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Countdown to Martial Law: The U.S-Philippine Relationship, 1969-1972

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COUNTDOWN TO MARTIAL LAW:
THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP, 1969-1972

A Thesis Presented

by

JOVEN G. MARANAN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2016

History Program

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ABSTRACT

COUNTDOWN TO MARTIAL LAW: THE U.S.-PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP, 1969-1972

August 2016

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Between 1969 and 1972, the Philippines experienced significant political unrest after Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos' successful reelection campaign. Around the same time, American President Richard Nixon formulated a foreign policy approach that expected its allies to be responsible for their own self-defense. This would be known as the Nixon Doctrine. This approach resulted in Marcos' declaration of martial law in September 1972, which American officials silently supported. American officials during this time also noted Marcos' serving of American business and military interests. Existing literature differed on the extent Marcos served what he thought were American interests. Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image* noted that Marcos did not adequately serve American interests, noting that he sent an insignificant amount of soldiers to Vietnam. Karnow also did not mention business interests. Raymond Bonner's *Waltzing with a Dictator* mentioned that Marcos was effective for serving American business and military interests. James Hamilton-Paterson's *America's Boy* agrees with Bonner's assessment,

also noting that Marcos served American business and military interests. Materials from the *Digital National Security Archive* (DNSA) and *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series affirmed Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's position, while noting that Karnow's work was outdated because of the limited information he had when *In Our Image* was published. There are three issues that concerned the U.S.-Philippine relationship under President Marcos during this time. The first issue was the societal and political unrest that threatened to undermine Marcos. The second issue concerned U.S. officials' application of the Nixon Doctrine to the Philippines. The third regarded President Marcos' serving of military and business interests in the Philippines. Marcos supported maintaining America's Filipino bases, which were important hubs of American military operations during the Vietnam War. In addition to military interests, President Marcos also aided American businesses in the Philippines, by removing restrictions that threatened American business activity. Each of these concerns led to President Marcos' declaration of martial law. American officials' tacit support for Marcos reflected their commitment to the Nixon Doctrine, which ensured political stability that preserved American business and military interests.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the night of September 21, 1972, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos issued Proclamation No. 1081, which declared martial law throughout the entire Philippines. Marcos made this declaration under the pretext of an assassination attempt on Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile. Years later, Enrile admitted this was staged.¹ The Proclamation declared President Marcos the Commander-in-Chief of the Philippine Armed Forces. Marcos also shut down newspapers, as well as television and radio stations. He also imposed a curfew between midnight and four o'clock in the morning. The Proclamation also ordered the arrest of Marcos' political enemies and leftist activists. This included Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., of the opposition Liberal Party, whose widow Corazon Aquino would later succeed Marcos as President in 1986. Proclamation 1081 turned the Philippines into an authoritarian regime. American officials did not make any public statements regarding martial law, and denied involvement in its planning.

Martial law was the result of the U.S.-Philippine relationship between 1969 and 1972, in which American officials fostered an equal partnership. They applied the Nixon

¹ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 359.

Doctrine, which reduced the American military presence in Asia. The Nixon Doctrine also affirmed that the United States expected its allies to be responsible for their own self-defense against internal enemies.² However, it did not call for a complete phasing out of American troops abroad. It advocated a minimized role, which allowed the U.S. to protect its allies more efficiently by reducing its military expenditures without compromising their allies' security. The Nixon Doctrine also promoted political stability within America's allies.³ This stability allowed American business and military interests to be met. During this time, President Marcos served American business interests by easing restrictions on foreign property ownership and allowing foreign nationals to hold executive office in a Filipino based company.⁴ Marcos and his supporters also ensured the continuity of the U.S. bases, which were important hubs for American military operations in Asia. However, this occurred during a period of political unrest. American officials were concerned that this unrest undermined Marcos' power and that a potential successor would threaten base rights and business interests. Their tacit support for Marcos reflected their commitment to the Nixon Doctrine, which ensured political stability that preserved American business and military interests.

Previous works on this relationship provide useful overviews on the roles that both American and Filipino officials played within it. Three important works that describe this relationship in detail are *In Our Image*, *Waltzing With a Dictator*, and *America's Boy*. Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Stanley Karnow's *In Our Image*

² Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 53.

³ William J. Pomeroy, *An American Made Tragedy: Neo-Colonialism and Dictatorship in the Philippines* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 93.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

provided a detailed overview of the relationship from the American colonial period to Corazon Aquino's ascension to the presidency. Investigative reporter Raymond Bonner's *Waltzing with a Dictator* notes how President Marcos was a brilliant political tactician who knew more about the American political system than U.S. officials knew of the Filipino one.⁵ It mentions that American officials knew of President Marcos' plans for martial law.⁶ Novelist James Hamilton-Paterson's *America's Boy* provides a detailed account of the Philippines under Marcos while including the author's own personal accounts of living in the Philippines. Hamilton-Paterson notes that the American influence in the Philippines resulted in a dysfunctional Filipino society. These three works provide useful guides to understanding the U.S.-Philippine relationship under Marcos by noting its complexities.

While they provide detailed accounts on the U.S.' relationship with Marcos, the authors differ on the extent Marcos acted on what he believed were American interests. Karnow felt that Marcos did not adequately serve them. He mentioned that Marcos sent two thousand troops to fight in the Vietnam War in exchange for American financial aid. According to Karnow, Marcos wanted "to extract a maximum profit from a minimal investment."⁷ Karnow also felt that the troop presence did little to serve American interests because of how small it was. By contrast, Bonner felt that President Marcos was effective for serving American interests. He writes that Marcos enhanced American business interests by issuing decrees that removed restrictions on American businesses.⁸

⁵ Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 7.

⁶ Ibid., 96.

⁷ Karnow, *In Our Image*, 376.

⁸ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 133-134.

Bonner also mentioned that Marcos supported the storage of nuclear weapons and the building of new facilities on the bases.⁹ Hamilton-Paterson also felt that Marcos was effective for serving American interests. He writes that Marcos agreed not to interfere with American businesses or investments in the Philippines in exchange for U.S. support.¹⁰ This debate over Marcos' serving of American interests is important because it helps understand why U.S. officials tacitly supported him.

Recently declassified documents from the *Digital National Security Archive* (DNSA) and the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) confirm Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's characterization of President Marcos was effective for serving American interests. Ambassador Byroade's September 22, 1972 telegram mentioned his discussion with Marcos on how to resolve threats to American business activity.¹¹ By discussing these issues with Byroade, this confirms Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's position. This telegram refutes Karnow's argument that Marcos did not adequately serve American interests. While Karnow's assessment of the Filipino troop presence in Vietnam was accurate, his material limited his analysis of Marcos' relationship with the U.S. While *In Our Image* provided a useful understanding of the U.S. relationship with Marcos, it is outdated because of the dearth of analysis on American interests. American interests were important to understand the relationship because it was a reason why American officials supported martial law. The DNSA and FRUS provide ample evidence

⁹ Ibid., 133.

¹⁰ James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: A Century of Colonialism in the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 285.

¹¹ Document #259, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 22, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 553-554.

that favor Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's position on Marcos' serving of American interests over Karnow's.

There were three issues that defined the U.S.-Philippine relationship under President Marcos prior to martial law. The first was the political unrest, which undermined on President Marcos' legitimacy. The second concerned how the U.S. applied the Nixon Doctrine to Philippines. The third issue related to how President Marcos maintained American military and business interests in the Philippines. Each of these concerns led to American tacit support for President Marcos' declaration of martial law and further expansion of his powers.

Between 1969 and 1972, the Philippines experienced significant political unrest that resulted in instability. During the 1969 presidential elections, Marcos' Nacionalista Party and the opposition Liberal Party owned private armies who physically intimidated voters.¹² In early 1970, violent leftist demonstrations occurred frequently during a period now known as the First Quarter Storm. Communist sympathizers allegedly hurled explosives into the Esso and Caltex offices in January 1971.¹³ There were also many other incidences of politically motivated violence that occurred throughout the period. Much of this political instability was a reaction to the increasing inequality and corruption in Filipino society. This unrest threatened to unseat President Marcos.

American officials applied the Nixon Doctrine to the Philippines by reducing its military presence and ensuring that Marcos remained President. They hoped this would

¹² Filemon C. Rodriguez, *The Marcos Regime: Rape of the Nation* (New York: Vantage Press, 1985), 35.

¹³ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Philippines: The Radical Movements," May 3, 1971, in *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 9, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142982/.

reduce the overt dominance the United States had over its former colony. This also allowed the Philippines to become more responsible for its own protection. Applying the Nixon Doctrine in the Philippines also required maintaining political stability, which meant ensuring that Marcos remained President. This meant encouraging him to implement measures such as land reform that would prevent a popular uprising from occurring. By applying the Nixon Doctrine, the United States maintained stability by ensuring that Marcos would remain President of the Philippines.

During this time, President Marcos also served American military and business interests, which were threatened by opposition forces. Despite the minimized presence, U.S. officials viewed its Philippine bases as being an important center of military operations in Asia. These bases were agreed to in the Military Bases Agreement (MBA), which granted the United States a ninety-nine year lease on several sites.¹⁴ The two most important bases were Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station, both situated on Luzon Island. They experienced an increase in activity during the Vietnam War due to the Philippines' relative proximity to former French Indochina. However, Nixon called for a policy known as Vietnamization, which pushed for the phasing out of American involvement in Vietnam. This policy applied the Nixon Doctrine to the Vietnam War by encouraging an increased South Vietnamese role in the war. This would also increase the importance of America's Filipino bases, especially Subic Bay, because fewer troops meant more naval presence. American officials continued to maintain a minimized presence in the Philippines, which became important to strategic interests in Asia.

