal context of the President as central but also largely as simply primus inter pares. Elite pliability had been effected primarily through co-optation of members of the traditional political elite willing to serve an imperial President and through the building up of new members of the elite, political personalities who often had neither an economic or a political base at the time they were recruited.

3. The effective participation of most Filipinos, remained largely as in the pre-1972 authoritarian state, i.e. basically as marginalized political objects affirming in elections, referenda and plebiscites political decisions made by the authorities and implementing the programs operationally indicated by those decisions.

4. Consequently, the superordinate-subordinate context of politics had intensified, reinforcing in the minds of most of the politically marginalized citizenry a sense of helplessness as regards their persons and their society. In mid-1985, a nationwide survey reported that only one out of four Filipinos disagreed with the perception that the nation is run by a few powerful and ordinary citizens cannot do much about it. Better than one in three (37%) shared the perception of powerlessness. (Bishop-Businessmen's Conference [BBC] for Human Development, 1985:31)

5. And yet, as in the pre-1972 period, also driving a significant number of Filipinos to resort to extralegal as well as illegal, even outrightly subversive, means in an attempt to protect their violated interests and to secure redress for their oppressive conditions. The potential for organized counterviolence was probably never higher than in the given circumstances. In September 1985, fully 37% of respondents in a nationwide survey confirmed the possibility that Filipinos might resort to violence as a means of solving their political and economic problems. (PSSC, 1985:29, 71)

6. Paradoxically, precisely because of this frightening potential for organized violence within the political system, a significantly greater number of Filipinos, traditionally unorganized and non-political, have found it necessary to organize themselves and try bringing about a regime change without resort to violence and with the support of the general public. Pressure politics short of violent confrontations with the authorities and electoral politics were the preferred options of this group of concerned Filipinos.

Public opinion normally plays a major role in democratic societies. In the authoritarian setting of the Philippines, it was predictable that the perceptions of the Filipinos were almost completely irrelevant to policymaking by the authorities. What

impressed the authorities was a conception of government which took for granted a marginalized citizenry and stressed the dominant, authoritarian roles which governments in Third World countries appeared destined to play. In such a situation, the concern was not so much with popular legitimacy; the preoccupation instead turned to making government a powerful institution which exacted compliance from the citizenry, initially through disinformation activities and ultimately through the active intervention of the military and other security forces.

4.0 Government and Nation-Building in a Developing Country: The Philippine Experience in Perspective

Government has a crucial, positive role to play in the process of nation-building. As the lead institution of the political system, enjoying preeminence in authoritative claims to the loyalty of its public constituency, government may have a distinct edge over other institutions in any attempt to consolidate the sense of community which blood ties, language, religion and history may already have facilitated among the people. Where it is indeed able to gain legitimacy before its constituency, government and the political system becomes a focus of loyalty which could cut across other, possibly divisive, alternative foci of social and cultural commitment. In this integrative sense, government cannot be underestimated in its ability to contribute towards the realization of a nation-state.

One must add, however, that this crucial function of government depends on yet another consideration: the ability of the institution to consistently deliver on a wide range of societal tasks.

This is a relatively modern expectation. As recently as a hundred years ago, the question whether a government was "good" (or "not good") could be addressed without involving an extended evaluation criterion. Even the more educated citizens would probably settle the issue by largely focusing on some minimal level of peace and order within their community. The universal education of citizens, the general health of the population and "essential services" which people now generally expect were not the primary responsibilities of government. Neither the potability of water nor the availability of jobs nor the construction and maintenance of extensive infrastructure projects crucially linked to government viability. All of these are now taken for granted as government responsibilities.

It is particularly in developing countries that this perception of government has strengthened tremendously. Government is currently viewed as necessarily concerned with multiple dimensions of public welfare, from primarily health care to employment and income to income distribution, human rights and a host of other compelling concerns. Precisely because in these countries the private groups have not developed institutional capabilities to service most areas of concerns, even liberals

recognize that government initiative and, often, long-term participation in many economic and social ventures cannot be avoided.

Together with the expansion of government's areas of responsibility, there has also come about increasing popular pressure on this institution to deliver. At least three major factors may be explored as contributory to this pressure on government.

First, one must acknowledge the influence of mass education which has exposed hundreds of millions of people to values and operations linked with the "good life" and humanized existence. Public educational systems in developing countries have instilled concepts and generated aspirations which were markedly dissonant with the objective conditions of those being educated. The secular character of the good life and its often materialist specifications in terms of basic needs make it easy for people to comprehend and be supportive of the modern theme: that a human being is entitled to a life where his most basic needs could be met, that the satisfaction of these needs are not only the concern of the individual citizen but also the responsibility of his society and its lead institutions, and that this responsibility must be attended to within his own lifetime and not in some afterlife. Education activated a sense of expectation as regards what a "good" society and a "good" government must be able to bring about. People in developing countries have increasingly identified with a "revolution of rising expectations" and governments in these countries have had to reckon with this demanding phenomenon.

Second, mass communication has made it inevitable for sentiments aroused by the educational system to be disseminated to progressively bigger publics. With improved means of communication and transportation, with television, newspapers and with cheap, portable radio sets, the village parochialism of the average citizen could not long endure. His sense of what is and what is desirable expands and government, in accordance with political ideas propagated by the educational system, is increasingly perceived as the vital instrument for linking these two dimensions of his life.