¹⁴ Pomeroy, *An American Made Tragedy*, 21.

American officials supported President Marcos because his supporters within the Constitutional Convention delegates favored maintaining bases. This convention was meant to reform the 1935 Constitution, which many Filipinos felt was outdated. Much of the convention consisted of Marcos supporters, who supported pro-American measures. Marcos' supporters released a study that concluded that continued American military presence would be in the Philippines' self-interest.¹⁵ This gave U.S. Embassy officials hope that base rights would not be threatened. American officials continued to support President Marcos, knowing that his supporters favored retaining the bases.

In addition to military bases, the U.S. presence in the Philippines also included American businesses. At least forty percent of the top two hundred Philippine corporations were American owned.¹⁶ Around eight hundred American companies operated in the Philippines. This included Mobil, Georgia-Pacific, Union Carbide, General Motors, United Fruit, General Electric, Pfizer, and Colgate-Palmolive.¹⁷ A staff report from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations estimated that American direct investment in the Philippines as of December 1970 was at \$710 million.¹⁸ American businesses dominated many sectors of the Filipino economy, which further highlighted the overall American presence.

The Laurel-Langley trade agreement also became relevant during this time because its eventual expiration would impact the economic relationship between the

¹⁵ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines "Status of the Foreign Bases Question in the Philippine Constitutional Convention," July 1, 1972, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 5, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151267/.

¹⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Korea and the Philippines, November 1972, A Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1973), 35.

¹⁷ Pomeroy, *An American Made Tragedy*, 43.

¹⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Korea and the Philippines*, 35.

Philippines and the United States. American diplomat James Langley and Filipino senator Jose P. Laurel signed the agreement in 1955. It succeeded the 1946 Bell Trade Act, which granted both American and Filipino citizens equal access to resources such as agriculture, timber, minerals, public utilities, and land.¹⁹ The Bell Trade Act gave Filipino sugar producers exclusive access to the American market. Laurel-Langley continued equal access to Filipino resources and extended the sugar quota. The United States became the largest importer of Filipino sugar. While the agreement expired in 1974, American officials were confident that Marcos would find ways to work around issues resulting from Laurel-Langley's expiration.

During this time, the Luzon Stevedoring and Quasha court decisions threatened American business interests in the Philippines. In the Luzon Stevedoring decision, the court ruled that foreign nationals could not hold executive office in Philippine based companies after 1974, when Laurel-Langley expired.²⁰ This decision threatened Americans' ability to control their Filipino subsidiaries. The Quasha decision threatened the ability of American citizens and companies to own properties after the Laurel-Langley's expiration. American William Quasha inquired to the Philippine Supreme Court on whether or not Laurel-Langley's expiration would affect his land holdings.²¹ The court ruled against him. U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines Henry A. Byroade discussed these cases with President Marcos, who assured the Ambassador that his

¹⁹ Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 28.

²⁰ Albert F. Celozza, *Ferdinand Marcos and the Philippines: The Political Economy of Authoritarianism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 112.

²¹ Kolko, *Confronting the Third World*, 251.

Administration would take care of them. Following martial law, President Marcos issued decrees that reversed these decisions.

American officials supported President Marcos because his administration ensured political stability that preserved American military and business interests. The Philippines faced significant political instability during that time, marked by significant violence. This led to President Marcos taking action to bring order in his country. Despite the change within Filipino government, martial law continued the status quo with respect to American business and military interests. American officials' tacit support for President Marcos reflected their commitment to the Nixon Doctrine, which ensured political stability that preserved their interests.

CHAPTER 2

1969: SETTING THE STAGE FOR MARTIAL LAW

The year 1969 became an important one for U.S.-Philippine relations because it helped set the stage for President Marcos' declaration of martial law three years later. Recently inaugurated President Richard Nixon called for a change in the relationship between the U.S. and its allies during his visit to Guam. Both his administration and President Marcos hoped to change the conventional perception that Filipino governments were American puppets. The Nixon Administration also planned to reduce American military presence in the Philippines, while maintaining enough troops to protect American interests. Nixon also appointed longtime statesman Henry A. Byroade as Ambassador to Manila. Byroade became important to the U.S.-Philippine relationship because he grew closer to President Marcos than his predecessors.

Around the same time, Democratic Senator Stuart A. Symington of Missouri held hearings regarding America's foreign policy, especially regarding the Vietnam War. That autumn, the Symington Subcommittee focused its matters on U.S. allies' role in Asia, including the Philippines. President Marcos was also running in a reelection campaign, which became one of the most controversial in Philippine history because of the tactics

that were used throughout it. The U.S.-Philippine relationship in the 1969 reflected a change in the perceived special relationship, in which U.S. had significant influence over its former colony. The Philippines would be more responsible for its self-defense, while at the same time continuing to serve American interests in the region, which included maintaining the bases.

President Marcos mentioned changing this special relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines during his visit to Washington in early April. He met with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and National Security Council staff member Lindsey Grant. President Marcos told them that the Philippines “must be seen ‘not as a puppet, but as a friend.’ ”¹ He also said that the United States should consult its Asian allies rather than imposing solutions on Asia. Kissinger assured him President Nixon would consult them. Marcos also reiterated that he wished to remain close to the United States, but “adopt a stance of independence.”² Kissinger agreed, noting that the U.S. did not want satellite states. Marcos also wanted the American bases to remain in the Philippines because there should always be a U.S. presence in Asia. This conversation would bring a change in how to approach the U.S.-Philippine relationship. While Marcos wanted more independence from the United States, he displayed a willingness to serve American military interests by continuing to support the bases.

In the same conversation, President Marcos suggested changing the Philippines’ role in the Vietnam War, which included phasing out its troop presence. He felt that the Philippine Civic Action Group (PHILCAG), which roughly numbered two thousand

¹ Document #186, “Memorandum of Conversation” dated April 2, 1969, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 394.

² *Ibid.*, 395.

soldiers, should withdraw from the Vietnam War because it was very expensive to maintain.³ Marcos suggested that the Philippines should concentrate on helping the South Vietnamese government develop an effective constabulary force. PHILCAG's presence in Vietnam was symbolic, since it did not participate in much combat during the war. Some Filipinos thought it was nothing more than a group of mercenaries, and that President Marcos had sent these troops in exchange for funds.

In addition to PHILCAG, President Marcos also mentioned his concerns regarding the Filipino economy to American Embassy official James Rafferty in April. They discussed the bilateral Laurel-Langley trade agreement, which granted American businesses parity rights in the Philippines, which included the right to own property. It also gave Filipino sugar producers exclusive access to the American market. This resulted in the Philippines exporting a significant portion of its sugar to the United States. However, the agreement was set to expire in 1974. Marcos asked Nixon to extend these privileges, fearing that the Filipino economy might collapse. Nixon agreed with Marcos' request for the extension of these privileges, noting that things could be "worked out."⁴ President Marcos seemed to trust U.S. officials and felt that the United States would continue to support him politically. Despite these concerns, the American and Filipino governments remained on friendly terms and were cooperative with each other.

During this time, the United States was planning to reduce its involvement in Vietnam, which would affect American base operations in the Philippines. Around June, President Nixon announced the withdrawal of 25,000 ground troops from Vietnam. This

³ Ibid.

⁴ Document #187, "Memorandum of Conversation" dated April 2, 1969, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 398.

was the beginning of a policy of Vietnamization, which called for a gradual reduction of U.S. troop involvement, while at the same time an increase in the training and equipping of South Vietnamese personnel for continued combat against the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong.⁵ Much of this was consistent with the Nixon Administration's commitment to find a way to end U.S. involvement in Vietnam. On the one hand, reducing this presence might impact the Philippines because there would be less activity at its bases. However, Vietnamization also increased the importance of the U.S. bases in the Philippines because, especially Subic Bay. Fewer ground troops might mean an increased naval presence in Asia. Thus, the Philippines remained important in discussions regarding American foreign policy in Asia. Despite the eventual phasing out of American involvement in Vietnam, its Filipino bases remained important hubs of American military operations in Asia.

Throughout the year, Marcos campaigned for reelection as President on the Nacionalista ticket. The Nacionalista Party ran on a platform that promised expanded social services, industrialization, law enforcement, and a streamlined bureaucracy.⁶ His opponent was Senator Sergio Osmeña, Jr., of the Liberal Party. Senator Osmeña was the son of former President Sergio Osmeña, Sr. Both parties proposed similar programs, but Liberals emphasized free enterprise and foreign investment, while the Nacionalistas emphasized economic nationalism. Nonetheless, the parties' positions remained indistinguishable from each other. Rhetoric rather than policy positions distinguished the two candidates. In addition to similar proposals, both espoused pro-American rhetoric

⁵ Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 64.

⁶ Filemon C. Rodriguez, *The Marcos Regime: Rape of the Nation* (New York: Vantage Press, 1985), 34.

and supported increased American aid to the Philippines. The 1969 elections would become known for its campaign tactics, rather than policy debates. Marcos was determined to defeat Osmeña, and be reelected as President.

American officials attempted to play a neutral role in the elections, which proved to be difficult. Prior to Nixon's visit to Manila in July, Acting Executive Secretary of State Department John P. Walsh wrote to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger regarding Nixon's plans to meet President Marcos' opponent Sergio Osmeña. Walsh felt that Filipinos would interpret Nixon's visit as having an important bearing on their Presidential election.⁷ He felt that if Nixon failed to meet with Osmeña, the Filipino public would interpret this as an endorsement of President Marcos. Walsh did not rule out the possibility that Osmeña could defeat the incumbent Philippine president. He then noted that the only argument against meeting with Senator Osmeña was the possibility of offending President Marcos.⁸ Walsh suggested that U.S. officials should inform Marcos that Osmeña requested a meeting with President Nixon. The United States attempted to work with both sides due to a possibility that Osmeña might defeat Marcos. They also did not want the Filipino public to think that it supported Marcos because it could hurt his chances of being reelected. President Nixon ultimately met with Osmeña in an effort to remain neutral towards the upcoming November elections. While American officials continued to support Marcos, they needed to show that they were acting independently of his interests. This meant meeting with both candidates, which would prevent the

⁷ Document #190, "Memorandum from the Acting Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Walsh) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)" dated April 2, 1969, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 402.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 403.

perception that the U.S. favored one candidate over the other. There was a public perception that the American officials intervened in previous Philippine Presidential elections, most notably in 1949.⁹ U.S. officials hoped to change this perception by portraying themselves as being neutral. This neutrality would also remain consistent with Nixon and Kissinger's pledge to display a relationship of equal partners.

Prior to his visit to Manila, President Nixon announced a new strategy for American foreign policy during a press conference in Guam. This strategy became known as the Nixon Doctrine. He announced that the United States would offer military assistance to its allies, but that they were also responsible for their own self-defense.¹⁰ In his speech, Nixon stated the U.S. "should assist, but...not dictate" its Asian allies.¹¹ Nixon called for a more balanced relationship between the U.S. and its allies. He made this announcement in the wake of the Vietnam War, which was becoming unpopular among the American public. In his speech, he noted that the war had been a "terribly frustrating one."¹² The American public did not want significant U.S. military involvement in the affairs of other countries. Much of the Nixon Doctrine was also consistent with previous remarks made by the American officials regarding the Philippines. This foreign policy approach provided opportunities for President Marcos to assert his independence over the United States, while continuing to serve American interests at the same time.

⁹ William J. Pomeroy, *An American Made Tragedy: Neo-Colonialism and Dictatorship in the Philippines* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 80.

¹⁰ Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 53.

¹¹ Richard Nixon, "Informal Remarks with Guam Newsmen, July 25, 1969," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1969* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1971), 548.

¹² *Ibid.*, 546.

President Nixon finally arrived in Manila in July 1969, shortly after announcing his foreign policy approach in Guam. The Philippine honor guard played their rendition of the popular Al Jolson song “California, Here I Come,” as a tribute to Nixon’s home state.¹³ Government employees, students, and ROTC students turned out to greet President Nixon along a six-and-a-half-mile route from the airport to Marcos’ residence at Malacañang Palace. They waved American flags while carrying placards that congratulated the U.S. for sending the first men to walk on the Moon. This welcome reflected the complicated relationship the Filipino public has with the United States. Filipinos have historically viewed the United States as the “mother country,” due to the Philippines’ status as a former American colony. Nixon’s trip would evoke a wide range of reactions from many different groups in Philippines.

Despite the positive reception Nixon received from many Filipinos upon his arrival, his visit also brought out anti-American protestors. There were protests held in front of the U.S. Embassy. Students also burned American flags and effigies of the American President. An unknown individual also threw a Molotov cocktail at the U.S. Information Service library, blowing up an exhibit and killing one person.¹⁴ Another unknown individual also hurled a grenade at the embassy. This showed that not all Filipinos were happy with Nixon’s visit. These people were especially upset at the American base presence in the country. This group also felt a sense of Filipino nationalism that strived to assert its cultural independence from the U.S. These protestors highlighted the divide within the Filipino public opinion on the United States.

¹³ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 64.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Nixon's visit gave Marcos the opportunity to develop a strong relationship with the recently inaugurated Nixon, whom he felt could serve his reelection campaign. He invited his American counterpart to spend the night at Malacañang in the hopes of creating the impression that the U.S. endorsed him for the presidency.¹⁵ President Marcos knew if he allowed President Nixon to spend the night at his residence, his critics could not criticize him for not being sufficiently pro-American. This would help win votes from much of the Philippine elite who had economic interests in the United States. Nixon had initially chosen to stay at a hotel, but finally agreed to stay at the President's residence. Marcos' wife, Imelda, spent millions of dollars on renovating Malacañang to accommodate President and Mrs. Nixon. Marcos was determined to win Nixon's favor.

In August 1969, Nixon appointed Henry A. Byroade as the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines. An Indiana native, Byroade graduated from West Point and served as both a lieutenant colonel and a brigadier general in World War II. He previously served as Ambassador to Egypt, South Africa, Afghanistan, and Burma.¹⁶ He would serve as Ambassador to the Philippines for nearly four years, which made him the longest serving American ambassador since Philippine independence. Byroade became close with both President and Mrs. Marcos during his tenure. Ferdinand Marcos and Henry Byroade had similar public personas; both men were said to have served in World War II and had reputations for being womanizers. However, Marcos' name never showed up on U.S. government records, which puts into question his military service.¹⁷ These similarities made President Marcos closer to Ambassador Byroade than his predecessors. However,

¹⁵ Ibid., 65.

¹⁶ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 357.

¹⁷ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 15.

Ambassador Byroade would not let his friendship with Marcos get in the way of asserting U.S. interests that conflicted with Marcos' interests. Nonetheless, the relationship between the two remained friendly.

During this time, the Symington subcommittee hearings revealed the quid pro quo relationship between the United States and the Philippines. In late September and early October 1969, a congressional subcommittee led by Missouri Senator Stuart Symington held hearings on the Philippines role in U.S. foreign policy during this time. The subcommittee was created earlier in February, but focused mostly on the Vietnam War. By late September, the committee held hearings on the role of other Asian countries in supporting the American war effort. During a hearing, Senator Symington questioned Lieutenant General Robert H. Warren, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Assistance and Sales. Symington asked him what the real purpose of American military assistance was and whether or not it came down to "a quid pro quo for the bases and a means of contributing to the Filipino government."¹⁸ Warren agreed that the military assistance reflected a quid pro quo relationship, but also noted that it was also meant "to maintain internal security and stability and, thereby, make our own activities over there more secure."¹⁹ Symington then asked if this meant that the U.S. was paying the Philippine government to protect them from anti-Americanism and anti-Marcos activists. General Warren replied that this was correct to "a degree."²⁰ The Symington

¹⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements Abroad, *United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad: The Republic of the Philippines, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on United States Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 244.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

subcommittee implicated that the American presence in the Philippines was partly to crack down on anti-American groups. While it was not the primary reason for U.S. military assistance in the Philippines, it indicated that there were more interests that went beyond Filipino national security. The committee hearings revealed that the United States gave military assistance in exchange for base rights. These frustrated American officials, who felt the hearings threatened cooperation with America's allies.

The Symington subcommittee hearings concerned Ambassador Byroade, who felt hurt U.S. ability to effectively create policy towards its Asian allies. He was disturbed by the implications of the proceedings, which he felt questioned the control over the conduct of American foreign relations.²¹ He also thought they portrayed a distorted and unbalanced picture of American foreign policy in Asia. Byroade expressed concern that hearings would threaten U.S. ability to enter confidential agreements with other governments. Lastly, he recommended to President Nixon and Secretary of State William Rogers that they consider disassociating the Executive Branch from the whole affair.²² The Subcommittee transcripts were released only after the Philippine Presidential election ended.²³ Hiding this information until the end of the election indicated that the United States continued to support President Marcos because they did not want the subcommittee to impact the outcome of the elections. Despite Byroade's concerns, the Symington subcommittee would not hurt America's relationship in the Philippines.

²¹ Document #196, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated October 30, 1969, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 419.

²² *Ibid.*, 421.

²³ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 76.

In spite of the subcommittee's revelations, the United States remained committed to portraying its relationship with the Philippines of one of equal partners. Kissinger's October 20 memorandum to Under Secretary of State Elliot L. Richardson noted Nixon's desire to reduce America's presence in the Philippines. Kissinger wrote that the President intended to eliminate aspects of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) that gave the U.S. advantages which it does not possess elsewhere.²⁴ Nixon intended to reduce the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the U.S. regarding base rights down to a level comparable to rights the U.S. possessed in other countries with American bases. He directed the Under Secretaries' Committee to undertake a review of the treaty, to examine how to change its provisions.²⁵ Nixon also directed the committee to examine how much land would be surplus to American military needs. He planned to invite the Philippine Government to renegotiate the agreement. However, Nixon noted that this must happen after the Philippine elections because of the possibility that Osmeña might defeat Marcos.²⁶ By calling for a study to examine the U.S. military presence in the Philippines, President Nixon intended to determine how much land was superfluous to American military interests in the region. This remained consistent with the Nixon Doctrine's calling for a reduced American military presence that encouraged Marcos to be more responsible for his country's self-defense. .