Finally, mass organization undertaken by opposition groups, by alternative political forces competing with government either above or underground, has also exerted pressure on government to deliver. Often skillfully exploiting themes of "humanized" life, human rights and social justice and effectively using mass communication techniques, these alternative political forces cannot be ignored by the political authorities. Specially when they are committed to violent regime changes, these groups present government with dual challenges: the sustained performance of government at levels which keep the citizens from being recruited into dissident groups; and the maintenance of an often costly military to defend the existing political order.

In developing countries, this trinity (the moral force of the idea of "humanized" life as activated by the educational

system, the technological force of enhanced mass communication capabilities, and the political force inhering in the emergence of activist mass organization) constitutes a synergistic pressure towards development-minded government. Where governments refuse to undertake the indicated development, the alternative has usually been a preservation of an onerous status quo at all cost, with mass deception and mass repression as fundamental government policies. Such policies have proved to be shortsighted and basically unworkable in most historical instances.

On the other hand, governments in developing countries which commit themselves to developmental functions of national integration and public services delivery may also be anticipated to develop strong, directive and probably authoritarian institutions. Integration demands firm and fair treatment of many competing, even conflicting interests which were traditionally resolved in social contexts of gross inequity. A developmentally minded government would find many occasions for upholding majority but unorganized interests, as in the case of the poor. The same government would also have to protect minorities which enterprising, exploitative majorities might have deprived of their legitimate shares of national resources. Far too many of the stresses threatening national unity are generated by the manner in which governmental authorities try to resolve ethnic, religious, as well as economic and political claims by minority groups. The Ibos of Nigeria, the Muslims in the Philippines, the overseas Chinese in some developing countries, and perhaps even leftist political minorities may be cited in this regard. In these situations where the integrative function of government presumes its ability to initiate and maintain public order, government's first priority will be to strengthen itself that it may effectively govern.

A government which seeks to deliver on the many responsibilities ascribed to it in developing countries inevitably builds up and tries to maximize its resource base. Taxation, foreign and domestic borrowing, foreign aid and even government entry into traditional private enterprise areas are some of the measures resorted to. All of these measures depend for their success on the ability of government authorities to gain the cooperation of their citizenry and, where this is not possible, to overcome predictable resistance to extractive public finance schemes. Obviously, a weak government cannot realistically expect much success in resource build-up in a developing country.

Strong government might be temporarily induced through the creation and maintenance of strong security forces. However, the historical evidence suggests that the strength of government (and its long term stability) ultimately depends on the willful support of its citizenry. It is a function of popular perceptions of regime legitimacy and substantial public confidence in government as a working mechanism for progressive social change.

This point cannot be overemphasized if one's holy grail is a stable, democratic nation-state. Far too many people pride them-

selves as students of Machiavelli and realpolitik and emphasize state security. Unfortunately most of them appear to have the most superficial understanding of their political adviser. They fail to heed the Florentine's ultimate warning to political architects and social engineers: "Those who do not build on the people build on a foundation of sand."

The problem does not appear to be strong government, so much as a credible, credibly performing and delivering government. In the specific case of the Philippines, over the past four centuries, but more particularly in the last two decades, the enduring political crisis has been that authorities would rather build new societies and new republics on foundations of sand.

4.1 Strong Government and the Philippine Nation-State

The Philippine government had not wanted for strength since 1972, the year martial law was declared by President Marcos and a regime of "constitutional authoritarianism" was inaugurated. The particulars of his thirteen-year rule in terms of repressive and irresponsible government, its public costs and public perceptions during this period have been discussed earlier (sections 3.2 to 3.6) in this paper. It is sufficient to note at this point that government under Marcos failed to serve the cause of national unity in any positive sense. Insurgency was prominently undertaken by the secessionist Muslims and the communist rebels, both of which threatened to break up the political system. The people in general, with their economic hardships and political alienation from government, had no incentives to help in the management of the insurgency problems, much less to pay attention to Marcos' rhetorics on national development and the "Filipino ideology". The only contribution Marcos might have made to the cause of national unity was in generating and consolidating so much opposition from so many sectors to the continuation of his authoritarian government.

The past thirteen years of Marcos' rule, however, have convinced Filipinos that something is needed to temper the political strength of ruling authorities: a functional mechanism for public accountability.

Under Marcos, the institutions of public accountability formally existed. As a matter of fact, it is doubtful whether any other Filipino President appeared to be as publicly concerned with the creation and operation of these institutions. The institutions, mostly specifically provided for by the 1973 Marcos Constitution, proliferated. Investigative powers over public officials and government agencies were supposedly wielded by the Batasang Pambansa or National Assembly, the Commission on Audit, the Tanodbayan or Ombudsman, and in matters concerning elections, the Commission on Elections. As a matter of fact, as part of its general administrative powers, every agency of government presumably enjoyed this investigative power as regards its personnel. Depending on their positions, corrupt government officials could

be charged and tried in the Batasang Pambansa, or the special court Sandigan Bayan, and where military men were involved, in the military tribunals. In addition, public accountability could also be theoretically exacted through the other judicial and executive agencies of government.

Marcos' imperial presidency, however, interested itself in form rather than substance. It curbed the effectiveness of all the formal institutions in processing public accountability cases. Marcos waived public audits, stopped investigations, and preempted unfavorable court decisions by declaring national policies which rendered pending cases "moot and academic". (Espiritu, 1986: passim)

Two things are indicated for institutions of public accountability to be functional in the Philippines, as well as probably in many other developing countries. First, there is needed the development and strengthening of a well-informed, alert, responsive and persistent public opinion. The public needs mechanisms for keeping it informed on current, urgent issues and developments and, just as important, organizations to convert its sentiments and convictions into effective pressure on government agencies and public officials. Particularly during Marcos' time but to a much less extent in the immediate post-Marcos era, the concerned public has often had no resort but pressure politics, that is to say, to take to the streets, demonstrate, picket and be exposed to often violent counteractions by police and military forces.