On November 11, President Ferdinand Marcos won his reelection campaign in one of the most controversial campaigns in Filipino history. The results showed that he

²⁴ Document #195, "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the Under Secretary of State (Richardson)" dated October 20, 1969, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 417.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 418.

defeated Osmeña with over sixty percent of the vote. This victory was the first time a Filipino president won his or her reelection campaign. Despite the official results showing that President Marcos won in landslide, his victory remained suspicious to many observers such as Filipino leftist activists.

The 1969 election was one of the most expensive presidential elections in Philippine history. President Marcos spent \$50 million on the campaign, much of which came from public funds.²⁷ This access to public money gave President Marcos more resources to produce a more successful campaign than his opponents. His campaign also bribed local politicians, who rigged the election in Marcos' favor. Ernest Maceda, Marcos' campaign manager, spent a total of 100 million pesos, roughly \$25 million, in bribes.²⁸ He hopped around the islands, dispensing peso-filled envelopes to barrio captains and city mayors. This also reflected the institutionalizing of the patronage system, in which Marcos gave local authorities money in exchange for their support. Marcos' excessive campaign spending put into question the validity of the results.

In addition to bribery, the Marcos campaign used physical intimidation. Election workers filled out ballots for Marcos' Nacionalista Party while being watched over by two armed men in civilian clothes.²⁹ Military gangs, which consisted of Philippine Constabulary murder squads, terrorized provincial electorates.³⁰ These groups intended to scare voters into supporting President Marcos. This proved successful as Marcos won by

²⁷ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 76.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: A Century of Colonialism in the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 261.

a significant landslide. It also showed that President Marcos took drastic measures to ensure that he would be reelected.

Marcos' excessive campaign spending weakened the Philippine economy, which resulted in Marcos' waning popularity. This infusion of large sums of money into the economy created high inflation. Prices rose while the peso was devalued. This caused greater economic hardships for the poorest Filipinos. The Filipino public's dissatisfaction with the economy and its government increased significantly after the 1969 elections because of the violence and economic turmoil that resulted after. They also perceived what they saw was government corruption. In the months and years that followed the election, the political and economic situation in the Philippines became increasingly unstable. This would lead to public outcry that lasted for several years until his declaration in 1972.

In December 1969, PHILCAG withdrew from Vietnam shortly after the Symington Subcommittee's reports revealed the quid pro quo relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines. The report confirmed the perception that it was nothing more than a group of mercenary soldiers. Protests against PHILCAG emerged during this time. This characterization of PHILCAG as mercenaries had angered President Marcos, which led him to withdraw all remaining troops in Vietnam.³¹

The year 1969 set the stage for much of the U.S.-Philippine relationship that occurred between President Nixon and President Marcos' Administrations. The Nixon Doctrine called for more self-defense from its own allies, while continuing to offer them

³¹ William E. Berry, Jr., *U.S. Bases in the Philippines: The Evolution of the Special Relationship* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 144.

protection. This led to President Marcos' increased power over the Filipino government. His reelection changed the situation in the Philippines, by creating significant economic and political instability that resulted from his campaign's spending. This instability would bring about societal unrest, which remained a significant problem until Marcos' declaration of martial law.

CHAPTER 3

1970: THE UNRAVELING OF TURMOIL

The year 1970 would lead to significant unrest that resulted from Marcos' reelection. Student-led protests emerged as a reaction to increased income inequality and continued American military presence. Many of the protesters were members of left-wing organizations that flourished during this time. U.S. Embassy and State Department officials monitored these groups to help the Filipino government undermine them. Both U.S. and Filipino officials also looked toward the upcoming Constitutional Convention, in which serious discussion had emerged in 1970. That fall, the Philippines held an election to elect delegates who would be drafting the new Constitution. Marcos' Administration expressed concern that the Convention could undermine his power, and told American officials such as Nixon and Kissinger that leftists could take over the Philippines. American officials felt these concerns were exaggerated. However, they also felt that the political unrest that resulted from the protests would undermine his power more than the Constitutional Convention.

Upon delivering his State of the Nation Address on January 26, President Marcos was met by 20,000 jeering students, workers and peasants. The mob pelted rocks and

bottles at him. Four days later, demonstrators tried to storm Malacañang Palace. They also burned candles nearby, next to a realistic coffin that symbolized the death of Filipino democracy. The next day, demonstrators shouted “Yankee, go home!” and “Imperialist pigs!”¹ They also ripped the large circular U.S. seal off the Embassy’s outer brick wall. U.S. Marine security personnel threw tear gas grenades, which caused the mob to retreat to a nearby business district. The demonstrators then smashed the windows of local businesses and burned cars. These demonstrations continued for the next two months, and became known as the First Quarter Storm because it occurred primarily in the first three months of the year.

The First Quarter Storm occurred during a time in which the Filipino public became increasingly disenchanted with social inequality and government corruption. Many of the demonstrators were students, primarily from the University of the Philippines (UP). UP became a hotbed of left-wing activism. However, most of the protestors were more interested in addressing income inequality and government corruption than Marxist-Leninist theory.² These students also suspected President Marcos of planning to remain in power beyond his second term. Despite their distrust of the government, many activists supported populist reforms such as land redistribution. While not all the protestors were self-proclaimed Marxists, they all agreed that something must be done to address the increasing poverty in the country.

These protests troubled President Marcos, who became distrustful of the United States. He met Ambassador Byroade on the morning after the January 26 riots. According

¹ Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 78.

² Ibid.

to Byroade, Marcos could not sleep the night before because the demonstrations and riots came “as a jolt to him.”³ He told the ambassador that his intelligence advisors tried to convince him that that the U.S. had been implicated in the riots. Byroade denied these allegations, assuring Marcos that the U.S. would not interfere in the internal affairs of the Philippines.⁴ The Ambassador recognized that Filipino politicians claimed American support and backing. Byroade later noted President Marcos and Imelda’s paranoia, mentioning that they told confidants that they believed that the U.S. instigated demonstrations against Malacañang. The ambassador wrote to Marshall Green, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, that America’s main problem at that moment was helping Marcos keep his cool. Byroade recommended that the American officials reassure Marcos that the United States would not be involved in these internal matters.

National Security Council and Embassy officials paid significant attention to the demonstrations and concluded that the protests were against government corruption. Henry Kissinger’s memorandum to President Nixon concluded that the proximate cause of student-led riots were their demand that political parties, especially Marcos’ own Nacionalista Party, not influence the Constitutional Convention elections held that November.⁵ Protestors feared that Marcos could influence the Convention and rig the Constitution in his favor. Kissinger also wrote that the U.S. hoped that these

³ Document #205, “Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to the Philippines (Byroade) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)” dated February 2, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office), 435.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Document #206 “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” dated February 3, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 438.

demonstrations would motivate President Marcos to prioritize social and economic reforms in his second term. By prioritizing reforms, the Filipino president could prevent a potential popular uprising that would result from a worsened situation. The U.S. felt that Marcos needed to acquiesce to some of the protestors' concerns or else they risked his disposal.

The First Quarter Storm concerned Marcos, who told Byroade that he might declare martial law to impose order. Marcos wanted to know if Byroade would “stand behind him.”⁶ Byroade reacted cautiously to prevent significant U.S. involvement in the situation. The ambassador suggested social programs and land reform, instead of taking drastic measures such as martial law.⁷ He also noted that President Marcos was truly afraid of a possible revolution. Ambassador Byroade also needed to minimize U.S. involvement, knowing that there would be significant anti-American backlash if they were to get significantly involved. American officials continued to reinforce to Marcos the need to implement reforms, which they felt would allow him to remain in power.

The First Quarter Storm occurred around the same time there was a proliferation of activism and protests throughout the world. In the May 1968 Paris strikes, French students and radicals protested the status quo in French society and Gaullism. Anti-Vietnam war protests, many of which involved students, also remained commonplace in America during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Kent State massacre occurred during a Vietnam War protest that May, which led to public outrage in the United States. This

⁶ Document #207, “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” dated February 7, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 440.

⁷ Ibid.

also intensified debate in democracies over the right to protest foreign policy.⁸ The New Left also emerged in the West, and tried to address social inequalities. While these events and movements were not directly related to the First Quarter Storm, they reflect the proliferation of activism throughout the world during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The First Quarter Storm dissipated in the month of April, when many students were on break from school. However, left-wing activism remained significant during this time. Marcos and the U.S. monitored much of these groups' activities. The two largest organizations were the Marxist-Leninist Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas-1930 (PKP) and the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). While the PKP was older, the CPP became more significant. Former UP lecturer Jose Maria Sison left the PKP to form the CPP in 1968.⁹ The PKP and CPP were nominally aligned with Moscow and Beijing, respectively. The PKP would eventually support Marcos after martial law, when they struck a deal that legitimized the party. By contrast, Philippine government banned the CPP, who remain illegal to this day. The CPP's armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), is still designated as a terrorist organization by the Philippines, the United States, and the European Union. President Marcos blamed the NPA for much of the violence before and after martial law, despite accusations that his own men had conducted some of the violence.¹⁰ He also felt threatened by the Communists because they addressed social injustice in Philippine society, which made their cause compelling to a segment of the

⁸ James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: A Century of Colonialism in the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998), 288.

⁹ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 117-118.

¹⁰ Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 251.

Filipino population. This could be problematic for the U.S., which remained committed to stopping the further expansion of communism.

American officials responded to the protests by providing riot gear, which allowed police to suppress protestors more effectively. In April, the Philippine government sent a request to the United States, which asked for riot control equipment. The following May, Richard E. Usher, the director of Philippine affairs at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, requested that the American government use \$75,000 to fund riot control equipment for the Philippines.¹¹ The equipment included helmets and gas masks. He noted that both the Embassy and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) believed that it was in the U.S.' best interest to grant riot control as a one-time response to the Philippines. U.S. officials approved this measure. By providing riot gear to President Marcos, the United States had an interest in preserving order in the Philippines.

In addition to the First Quarter Storm, U.S. officials such as Kissinger and Byroade became preoccupied with the Williams case, which threatened the U.S.-Philippine relationship by highlighting misconduct committed by American military personnel. Air Force Sergeant Bernard Williams at Clark was accused of complicity in an attempted rape case in nearby Angeles City, in which the accused were American soldiers.¹² His supervisors allowed him to depart on reassignment while the judicial

¹¹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "AID Funding for Riot Control Equipment in the Philippines," May 21, 1970, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, DC, 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142142/.

¹² Document #211, "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" dated February 20, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of*

procedures were pending against him. Kissinger wrote that anti-American elements in the Philippines used the Williams case as an affront to Philippine sovereignty and to inspire more protests against the Marcos government.¹³ Byroade also felt that the Filipino government highlighted this to deflect attention from economic and social issues. Kissinger requested that they return Williams to the Philippines so that Philippine courts could prosecute him. U.S. officials risked straining its relationship with the Marcos government if the military prosecuted Williams instead of the Filipino courts. They returned Williams, who stood trial and was acquitted of the charges against him.¹⁴ In the wake of the First Quarter Storm, the United States did not need more bad publicity in the Philippines. This remained consistent with the Nixon Doctrine, by allowing the Filipino authorities to take care of affairs that occurred on its soil.

U.S. officials would release public statements that attempted to dispel myths about the dominant relationship between the Philippines. The Embassy released a non-classified fact sheet, dated April 10, that tried to disprove allegations that the U.S. deliberately kept Philippines a non-industrialized country to maintain access to its raw materials, while exporting manufacturing goods there. The report refuted this by noting that U.S. programs contributed to the development of Philippine industry by providing loans to Philippine companies.¹⁵ The fact sheet also dispelled the myth that USAID programs focused on agriculture at the expense of industry by noting that most of the

the United States, 1969-1972, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 448.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ William E. Berry, *U.S. Bases in the Philippines: The Evolution of the Special Relationship* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 130.

¹⁵ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines "Economic Colonization," April 10, 1970, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, D.C, 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142678/.

assistance went into infrastructure development designed to benefit the whole economy.¹⁶ Embassy officials tried to dispel this idea to show that the U.S. did not have a special relationship with the Philippines anymore. They hoped that the public perception of the U.S.-Philippine relationship was one of equal partners, unlike before.

The National Security Council's Under Secretaries Committee published a classified review of American bases and facilities in the Philippines. This was created as a result of Kissinger's October 1969 memorandum that requested the undertaking of the treaty and other relationships with the Philippines. The study concluded that the U.S. did not control a disproportionate share of land in the Philippines. The report noted that the Air Force could relinquish some land without hurting base expansion requirements, security, or integrity.¹⁷ This also continued to remain consistent with the Nixon Administration's efforts to reduce U.S. military presence, in order to make efficient use of the military. It also reinforced the idea that the Nixon Doctrine did not call for the end of American presence in Asia. Instead, it called for careful planning on U.S. military operations.

This optimism Kissinger felt regarding American bases in the Philippines would also be seen in Byroade's relationship with President Marcos. He praised him as being an effective politician who did more for the Filipino people than "many of the Presidents

¹⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷ Document #215, "Report by the National Security Council's Under Secretaries Committee Review of U.S. bases and Facilities in the Philippines" dated April 6, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 456.

combined.”¹⁸ According to Byroade, Marcos built more roads and schools than his predecessors. The Ambassador noted that Marcos could work towards goals that were both in the interest of the U.S. and the Philippines. He also described Marcos as being easy and pleasant to work with. Byroade also characterized him as being “quite pro-American.”¹⁹ The Ambassador had successfully cultivated a close U.S.-Philippine relationship with President Marcos.

Around the same time, the United States set out details on reducing its presence within its Filipino bases. The Under Secretaries Committee called for a thirty-three percent reduction of personnel at Clark and a twenty-five percent reduction of personnel at other facilities.²⁰ This reduced the U.S. military presence in the Philippines to pre-Vietnam war levels. However, Kissinger noted that these reductions required the laying off of thousands of Filipino workers and the loss of millions in foreign exchange. Despite these issues, he noted that the U.S. could resolve these issues by emphasizing bilateral military agreements and multilateral trade agreements.²¹ Kissinger hoped that the U.S. could continue to maintain its military presence more efficiently by reducing its numbers, to sustain itself once the U.S. ended its involvement in the Vietnam War.

During this time, the Filipino public wanted government reforms that could address societal problems that led to further instability within Filipino society. Leaders from both Liberal and Nacionalista parties called for a Constitutional Convention that

¹⁸ Document #219, “Letter From the Ambassador to the Philippines (Byroade) to President Nixon dated May 13, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 466.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 467.

²⁰ Document #225, “Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon” dated July 13, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 477.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 478.

would create a new Constitution to replace the one ratified in 1935.²² A loose coalition of intellectuals, professionals, businessmen, and clergymen supported the creation of such a policy. The Constitutional Convention could make concessions to the First Quarter Storm protestors, in order to maintain stability within Filipino society.

However, there were concerns from Imelda Marcos that communists and other leftists would dominate the Convention. She feared that the Philippines could become another Chile. Kissinger's October 20 memorandum to Nixon refuted Imelda's concerns by arguing that there were enough pro-Marcos delegates that would offset leftist forces. His report noted that the consensus among U.S. officials was that President Marcos could "dominate the Convention through pro-Marcos delegates and is already moving to assure the election of delegates who will support him."²³ Of the 2600 candidates for 320 delegate positions, U.S. officials reported that most of the delegates were moderate in their outlook on issues that affected U.S. interests. Only fewer than twenty were leftist or communist. Kissinger felt confident that the Convention would not seriously impact U.S. interests and noted that Marcos would be successful in his endeavors without American help. He remained optimistic that President Marcos would manipulate the Constitutional Convention to create policies that were favorable to towards American interests.

American officials continued to support Marcos, who they felt was the best person to serve their interests. Byroade felt that Marcos was easy to work with. However, the First Quarter Storm seemingly threatened President Marcos' political legitimacy. This

²² Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 81.

²³ Document #232, "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" dated October 20, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 494.

concerned both U.S. and Filipino officials. American officials such as Byroade and Kissinger recommended to Marcos that he create populist programs to prevent a possible revolution from happening. The upcoming Constitutional Convention would also attempt to help create reforms that would benefit Filipino society. U.S. officials remained optimistic that pro-Marcos forces would prevail, and did not want to intervene. The U.S. trusted him to work in their favor. This was reinforced by the Nixon Doctrine, which allowed President Marcos to preserve American interests, with minimal presence. U.S. officials supported Marcos not only because he preserved these interests, but also the political turmoil at the time threatened his ability to serve them.

CHAPTER 4

1971: CHAOS AND DISORDER

The year 1971 led to further disorder and chaos in Filipino society, already riddled with significant violence and political instability. Anti-American forces within the Filipino elite, such as businessman Eugenio Lopez, hoped to remove Marcos and reverse many of the benefits the U.S. received in the Philippines. The Philippines also continue to experienced significant political violence, much of it from leftist groups. During that summer, the recently formed Constitutional Convention was split into pro and anti-Marcos factions, who could not agree on measures. However, American officials remained optimistic that pro-Marcos factions would prevail and introduce measures favorable to American interests. At the same time, Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., of the Liberal Party emerged as a significant member of Marcos' opposition. Tragedy struck his party with the Plaza Miranda bombing, which killed several people and injured several Liberal senatorial candidates during a rally in August. Marcos blamed these attacks on Aquino and the Communist guerillas. Despite this serious blow to the Liberals, they swept the senatorial elections in November. American officials continued to support

President Marcos, knowing that he continued to serve business and military interests. They were also concerned that his successor could reverse this.

In the month of January, Byroade discussed with Nixon recent developments regarding the overall political and economic situation in the Philippines, particularly of those serving American interests. Initially, Byroade told Nixon that the overall situation was not good.¹ However, he also felt there were some positive developments. Byroade praised President Marcos' economic advisors who formulated policies that were favorable to foreign investment. According to him, Marcos hired U.S.-educated technocrats who put fiscal controls into effect.² He noted that these advisors understood that "discriminating against American business interests might cost the Philippines a divestment of \$600 million."³ By praising Marcos' economic advisors, Byroade was willing to support President Marcos during a time of political instability because he served American business interests.