Second, one must not underestimate the probable impact of an exemplary leadership, specially where the highest leaders themselves manifest an unswerving commitment to public office as a position of public trust. In authoritarian political systems, this condition is easier stipulated than achieved. Power corrupts and authoritarian leaders, with their vast powers, appear mostly unable to resist corruption. Perhaps no formula exists to guarantee the emergence of this kind of exemplary leadership. It may be ultimately an act of noblesse oblige. In any case, Filipinos will strain to remember, among their many public officials in the last 13 years, one who willingly walked a direct path towards accountability to the public. In 1986, with the overthrow of Marcos and many of his political lieutenants, Filipinos have once more re-kindled their hopes that the new set of authorities would set themselves up precisely as paragons of conscientious and effective leadership.

5.0 The Liberalization of the Philippine Nation-State*

After this extended survey of the evolution of the nation-state in the Philippines, including an analysis of the recently overthrown Marcos government and the political perceptions of Filipinos in the last two decades, it is clear that no political system existed in the Philippines where ruling authorities had successfully identified regime interests with those of the Filipino people.

Furthermore, even as one believed strongly in the need to liberalize the authoritarian political system dominated by Marcos, one had to distinguish the need for liberalization from the probability of liberalization taking place. Under Marcos, it was difficult to escape skepticism as regards the latter concern.

In this final part of the paper, the grounds for such skepticism are clarified.

5.1 Regime Liberalization and Liberal Democracy: An Alternative to Current Philippine Politics

First, a note must be made to clarify what regime liberalization means in this paper. The basic paradigm for liberal democracy is a political regime where the principles of popular sovereignty, participative politics, public accountability and government checks and balances are recognized; where elites may exist and often assume a directive and tutelary role as government authorities; and finally, where government, tasked with social justice considerations and compelled by dearth of effective alternative social institutions, assumes responsibility for a broad range of societal functions. While the paradigm is clearly an ideal type, the empirical liberal regime is understood to be one which, using a method of successive approximations, historically moves closer towards the paradigmatic parameters of liberal democracy. Given an authoritarian political system, regime liberalization requires structural as well as process change which moves the political system towards a liberal democratic framework.

5.2 Indicators of Regime Liberalization: A Summary Analysis

In contemplating liberal democracy as an alternative political development for the Philippines in the 1980s, it may be advisable to identify indicators, both positive and negative, of this ideal type. Positive indicators are those that facilitate the creation of a liberal political system; negative indicators do the opposite. (The justification for each item on the list of either positive or negative indicator is omitted in this paper. This more detailed explanation may be taken up in another discussion paper where space limitation would not be as much of a constraint as on this one.) This list of indicators is not an

*The author would like to remind the reader that this section was written primarily with Marcos' government in mind. Please see the Prologue for why he has chosen to retain this section largely in its original January, 1986 presentation form. The author's Epilogue updates the discussion to the present Aquino government.

exhaustive one. Some people will find other dimensions of liberal democratization for which appropriate indicators could be designed. However, for purposes of this present discussion, the indicators offered here may serve to initially context one's evaluation of a liberal democratic regime as a probable political development in the Philippines of the 80s.

5.2.1 Positive Indicators of Liberal Democratization

The following may be considered as positive indicators of a liberalizing regime: (a) the rise of alternative political command centers within the government and among the aboveground opposition; (b) the resurgence of civilian governmental institutions, particularly the constitutional agencies like the Legislative, the Judiciary, the Commission on Audit and the Commission on Elections; (c) the resurgence of mechanisms for responsible, regular and authoritative popular political participation such as the referenda, plebiscites and elections; (d) the development of control policies to ensure constitutionalism among the military; and (e) the build-up of political institutions like the political party, the alternative press, and even institutions traditionally perceived as being non-political in character (e.g. universities, research groups, think-tanks and other academic institutions) which contribute to greater awareness regarding government functions, operations and its public accountability.

Positive Indicators Analysis

As regards the positive indicators, it would be difficult to be optimistic concerning a liberal democratic regime in this country. The period of constitutional authoritarianism manifested more markedly authoritarian rather than constitutional features. The preeminence of an authoritarian ruler demanded the concentration of political power in the executive, with the consequent emasculation of the other constitutional agencies. Mechanisms for popular political participation, as pointed out earlier in this paper, were largely reduced to exercises where a grossly uninformed public was either confused or brought into supporting constitutional amendments, pre-ordained voting ratios and other results which enhanced the primary of the ruling authorities. The military was reduced to being an auxiliary class where inefficiency, demoralization and politicization found a haven. The ruling political party became grossly dependent on the political perceptions and interests of an extremely narrowly constituted leadership. The alternative press and largely non-partisan institutions like those of academe were increasingly marginalized in influence, if not outrightly proscribed from performing traditional functions. The aboveground opposition groups, hampered by meager material resources and, more critically, of programmatic strategies of alternative government, made no headway in organizing the citizenry against the ruling authorities. Neither government nor the aboveground opposition groups succeeded in a popular mobilization effort which might have mitigated if not prevented the political and economic crises of

the 1980s.