Later in the conversation, Ambassador Byroade noted that Marcos' political rival, businessman Eugenio "Geny" Lopez, threatened President Marcos' ability to remain in office. Lopez owned ABS-CBN Television Corporation and the *Manila Times* newspaper. Byroade described him as "a sour, vicious, and bitter person who wanted to drive the U.S. from the Philippines."⁴ Interestingly enough, Geny's brother Fernando was Marcos' Vice President. Byroade described the Vice President as "fairly a good man, but

¹ Document #233, "Memorandum of Conversation" dated January 15, 1971, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 495.

² *Ibid.*, 496.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* 497.

rather stupid” compared to his brother.⁵ He expressed concern that Geny might use his influence to unseat President Marcos and control the Philippines through his brother. One year later, President Marcos would shut down both ABS-CBN and the *Manila Times* shortly after declaring martial law, which undermined the Lopez family’s influence. Byroade continued to support President Marcos, knowing there were anti-Marcos forces that also threatened American interests as well.

Byroade then noted that Marcos might declare martial law within the city of Manila and suspend habeas corpus. Prior to Byroade’s meeting with Nixon, Marcos requested that Byroade ask his American counterpart if he would support these measures. Nixon told Byroade that they would support Marcos “so long he was doing it to preserve the system against those who would destroy it in the name of liberty.”⁶ Nixon also noted that they would support someone who would be trying to preserve order. He showed prudence by offering support for martial law, but noted that President Marcos needed justification for declaring it. While not giving unconditional support for martial law, Nixon allowed Marcos to take action independently from the United States.

President Marcos continued to work on his plans for declaring martial law that spring. He worked out plans for military reorganization, mass arrests of political opponents, nationwide censorship, and curfews.⁷ However, Marcos needed an act of violence that would be the catalyst for his declaration. At the end of a discussion amongst his generals, Marcos agreed to an undefined strategy, which consisted of provoking radicals into committing violent acts. President Marcos began to move ahead with his

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ William C. Rempel, *Delusions of a Dictator: The Mind of Marcoses as Revealed in His Secret Diaries* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1993), 107.

military reorganization plans. However, he decided to halt his plans through a political dare from the opposition Liberal Party and opposition senator Benigno Aquino, Jr. They challenged him to make the upcoming November senatorial elections a referendum on the President.⁸ Marcos felt confident that his candidates could defeat the Liberals, in the aftermath of his successful reelection campaign two years prior.

The political situation in the Philippines remained unstable due to violence, supposedly from leftists, which continued to affect everyday life in the Philippines. In January, unknown groups hurled explosive devices into the Esso and Caltex offices in Manila, killing one employee and injuring four others. Police found leftist People's Revolutionary Front issued leaflets found near the Caltex office that read, "This is the anger of the Filipino people against U.S. imperialism."⁹ On March 30, six young leftist activists attempted to hijack a Philippine Air Lines flight schedule from Manila to Davao. At least two of the six hijackers were sympathizers of the leftist student group, the Kabataang Makabayan (KM).¹⁰ The KM espoused Maoism like the NPA, their political allies. Despite these events, the State Department concluded that none of the radical groups were close to the stage where they could seriously contemplate overthrowing the government. However, it also concluded that these groups could find grounds for long-term encouragement in the country's current plight. The State Department report did not overestimate the Communist threat in the Philippines, but it continued to view them as a

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Philippines: The Radical Movements," May 3, 1971, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 9, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142982/.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Philippines: Hijacking Focuses Attention on the KM," April 5, 1971, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151316/.

legitimate threat to Filipino society. While they could not overthrow President Marcos they felt that the politicization of the large student population had potential to undermine the Filipino oligarchy's influence upon its country. These events contributed to the political unrest and instability that worried the Filipino public.

On June 11, the Constitutional Convention convened at the Manila Hotel to debate provisions for new constitution that could alleviate much of the political instability. Former Philippine President Carlos P. Garcia was sworn in as the convention's president. However, Garcia died of a heart attack three days later. Former President Diosdado Macapagal, Marcos' predecessor, succeeded Garcia. The Convention was well underway in its attempt to reform Filipino society.

Around the same time, Liberal Party Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. of Tarlac province emerged as an important opposition leader. Aquino was born into one of the Philippines' most prominent oligarchic families. His grandfather was a general, while his father was Speaker of the House during World War II. His wife, Corazon, was born into the Cojuangco family, another prominent clan within the Filipino oligarchy. She became President Marcos' successor in 1986. Ninoy was elected Senator in 1967, and had ambitions of succeeding Marcos upon expiration of his term in 1973.¹¹ Leading up to President Marcos' declaration of martial law, he verbally attacked President Marcos many times. The Senator accused Marcos of creating a garrison state. Aquino's anti-Marcos rhetoric continued until martial law, when authorities arrested him for charges of treason.

¹¹ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 396.

Later that summer, the Plaza Miranda bombings became the catalyst that allowed President Marcos to take extraordinary measures. On August 21, the Liberal Party held a rally for its senatorial candidates in the upcoming November election at the Plaza Miranda, a public square in Manila. Unknown assailants hurled grenades onto the stage, killing nine people and injuring about a hundred. The Plaza Miranda bombings wounded almost the entire party leadership. Marcos tried to blame the NPA and Senator Aquino, but there was no conclusive evidence on who was responsible. Nonetheless, this bombing reflected the political unrest at that time, and also resulted in Marcos' expansion of presidential powers.

President Marcos responded to this incident by suspending habeas corpus, which he justified during a TV news conference. According to Frank Maestrone, political counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Manila, Marcos described his suspension as a preventative measure.¹² The Philippine president also argued that his military forces could not properly deal with political dissidents unless he suspended habeas corpus. Marcos noted that his suspension was not unprecedented. He mentioned that in 1950, then-President Elpidio Quirino suspended habeas corpus after twenty-two incidents. By contrast, Marcos displayed a graph that included over one thousand incidents. This graph seemingly justified President Marcos' actions by noting how much worse the situation seemed than the events in 1950. Marcos' suspension of habeas corpus would foreshadow his martial law declaration in the following year.

¹² U.S. Department of State, "President Marcos Accuses Aquino in Bombing Incident," August 24, 1971, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679153089/.

Following the bombings, Ambassador Byroade met with both President and Mrs. Marcos to discuss Marcos' habeas corpus suspension. Upon meeting with the Ambassador, President Marcos told him that he did not suspend habeas corpus solely on the Plaza Miranda incident, but that "this was the last straw."¹³ Marcos told him that he was determined to stop the Communist-led insurgency in the Philippines. He assured Byroade that he would not misuse the suspension for political purposes or against personal enemies. Marcos also said that it would not be difficult to have the Constitutional Convention extend his tenure of office, but he would not do that.¹⁴ However, he noted that he would remain in power if the country were in a condition that he could not leave the office of President. While President Marcos did not confirm plans to remain in power, he did not rule it out as a response to the seemingly unstable political situation. The Plaza Miranda bombing gave him the opportunity to expand his power.

Despite the Plaza Miranda attacks, the Liberal Party successfully captured six of eight Senate seats in the election, which surprised President Marcos. The Filipino public supported the Liberals out of sympathy. The Liberals also ran a successful campaign, arguing that President Marcos' mismanagement of the Filipino government led the Philippines to the brink of revolution.¹⁵ Marcos feared that the Liberal victories in the Senate would give the party momentum that would lead them to victory in next

¹³ Document #239, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 3, 1971, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 511.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Filemon C. Rodriguez, *The Marcos Years: Rape of The Nation* (New York: Vantage Press, 1985), 54

presidential election.¹⁶ This made him concerned that this would hurt his party's ability to remain in power after his term expired in 1973.

In addition to the Liberal Party victories, certain Constitutional Convention delegates threatened President Marcos' ability to remain in power. While the Communists did not influence the Convention, many of the delegates were businessmen and lawyers who wanted power for themselves and their friends. These groups represented a segment of the Filipino elite who was opposed to the overall U.S. presence in the Philippines. This concerned President Marcos, who hoped to persuade delegates to vote for pro-Marcos and pro-American measures. In a December 1985 interview with journalist Raymond Bonner, Byroade noted that he and Marcos hatched a plot to defeat anti-Marcos and anti-American provisions being considered by delegates. Byroade also told Bonner that he would "take the details of what they did to his grave."¹⁷ His involvement in the Constitutional Convention reflected the U.S.' continued support of President Marcos. Despite potential threats from the anti-American elite, Byroade and Marcos felt they could manipulate the Convention in their favor.

During this time, the Constitutional Convention discussed sensitive issues such as curbing the Marcoses ability to hold political power after 1973. According to an October 13 telegram from the Embassy, delegate Napoleon Rama authored a resolution that would exclude both Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos from seeking the presidency after 1973.¹⁸ Marcos' responded by saying that Rama was motivated by personal hatred during

¹⁶ Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 80-81.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁸ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines "ConCon Takes Up Sensitive Political Issues," October 13, 1971, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986, Digital*

a televised conference. He implied that the resolution was a response to the exclusion of Rama's brother, who was the governor of Cebu province, from the pro-government Nacionalista ticket. However, Marcos claimed that he did dissuade delegates from supporting the resolution. President Marcos tried to criticize Rama in order to delegitimize his resolution. Marcos acted tactfully by noting that he was not trying to dissuade delegates from voting for it. However, both U.S. and Filipino officials knew that he ultimately wanted delegates to vote against the resolution. President Marcos asserted his authority over the delegates, but not in a manner that was blatantly coercive. The measure to ban the President and his wife from running after 1973 failed.¹⁹ It showed that Marcos and Byroade's plan was successful in attempting to influence the delegates.

The Convention also debated whether the Philippines should maintain a presidential system or adopt a parliamentary system. The latter would benefit President Marcos, who was ineligible for a third term in 1973. Under a parliamentary system, he would become Prime Minister, which would allow him to hold executive office indefinitely.²⁰ Another issue they debated was restricting Presidential powers. According to Byroade, delegates were split on whether to terminate the ability of a chief executive to suspend habeas corpus. In an October 11 session, twenty-two committee members voted for the presidential system, while ten voted for a parliamentary one.²¹ The majority of those voting for the presidential system also voted for reducing the president's powers such as the ability to suspend habeas corpus. However, delegates who voted to ban

National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679140936/.

¹⁹ Rodriguez, *The Marcos Years*, 52

²⁰ William J. Pomeroy, *An American Made Tragedy: Neo-Colonialism and Dictatorship in the Philippines* (New York: International Publishers, 1974), 99.

²¹ Embassy of the United States, Manila, Philippines "ConCon Takes Up Sensitive Political Issues," 3.

Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos from running for president began to withdraw their signatures.²² The Convention ultimately voted in favor of the parliamentary system and against banning the President and Mrs. Marcos.²³ President Marcos' influence within the Constitution Convention became more apparent.

The situation in the Philippines necessitated American support for President Marcos to preserve American interests. The violence scared the country and seemingly undermined Marcos' ability to govern effectively. Marcos continued to maintain the status quo within the U.S.-Philippine relationship, which consisted of preserving the American bases and business investments. However, his political rivals within the Filipino elite threatened to undo the close relationship that President Marcos and Ambassador Byroade created. One way they would try to do this was through voting for anti-American and anti-Marcos reforms during the Constitutional Convention. This group formed a significant delegate bloc. Despite this, Marcos and Byroade would devise a plan to undermine them. Marcos would also successfully consolidate power further through his suspension of habeas corpus after the Plaza Miranda bombings. While Marcos did not follow through with his martial law plans, suspending habeas corpus was a precursor to what would happen in the following year

²² Rodriguez, *The Marcos Years*, 52.

²³ *Ibid.*, 53.

CHAPTER 5

1972: FROM DEMOCRACY TO DICTATORSHIP

The political and societal unrest peaked in 1972, which led to Marcos' declaration of martial law. During this time, American officials continued to support Marcos' maintaining of power. They were confident that the Constitutional Convention would not threaten the status of American bases. However, the summer would be marred with significant violence, much of which was blamed on leftist groups. American businesses also experienced significant difficulties during this time, such as threats to land holdings in the Philippines. Despite threats to American business interests, Marcos addressed these concerns through his decrees. Around the same time, he revealed his blueprint for martial law to American officials. However, Senator Aquino would also reveal these issues to the public. Despite this, significant violence occurred prior to martial law that allowed President Marcos to make his declaration. U.S. officials released no public statements, but made private statements in support of it because they felt that martial law would be beneficial to these interests.

On January 24, President Marcos delivered his State of the Nation Address at the Legislative building in Manila. President Marcos began his speech by noting that the Philippines would prevail over its challenges in “these times of rupture.”¹ He assured the Filipino public they could overcome problems that plagued their country. Marcos then referenced the U.S.-Philippine relationship. He noted his preference for new conversations with the U.S. regarding the creation of potential programs in anticipation of the reduction of American forces in Southeast Asia. Marcos also mentioned his administration’s role in attracting foreign investments into the country’s economy. According to him, automobile companies such as Ford and General Motors were interested in manufacturing cars in the Philippines.² President Marcos’ speech reflected his commitment to foreign investment, especially American businesses. He also echoed U.S. officials’ plans to reduce the number of military personnel in Southeast Asia. Marcos used his State of the Nation Address to acknowledge public support for American business presence in the Philippines. He justified this by noting that this could help stimulate the Philippine economy. President Marcos’ public support for American business interests and discussion over its military presence showed he thought Philippine and American interests were aligned.

Around this time, the U.S. Embassy paid significant attention to the Constitutional Convention’s approach to the status of foreign bases in the Philippines. Embassy officials felt that most of the delegates were more supportive of the bases. Its telegram to the State Department included a position paper written by pro-Marcos delegates. The paper

¹ Ferdinand Marcos, “Seventh State of the Nation Address” (speech, Manila, Philippines, January 24, 1972), Republic of the Philippines, <http://www.gov.ph/1972/01/24/ferdinand-e-marcos-seventh-state-of-the-nation-address-january-24-1972/>.

² Ibid.

concluded that continued American presence would be in the Philippines' self-interest. It also argued that a constitution's language must be sufficiently broad to meet the challenge of change.³ However, it noted that it would be necessary to reduce elements of U.S.-Philippine security agreements that encroached on Philippine sovereignty. Despite these proposed reductions, the telegram concluded that the Philippine government would favor retention of the bases. This also remained consistent with the Nixon Doctrine. The Convention paid attention to the Philippines' security and economic agreements with the U.S., which included provisions that favored both parties. American policymakers concluded that the majority of delegates felt that banning foreign military bases could threaten Philippine national security. They remained optimistic that the pro-Marcos delegation would continue to push for pro-American measures.

This optimism was also reflected in Under Secretary of State John Irwin's March 18 memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green. The memorandum reiterated maintaining a satisfactory relationship with the Philippine government that ensured the availability of the bases, while reducing elements of the special relationship with the Philippines. Irwin defined this special relationship as excessive Filipino dependence on the United States for military aid.⁴ It recommended that the U.S. should not extend the Laurel-Langley trade agreement. Officials felt that American firms affected by its expiration had made appropriate

³ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, "Status of the Foreign Bases Question in the Philippine Constitutional Convention," July 1, 1972, in *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, 6, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151267/.

⁴ Document #248, "Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State (Irwin) to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs (Green)" dated March 18, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972*, (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 531.

adjustments under how they operate and would continue to do business in the Philippines.⁵ This meant that Laurel-Langley was cumbersome and superfluous to American business interests. Lastly, Irwin stressed that the bases were of fundamental importance to the U.S., and were likely to become more valuable if other Western Pacific states curtailed base rights. This showed the Nixon Administration's further commitment to reducing their military presence to maintain efficiency.

In addition to reducing American military presence, U.S. officials attempted to remain silent on domestic Filipino issues to prevent complications in the relationship between the two countries. In May, Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., criticized the Philippines' dependence on the U.S. for its national security and the American utilization of its Filipino bases for the Vietnam War effort. He also set out his foreign policy framework that consisted of forty-four points that could be used for a potential campaign for president. Ambassador Byroade hoped to challenge Senator Aquino on these issues. However, Secretary of State Rogers responded to Byroade by suggesting that Byroade "must avoid public discussion of these matters as much as possible."⁶ Had the ambassador made public criticism of Aquino, anti-American forces in the Philippines could interpret this as American intervention in the business of its allies. The U.S. needed to stay out of domestic issues to prevent backlash from the Filipino public.

The Philippines continued to experience significant violence and unrest during the month of July, much of which the government blamed on Communist groups such as NPA. On July 3, an explosion occurred at the American Express office in downtown

⁵ Ibid., 533.

⁶ Document #249, "Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Philippines" dated May 13, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 535.

Manila.⁷ Small, but unexplained, fires followed in the congressional building and in the Department of Finance. On July 18, unexploded devices were found in the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center, and in the Publications Division of the Philippine Senate.⁸ The Philippine Armed Forces seized smuggled arms from a ship that they accused of supplying Maoist insurgents. Despite supposed threats from Communists, the American officials felt that urban terrorism did not fit into the NPA's plans. They concluded that Marcos' charges were overdrawn, and did not rule out the possibility that his supporters were responsible for some of the violence.⁹ However, violence committed by either party scared the Filipino public who felt there was a lack of law and order within their society.

The Philippines also experienced significant rainfall in July and August, which caused natural disasters throughout the country. In early July, the island of Luzon experienced significant flooding that killed over 650 people. Over 80 inches of rainfall accumulated within one month. This was equivalent to the average annual rainfall that the Philippines usually received.¹⁰ In addition to the hundreds killed, these disasters displaced millions of people. Much of the streets of Metro Manila were submerged and every surrounding river, lake, and stream overflowed.¹¹ The disaster ruined much of the rice crop. Food riots and looting broke out in several places. The resulting floods also caused an outbreak of cholera and typhoid epidemics. While not directly related to the

⁷ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, "GOP Warns of Communist Campaign of Urban Terrorism," September 9, 1972, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington D.C., 2, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151932/.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰ U.S. Agency for International Development, *Disaster Relief Case Report Philippine Islands-Floods* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1972), 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

political turmoil, the floods exacerbated the situation by making the lives of many Filipinos more difficult. This resulted in further instability within Filipino society.