The assassination of Aquino in August 1983 and the resulting outbreak of the political and economic crises were probably contributory to some improvements in relation to the positive indicators of liberal democratization. The rise of independents within the ruling party, the greater outspokenness of Supreme Court justices, the greater representations of the opposition in the Batasan, the commendable efforts of non-governmental agencies like NAMFREL in monitoring the May 1984 elections, the galvanizing majority report of the Agrava Fact Finding Board, the organization of reformists within the military, the revitalization of the alternative press, even the greater integrity and reliability of information issuing from some sectors of the government's statistical service, infused optimism among those holding a liberal political credo. Beyond all of these developments, of even greater positive impact for liberalism, there were the large throngs of people in many parts of the country who publicly demonstrated their disaffection with government's management of their economic and political conditions.

These gains had been attenuated in the past six months, since July of 1985. For each one of the positive developments in the first 18 months after Aquino's assassination, a counterdevelopment may now be cited. The dynamics of this reversal cannot be analyzed here in this paper in detail. However, it may be instructive to identify at least one line of analysis:

The authoritarian government, besieged by advocates of pressure politics, yielded what it could no longer withhold without being politically displaced. For so long as public pressure could be maintained on the government, the latter had to liberalize. For public pressure however to be maintained, the public had to be organized. Opposition leaders and their limited groups failed to undertake this organizational work. Euphoric with the mass resentment displayed by the public after Aquino's assassination, further buoyed by the windfall they gained from the Batasan elections of 1984, opposition leaders prematurely concluded that the Marcos era was over. Many opposition leaders might have started thinking of traditional political ambitions and the necessary positioning which they must undertake to emerge among the top men in the post-Marcos Philippines. This mentality would explain why so many aboveground opposition groups were dismembered and continued to be dismembering groups. Their dialectics was cluttered by operational antitheses, with syntheses (opposition unity as well as systematic mass organizational work) being no more than frequently engaged-in public relations rhetoric.

5.2.2 Negative Indicators of Liberal Democratization

The negative indicators of regime liberalization may include the following: (a) continuing deterioration in the economic life of the people; (b) increasing levels of social unrest; (c)

increasing appeal and organizational viability of radical political movements; (d) continuing external intervention in Philippine economic and political issues; and (e) increasingly negative public opinion due to the above four considerations.

Negative Indicators Analysis

For Filipino liberals, an analysis of the negative indicators of liberal democratization yielded little comfort. The economic deterioration continued, with the public's purchasing power reduced by double digit inflation rates (50% in 1984 and 45% in 1985), with unemployment nationally estimated by a credible survey in June-July 1985 at 13% and with 74% of the survey respondents regarding themselves as "poor". (BBC, 1985:26) Crimes rates, number of strikes and insurgent operations continued at levels significantly higher than in the pre-martial law period. Subversive groups like the CPP-NPA appeared to appeal to many, with membership possibly having increased at an annual average of 10-15% since 1973, and after 1983 perhaps by 50 to 60%. The National Democratic Front and other leftist front organizations also appeared to have increased their recruits and their presence more markedly felt in more areas of the country. The IMF and the World Bank continues to demand their "conditionalities" of the Philippine government; and the President and his leading lieutenants periodically had to ritually reassure the Filipino people that foreign intervention could not possibly be successfully exerted on a host of issues, economic as well as political.

As regards increasingly negative public opinion, it was remarkable that no national government institution or personality was rated satisfactory by more than 50% of respondents surveyed nation-wide in June-July 1985. The President rated 44%, the First Lady 50%, the Prime Minister 38%, the National Assembly 45% and the Supreme Court 40%. The Sandiganbayan, entrusted with a most delicate task of trying the accused in the Aquino assassination, rated a paltry 26%. (BBC, 1985:33) While no figures were available for other crucial government officials, it would be revealing to find out how many people were satisfied with officials (like the Minister for Economic Planning and Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority) who regularly informed the people that economic recovery was proceeding, that in the last decade income distribution had improved, or that the wages of labor had increased. (Even "nincoompoops", President Marcos' favorite term for those who challenged government policies and questioned official statistics, could have been asked their opinions regarding the last set of questions.)

A later nation-wide survey done in September 1985, testing for popular trust in government institutions and personalities, had more shocking findings, as reported in an earlier section (3.6) of this paper.

5.3 Prognosis Regarding the Likelihood of a Liberal Demographic Regime in the Philippines

Given the indicators cited above, it was highly unlikely in January of 1986 that regime liberalization or a liberal democratic alternative could be anticipated in the short term. No political force(s) existed within the Marcos government which could be identified as committed to values of self-restraint or institutional check and balance or perhaps even public accountability. Self-restraint was a virtue hard to come by when one's mission was, as Marcos put it, never to abandon his people and the alternative leaders were perceived by the authorities as "nincompoops". When a revered tradition of judicial seniority was waived precisely because the prospective Chief Justice might not see eye to eye politically with the preeminent political authority, it became rather difficult to conceive of institutional checks and balances as functioning at all. When partisan voting in the National Assembly most efficiently quashed formal moves towards impeaching the President in the National Assembly, it was unlikely that public accountability would be served. When regime critics become threatened species, as journalists with well-formed backbones appeared to have become in the 1980s, the probability was that values of rationality, the dignity of the individual and similar liberal values would be neglected.

From the ruling authorities then, no realistic hope could be entertained in building the foundations of liberal democracy. Durable regime liberalization, as distinguished from tactical political retreats, was a contradiction in terms for Marcos and his ruling clique.

Unfortunately, much the same might be said of most of the opposition. There were principled oppositionists who simply had given up on liberal democracy and embraced ideologies which called for radical political prescriptions. They are not the concerns of this paper. Rather, the concern is with opposition leaders who floated ideas consonant with regime liberalization and liberal democracy but who failed to transcend their narrow political ambitions. As indicated in the analysis of positive indicators of liberalization, the various opposition leaders mostly failed to organize more of the public in effective national pressure groups. Instead, they have settled for their traditional limited sectoral support, anticipating a return to the traditional politics of oligarchy. Such leaders needed to immerse themselves in organizational work, particularly in mass organizations where questions as to who would be a post-Marcos President or influential minister attracted little interest.

The Ultimate Possibility: People Power

The analysis of leaders, both administration and oppositionist, makes one uncomfortable about the prospects of a liberal political regime in the Philippines. But perhaps liberal analysis cannot end at this point.

If liberals are optimists, even forced optimists, two other alternatives for liberalism might be considered. First, a deus ex machina resolution of the present crisis of authoritarianism could be offered. (One must not yield to the temptation, however great, to look up to heaven and, in the fashion of the two greatest saints of Catholicism, pray that the heart of an authoritarian ruler, in his autumnal years, be softened towards liberalism. This despite assurances by Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates [Marcos and Arturo Tolentino] that indeed, should the President be re-elected in the snap elections of February 1986, there would be a different Administration, even a different political regime. Even the Greek inspirers of St. Augustine and St. Thomas point out that habits die hard, and, one may add, political habits of rule specially so.) The political deus ex machina must be a Great White Uncle, who actively intervenes in Philippines politics as his strategic interests dictate.

Many Filipinos, perhaps in their desperation, unfortunately appear to welcome foreign intervention. Serious movements for re-integrating the Philippines back into the United States have drawn sizeable numbers of converts. The hope appears to be that since the United States is a liberal democracy, Philippine integration into that system would serve to kindle liberal fires among Filipino souls and irrevocably turn the Philippines into a liberal state.

Another hope is that with American intervention, the authoritarian ruler might be displaced and liberal-minded ones installed in their place. From the latter would issue a regime of political liberalism.

This alternative suffers from two lapses, one of political intellect and the other of moral or patriotic spirit. After Vietnam, the probability is weak that the United States could be persuaded to attempt open, formal take-over of any Asian country, however the invitation to do so might be extended. And certainly not a country which in its current crisis poses itself to the American public as having potentials of another Vietnam.

(As for the lapse in patriotism, the author prefers to simply point this out without commenting further.)

As regards American intervention, open or covert, or both, designed to facilitate liberal-minded political leaders, a caveat is in order. Filipinos cannot be comfortable with leaders who actively owe their position to an alien power. Should this be effected nevertheless, the probability is great that no liberal regime will actually develop. At best the pre-Marcos political regime will be reinstated, with its clear tendencies towards authoritarian relapse. People who do not study their history, it is said, are doomed to re-live it.

The other alternative is the unseating of the authoritarian rulers and their replacement with liberal ones through the

efforts of most Filipinos. There is some naivete that the 1986 snap elections would see "people power", as it is now often called, exercised by largely politically unorganized Filipino voters, leading to a change in political authorities as well as political regimes. Again a caveat is in order. Without politically being organized, how can Filipinos rationally expect their new political leaders to willfully and willingly submit themselves to popular sovereignty and public accountability. Without a dynamically organized citizenry, how can the age-old problem of guarding the guardians be resolved such that a liberal regime is not only initiated but is effectively maintained?

The only solution as most have affirmed lies in the direction of people power. But unless this prescription is to remain a ringing rhetoric, the people must learn to organize themselves into a political force which will keep their own leaders accountable to the many. This lesson is best learned as Filipinos struggle in crisis and organize themselves to overcome it. No political group may be identified in the Philippines of January 1986, including those who stridently avow "service to the people," as having learned this lesson yet, much less designed and implemented programs which operationally lead to a liberal democratic Filipino nation-state.

On account of the above observations, skepticism (a healthy attitude which unlike cynicism does not keep one from politically acting) is indicated as regards the likelihood of a liberal political regime for Filipinos in the near future. As a liberal must be optimistic, it is this author's belief that more and more Filipinos will work together to make their ideal closer to realization. But to date its coming within the next four or five years is to falsify the bona fides of seekers of this most elusive of political grails.

6.0 The 1986 February Revolution and Its Implications

In February of 1986, after a series of public protest actions following the most expensive and corrupt national elections in Philippine history, most of the forces which had built up to oppose Marcos' authoritarian rule temporarily allied with each other and succeeded in dramatically deposing the dictator. The triggering incident was the mutiny by his Minister of Defense and the military's Vice-Chief of Staff, initially supported by a small group of military reformists who contemplated imminent arrests by military forces loyal to Marcos. The highest ranking reformists with close ties to the Defense Minister had planned a coup which Marcos military men had discovered and were poised to abort.

The mutiny caught the restive public's imagination and when its leaders pledged their support to Corazon Aquino, popularly regarded as the cheated victor of the recent snap presidential elections, Filipinos by the millions peacefully protected the mutinous military. In a unique non-violent confrontation, they

neutralized the Marcos military loyalists and, furthermore, eventually inspired the greater number of military men, to turn against him. In the now historical four fearful days of February, largely unorganized but spontaneously reacting millions of Filipinos thus forced Marcos and his henchmen to flee the country.

The protest call was "Sobra na, Tama na, palitan na!" "Enough is enough, there must be a change!" After two decades of Marcos rule, Filipinos had had enough of political repression, economic deprivation and national psychological humiliation. "People's power," through a process of popular catalysis which up to now defies academic explanation, ousted Marcos.

After two decades of Marcos rule, the people's revolution was spurred by a sense of overly-deferred, legitimate popular expectations. Marcospeak visions of a revolutionary New Society and an epoch-making New Republic sounded hollow as objective conditions of immiseration continued to attend Philippine society.

The ouster of Marcos and the rise of Aquino to the Presidency must be contexted within this environment of liberated popular expectations. Socio-economic improvements and significant liberal political change will be popularly anticipated. Even as allowances will be made for the difficult circumstances within which the Aquino government started its operations, there will be a natural expectation by the public that the deterioration of their economic and social well-being will be arrested and in due time reversed. Employment opportunities will have to be increased, real incomes improved, peace and order secured, and an over-all perception of greater social justice maximized.

Even more vitally, popular expectations will anticipate the stabilization of a political system through greater democratization, devolution of overcentralized governmental powers, and effective rectification of the traditional socioeconomic inequities which breed insurgency in Philippine society.

The popular pressure, in brief, will be towards a regime where political oligarchy is progressively replaced by a liberal democratic style of government and where, at the same time, a productive economy increasingly attends to equity objectives. No trickle-down strategy of development will be sufficient or credible. The Aquino government, to survive and continue to hold the faith and support of Filipinos, will thus have to maximize its delivery function even as its integrative capabilities remain intact.

One thing must be noted regarding the public's temper as regards their hopes. Current surveys indicate that even as a sense of urgency might attend many of these anticipated economic and political improvements, people are showing sobriety and moderation concerning the rate at which such improvements could be effected even under Aquino. For example, in anticipating the

quality of life (QOL) within the coming year (dating from May, 1986, when the nationwide survey ran), optimism was clearly indicated by about 80% of the respondents who felt their QOL would at least be maintained at current levels. Less than a majority (40%) expected improvement, a similar number foresaw neither improvement nor deterioration, and a small number (9%) even conceded the possibility of further deterioration. Even more revealing is the greatly moderated average rate of improvement expected by the respondents. When asked to compare their present quality of life and that anticipated three years hence, those interviewed were effectively saying, "There definitely will be improvement, but at almost a snail's pace." The May 1986 survey data impressed the analyst enough to say, "By and large, Filipinos are not being unreasonable in their expectations of a better life. No unreasonable pressure is thus exerted on the Aquino administration to deliver beyond its presumable abilities. This sentiment is so much political capital for the present dispensation." (Miranda in Ateneo-Social Weather Stations, 1986a:24-25)

The most recent data (October 1986) are confirmatory of the earlier May findings, showing no significant change in public expectations. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (86%) of respondents expressed the belief that Aquino's government needs more time to improve the conditions of the people due to the enormity of the problems they face. This author who also undertook the analysis of the October 1986 data referred to here commented: [Given these findings, the public's] only demand would probably be that conditions are not demonstrably worsening too much or too fast, a minimalist rather than a maximalist orientation which makes it easy to find virtue in absolute prices holding constant and inflation rates significantly diminishing, contrary to what [had] appeared to be the irrevocable natural laws of Marcosian economics." (Miranda in Ateneo-Social Weather Stations, 1986b:6)

Public expectations are probably moderated not only by their appreciation of the magnitudes of Philippine economic and political problems, but also by their confidence in the incumbent President. Their support for Aquino has not decreased at all, despite predictions that it would soon after the political honeymoon (the first 100 days) with the new administration ended. Well into her eighth month as President, Aquino remains popular, with 78% of respondents in a survey last October, 1986 expressing satisfaction with her performance in general. This level of satisfaction unfortunately is not characteristic of most of her cabinet members and only one person, General Fidel Ramos who is the New Armed Forces of the Philippines' Chief of Staff, enjoys the satisfactory rating of about as many respondents (79%). (Miranda in Ateneo-Social Weather Stations, 1986b:13-14)

7.0 The Aquino Government: Towards Long-Term Political Stability

A new government, and even more fundamentally a new political regime, needs to address multiple current challenges before it can realistically hope to endure. Particularly in a situation where political authorities are not partial to undertaking radical means to effect the emasculation of economic and political forces which a repressive regime had fostered and built-up for its self-protection, a new government must assiduously cultivate legitimacy before the eyes of its citizenry.

A major challenge of this government will be to address the economic crisis, at least to keep the economy from further deteriorating and, eventually, to improve the living standards of the majority of Filipinos. Both national and foreign resources need to be synergistically combined in economic recovery programs which will alleviate the economic hardships of the people. Where national resources prove inadequate, foreign assistance will be vital. The lynchpin of any economic recovery strategy with a strong foreign assistance component is a policy that emphasizes nationalist control over the terms of foreign assistance and the equitable distribution of the inevitable costs of that assistance among the various sectors of the Philippine economy. Imperialist debt traps have to be avoided, as well as superficially attractive schemes which promise immediate relief from external debt difficulties but bind Filipino national interests to the security interests of superpowers. (A current campaign is being waged by some finance people in the Philippines to service the huge external debt of the country by effecting twenty-year military bases agreements with the United States.)

An even more vital challenge of the Aquino government is the consolidation of its national political authority, a problem partly resulting from the continuing presence of political elements whose vested interests lie in the resurrection of Marcos' or his surrogates political supremacy. Regional political warlords with their private armies as well as intractable Marcos elements in the military have to be neutralized.

In part, this consolidation of political authority involves the reform of the military, certainly one of the fundamental challenges to the government of President Aquino. Led by politicized senior officers during Marcos' time, harboring graft and corruption at many levels in its various services, and employing many men who recognize no human rights, the military has to be remolded into a truly new Armed Forces of the Philippines. Constitutionalism and professionalism have to be instilled specially in the officer corps so that the attractions of political patronage and politicization are minimized. Military pay and material benefits have to be significantly improved to attract better recruits and to keep soldiers in the field from living off the civilians. And, most crucially, there must be developed in the entire military a clear sense of the chain of command, within and beyond the military itself. Only thus may Filipinos realistically hope that the military will not again become the tool of

shrewd political usurpers, or become the usurper of political power itself.

Another dimension of political authority consolidation concerns the insurgents, particularly the communist and Muslim rebels. A double-edged program of counterinsurgency, combining a firm, even forceful response to the irreconcilable and socio-economic and political benefits to the non-ideological, will have to be designed and conscientiously implemented. Such a program is best prepared in consultation not only with the officials of government, civilian and military, but also with rebel group representatives who show signs of sincere interest in a workable national reconciliation policy.

It is crucial in any dealings with the insurgents, particularly the communists, for the Aquino government to be perceived as truly enjoying widespread, popular support. This is the only condition that could weaken the hands of adventuristic elements among the rebels and strengthen those who argue for political negotiations. The government would then have a most critical asset to work with, time with which to demonstrate not only its good intentions for the rebels but its effective ability to convert intentions into actions yielding positive results.

Aquino's consolidation of political authority within her own Cabinet needs to continue. Even as the ouster of the former Minister of National Defense, Juan Ponce Enrile, last November, 1986 minimized Cabinet factionalization, the Cabinet retains some potential for politically disruptive developments. The Cabinet has to be maintained as an executive staff to the President and personalities who cannot live with this constraint have to be eased out without necessarily exposing the country to political disruption.

Within the ranks of the Aquino government, a challenge to political stability must also be situated. Short-sighted policies which entrench the influence of any sector, whether economic, political, or religious, threatens in the long run to destabilize the present government by rendering it vulnerable to perceptions of favoritism or sectarianism.

Finally, challenges must also be located in the various efforts by foreign governments, either to perpetuate historical political privileges and protect their strategic security interests at the expense of the Filipinos own vital concerns, or to initiate ideologically suspect relationships which eventually reduce countries to the status of client states or surrogate polities.

International agencies which appear to make little distinction between a corrupt Marcos government and the current one in their negotiations with the Philippines, specifically as regards the country's foreign debts and need for additional financial assistance, have to be resisted in their efforts to dictate the directions of Philippine economic development. It is

currently difficult to assume that these international finance agencies and consortia of foreign banks are concerned with anything beyond debt repayment, or economic growth which begs the question of equity, or simply the material survival of most poor Filipinos.

In all of these challenges, the long term political stability of the Aquino government (as well as that of the Philippines) can only be assured through the effective support of its final constituency, the Filipino people. Such support flows from the popular perception that indeed government has successfully worked to further the people's material interests. Their interests are best served by a government whose political directions consistently emphasize the democratization of the political system, the safeguarding of republicanism, the clear pursuit of enlightened nationalism, the implementation of equity programs prioritizing the traditionally marginalized and, not least, the maintenance of civilian supremacy in its political administration. These are indeed revolutionary directions relative to the general thrusts of Philippine governments in the last 400 years as presented in this paper.

Shorn of these directions, no government can escape being another Marcos government in the Philippines. Nor can it long escape the wrath of another people's revolution, one which probably will be conducted with organized people's power and which could well be attended by a level of revolutionary violence hitherto unrecorded in Philippine history. The public pulse has indeed quickened quite a bit. Even as there is unprecedented support for the Aquino government, there is also apparently the feeling that this government might be the last chance for Filipinos to peacefully effect change in their country. In the October, 1986 survey alluded to earlier, a majority of respondents (51%) says that Filipinos could lose their faith in peaceful means of effecting democracy. In the political analysis of that survey data, this author remarked:

Although similar but not identical test questions in past surveys make comparisons not fully legitimate, the frightening thing about this confession is that at no time during Marcos' dictatorship was this level of possible disillusionment with peaceful alternatives attained. Even the February Revolution itself was a public testimony to the commitment to peaceful change. It is as if Filipinos wanted to send a clear message to their current political leaders, a message of kapit sa patalim, hawak ay patalim (a desperate man will grasp even the edge of a knife, but then one must not forget he now holds a knife). If this is so, then Aquino's phenomenal public support also has a grim aspect to it.

(Miranda in Ateneo-Social Weather Stations, 1986b:13)

Epilogue

Writing epilogues on any topic concerning the Philippines carries a lot of risks. Specially as regards the question of the political system and its impact on nation-building, there is a good chance that epilogic material may easily transmute into well-known, traditional prologues. The theme of oligarchy, for instance, has several times been cast in epilogic refrains. From the revolution of 1896 to the "democratic revolution" of 1972 and, lately, to the February 1986 revolution, the end of oligarchy in Philippine politics has oft been euphorically announced. Still, even as the prospects of a substantial transformation in the Philippine political system loom large in current discussions, an epilogue on the Marcos regime necessarily requires a prologue, even a very provisional introduction to the post-Marcos, Aquino government.

Under Aquino, the crisis of Philippine government and the political system continues at high pitch. The political stability of the country remains much threatened by forces which seek to restore the regime of the fallen dictator and his reputed surrogates, or gain advantages for insurgency movements, or effect too radical changes in an essentially conservative political culture, or simply ensure political capital for politicians minding their immediate future. (The President herself probably would add those forces which, inspired by messianic mentalities, dare design plans like "God save the Queen," last November's much advertised and subsequently failed coup.)

The basic concern with political stability spills over into the economic sphere. Even as a lot of economic recovery planning and advertising has been undertaken, neither domestic nor foreign investment appears to have picked up sufficiently to fuel the engine for self-sustaining economic recovery. The protracted negotiations of the country's foreign debt have not been positively affected by foreign perceptions of how shaky the political foundations of the new administration might be. Thus, the economy continues to be sluggish and optimistic economic projections targeted for a zero to 1.5% GNP growth rate for 1986. (The latest official figures estimate the GNP to have attained a positive growth rate [0.13%] for 1986, a statistic which carries a lot more psychological than actual material or economic impact.)

In this context of on-going crisis, the mere ability of the Aquino government to have survived to date is already noteworthy. Without its own political organization (either a mass or cadre or even traditional political party) to fall back on, or a consolidated military to backstop its policy of reconciliation with Marcos loyalists, Muslim secessionists and communist rebels, and increasingly subject to attacks from within its own ranks as well as from fretful allies of convenience in the February revolution, it is incredible that the Aquino government has lasted this long. The only plausible explanation lies in President Aquino's continuing rapport with and support from the great majority of Fili-

pinos. Hardly any Filipino politician or political group, at least not until recently, dared to challenge her popular appeal.

This government, however, cannot hope to endure by taking for granted the immense popular support its leader continues to enjoy. Faith, it is said, can move mountains, and Filipinos have faith in their current President. But to remain faithful, their President and her government need to show their constituency that, with popular cooperation and active support, the mountain of problems is indeed being moved, albeit slowly. Aquino's government cannot indefinitely continue to substitute promises for results specially when it comes to the material welfare of Filipinos. After Marcos, Filipinos are generally much less naive and trusting than before.

The ability to deliver on its perceived responsibilities is the acid test of this government. Given the magnitude of its current political and economic responsibilities, this government cannot possibly succeed without mastering to some extent the challenges that have been set down earlier in this paper. Its political authority needs to be consolidated, its mass organizational work must be picked up, and its military reformed and kept under reliably functional, civilian control. All these things require a well-developed sense of urgency and decisiveness by the leadership. All of course also presume a government strong enough to govern. The crisis character of Philippine society in the 1980s may not permit the greatest latitude in liberal democratic experimentation; it is probable that the Aquino government would be much censured by liberals when it undertakes decisive measures to address its many challenges.

A lot of attention is currently focused on the formal constitutional framework within which this government is supposed to be legitimized. The President had appointed a Constitutional Commission whose draft constitution is being submitted to the people for ratification. Arguably a flawed constitutional draft primarily because of its confused attempt to unnecessarily acknowledge President Aquino and Vice-President Laurel as legitimately elected in the 1986 elections (thereby implicitly vesting the authoritarian Marcos Constitution with a legitimacy which the February '86 revolution definitively denied!), the President has been openly campaigning for the draft's ratification. The official line is that the ratification of this apparently liberal democratic constitutional draft would serve to stabilize the political system by providing it with a formal charter, one that would squelch all doubts about the current government's legitimacy precisely because the people's imprimatur would be clearly recorded in the forthcoming national plebiscite.

This position is of doubtful validity. It is doubtful whether the legitimacy of this government (and therefore its stability and durability) could be increased or diminished by formal exercises. People could not have so soon forgotten that Marcos' government, as one of his political advisers was so exhilarated in pointing out, had no peer as far as being "lawful"

was concerned. Its legal bases, from his personalized Constitution to his numerous decrees and orders, to the accommodating laws of a pliant National Assembly and the judicial pronouncements of an intimidated judiciary, were all for everyone to marvel at. It is truly incredible that within such a short period of time people would forget that all of Marcos' legal bases failed to generate legitimacy for his regime. National leaders in particular should try to find their legitimacy and credibility elsewhere. Framework and institution-building needs to be undertaken, but legal exercises and "lawful" pronouncements need not be projected as if they generated employment, fed the poor and hungry, and protected the weak and exploited in the country. Marcos had to invoke the law because he feared the people; current national leaders presumably do not fear the people, why should they be so concerned with the legal legitimization of their authority?

In this connection, one thing has to be considered. The formal political institutions which underpinned the illusion that a liberal democratic regime was ever present in the Philippines lie in shambles, shown by Marcos to be completely impotent in the face of authoritarian attack. Aquino's government therefore has to engage in institution-building, but it is political dynamic creation rather than simply formal or legal concoction. Either the traditional oligarchic institutions of Philippine politics are simply reactivated or truly democratic institutions are built up, with the citizenry now actively participative in the latter. Whether President Aquino and her government can survive in picking up the latter option, in a political system that has historically been oligarchic in its organization as well as dynamics, is a most controversial problem.

Oligarchic or democratic, one thing may be anticipated with much certainty: Aquino's government will shortly be politically strengthened, primarily with deceit and arms if it chooses, a la Marcos, to be regressive and effect a simple restoration of oligarchic politics, or with even more public support (and also inevitably arms) should it take its progressive rhetoric seriously and attempt a long-run strategy of democratic transformation in Philippine politics.

And should it be unwilling or unable to make a choice, the Aquino government would probably be superseded by political forces which in a time of crisis refuse to suffer a similar infirmity. In time such forces can win popular support away from any leader who appears unable to lead in these trying times. In the Philippines, the historical political crisis has always been "whether its political leadership would dare to live its revolutionary rhetoric, or abort progressive developments and relegate them to the legendary realm of yet another "unfinished revolution"

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