The end of summer brought concerns regarding American business interests in the Philippines, most notably in the Quasha decision. The Quasha case concerned a judicial determination of the rights acquired by American citizens and corporations through the Parity Amendment found in Laurel-Langley trade agreement. This amendment allowed American citizens to own land in the Philippines. However, Laurel-Langley was set to expire in 1974, which concerned Americans. American William Quasha appealed to the Philippine Supreme Court on the status of his land holdings after Laurel-Langley's expiration. On August 17, the court ruled that Quasha's landholdings were invalid. They interpreted the Parity Amendment as allowing American individuals and corporations to only purchase land in the public domain.¹² The land Quasha purchased had been in private hands. The court also ruled that special privileges that American citizens and corporations held would end with Laurel-Langley's expiration in 1974. The Quasha decision impacted the American expatriate community in the Philippines because a majority of the land purchased by Americans had been privately owned. According to a National Security Council memorandum, this would create problems for a significant portion of \$1 billion in total U.S. investment.¹³ The Quasha decision worried American citizens, who feared they could lose their property.

¹² U.S. Department of State, East Asian and Pacific Interdepartmental Group, "NSSM – 155: Philippine Policy – Annex on the Quasha Decision," September 21, 1972, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679141257/.

¹³ *Ibid.*

The memorandum suggested that the Philippine Supreme Court could modify its decision by affirming the rights of U.S. investors to possess clear title and protecting their lands from reversion to Filipino citizens.¹⁴ It then mentioned that remedial provisions in a new Philippine constitution could resolve problems resulting from the Quasha decision. One such provision was the implementation of a parliamentary form of government, which would allow Marcos to become Prime Minister and hold executive office after 1973. This would give Marcos more time to address these concerns. U.S. policymakers needed Marcos to remain in power because he helped create a business friendly environment.

The Philippine Supreme Court also threatened business interests with the Luzon Stevedoring decision, which prohibited foreigners from holding executive office in Filipino-based businesses. The Supreme Court ruled that executive positions were reserved for only Filipino citizens. This meant that American citizens could not control their subsidiaries through contracts or managerial positions.¹⁵ By not being able to own their Filipino subsidiaries, this hurt American business executives' abilities to profit significantly from the Philippines.

Around the same time, President Marcos told U.S. officials that he was contemplating whether or not he should proceed with martial law. He knew that asking the United States' advice would provide more legitimacy for his actions. He asked Ambassador Byroade about the attitude towards the Philippines in Washington. Byroade met with Nixon and Kissinger at the Oval Office, and outlined potential negative

¹⁴ Ibid.,4.

¹⁵ Albert F. Celozza, *Ferdinand Marcos and the Philippines: The Political Economy of Authoritarianism* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 112.

consequences of martial law, which was that significant sectors of the Filipino population would rebel if the U.S. supported it.¹⁶ Nixon did not pay attention and seemed bored during much of the discussion.¹⁷ Despite this, the three agreed to support Marcos' declaration of martial law on the pretext that it helped put down the Communist insurgency.

Despite the secrecy over martial law, rumors emerged over President Marcos' plans to declare it. Aquino revealed President Marcos' plans for martial law on the floor of the Senate on September 13. His speech warned of the possibility that President Marcos was moving to impose martial law. He also noted that the government named the plan, "Operation Sagittarius." According to Aquino, the Philippine government planned to place Manila and nearby provinces under control of the Philippine Constabulary.¹⁸ Fourteen radical Constitutional Convention delegates also charged that martial law could be imposed with the advice and consent of the U.S. military. Editorials also questioned whether or not the situation warranted martial law. They also noted that the U.S. Embassy did not take the leftist threat seriously as the Philippine government did. The significant public backlash had seemingly put into question Marcos' ability to declare martial law.

Despite this public backlash, President Marcos remained determined to declare martial law. One week before martial law, Byroade wrote to the State Department that he

¹⁶ Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing With a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 96.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, "Senator Aquino Reacts to Martial Law Rumors," September 15, 1972, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, Digital National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679152200/.

believed that Marcos could extend himself through constitutional means, without U.S. support. He also noted that martial law would not be an extra-constitutional step if it were carried out for purposes specified in the Philippine Constitution.¹⁹ Byroade's statement indicated that he would support martial law under certain conditions. He also mentioned that Marcos said that he would act promptly if a part of Manila was burned or if a top government official was kidnapped or assassinated. This changes the narrative by contradicting Karnow, who mentioned that Byroade kept advising Marcos against declaring martial law.²⁰ While Byroade did not express outright support for Marcos' plans for martial law, he gave Marcos advice on how he could declare it.

Byroade and Marcos discussed martial law with some caution on how to proceed. On September 20, Byroade had a personal conversation with Marcos that pertained to concerns regarding the Philippine President's plans for martial law. The Ambassador also noted to Marcos he "was not under instructions" from his superiors and anything he might say "would at this point be just personal from" him.²¹ Byroade also wrote that President Marcos needed to remain in a position where he could say that he did not accept the Ambassador's advice. He also reminded the Philippine President that the Nixon Administration was in the wind-up phase of their reelection campaign. Byroade told Marcos that he felt that Senator George McGovern, the Democratic nominee, would seize on a military takeover in the Philippines to use it as proof that Nixon's foreign

¹⁹ Document #256, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 15, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 546.

²⁰ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 356.

²¹ Document #258, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 21, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 551.

policies, particularly in Asia, were failures. Marcos told Byroade that he did not make an official decision to declare martial law, but that “planning for it was at an advanced state.”²² Marcos also concluded that his country’s Constitution was broader than the American one.²³ He felt that the ineffectiveness of the government was enough for him to legally declare martial law. He described the problems of Filipino society in a similar manner to critics of his Administration. Marcos also felt “his place in history might be made if he had the power of drastic reform.”²⁴ This showed that American officials experienced some difficulties in their dealings with President Marcos. While they were willing to discuss these plans, they understood that they needed to remain silent on the matter.

One day before declaring martial law, President Marcos worked with Ambassador Byroade to fix problems American businesses faced in the Philippines. During their meeting, Marcos noted that the Philippine Supreme Court should correct its decisions on the Quasha and Luzon Stevedoring cases.²⁵ They both agreed that the Supreme Court could invalidate them. Regarding Luzon Stevedoring, President Marcos felt that foreign executive management would be an asset for companies he described as advanced technological enterprises.²⁶ President Marcos pledged to support American business interests in these statements. This meeting reinforced both Byroade and Hamilton-Paterson’s narrative that President Marcos supported American business interests.

²² Ibid., 552.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Document #259, “Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State” dated September 22, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 553.

²⁶ Ibid., 554.

Marcos' removal would prevent him from resolving the issues that stemmed from both the Quasha and Luzon Stevedoring decisions.

To declare martial law, President Marcos needed a catalyst that allowed him to declare it without significant public opposition. On September 21, Marcos reported that unknown gunmen tried to assassinate his Defense Secretary, Juan Ponce Enrile, whose motorcade had allegedly been ambushed. Years later, in 1986, Enrile admitted that his assassination attempt was faked.²⁷ Nonetheless, this became the pretext President Marcos utilized to declare martial law. This fake assassination attempt reflected Marcos' willingness to take extraordinary measures that allowed him to declare martial law.

At midnight, September 22, President Marcos announced Proclamation No. 1081, which imposed martial law throughout the Philippines. He officially proclaimed it at mid-day September 23. The Proclamation imposed a national curfew, ordered the arrest of Marcos' political opponents, and closed many media outlets. They also cancelled all domestic commercial flights. The Philippine government suspended international cable and telephone traffic. Proclamation No. 1081 ended democracy in the Philippines. Ferdinand Marcos had become a dictator, not unlike his Asian contemporaries Suharto in Indonesia or Park Chung-hee in South Korea.

The Filipino public initially accepted martial law because it halted much of the crime and violence that plagued Philippine society. The curfew kept teenage youth at home, relieving concerned parents. Marcos convinced much of the Filipino public that martial law would resolve the nation's problems. Martial law seemingly brought stability to the Filipino people, who experienced little of it in the past three years.

²⁷ Karnow, *In Our Image*, 359.

The United States remained silent on the matter, and denied involvement in Marcos' plans.²⁸ Kissinger and Byroade gave private support for martial law. Kissinger felt martial law would not pose serious problems for U.S. security and economic relations with the Philippines. He felt that "individual business operations might be even be improved."²⁹ However, he recognized that critics of U.S. foreign policy would interpret this as tacit support for Marcos' move. Nonetheless, Kissinger felt that this silence would help the U.S. maintain access to its military bases.

Byroade reiterated this sentiment, noting that the U.S. should not provide any public statement of support for martial law. The Ambassador also concluded that they should "quietly continue business as usual" with the Philippine government, while monitoring "any potential abuse of his new powers."³⁰ Despite this concern over Marcos' extension over power, Byroade remained optimistic that he would not abuse them. U.S. officials remained silent on martial law because it would allow them to maintain American business operations and bases.

American business leaders also expressed their support for President Marcos during this time. Tristan Beplat, President of the Philippine American Chamber of Commerce in New York, argued that President Marcos would continue to support

²⁸ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Korea and the Philippines, November 1972, A Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate* (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, D.C., 1973), 6.

²⁹ Document #260, "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" dated September 23, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 557.

³⁰ Document # 263, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated October 2, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 563.

American investment.³¹ While Beplat did not make explicit mention of martial law, he felt that American businesses would suffer if Marcos fell. He also believed that the Quasha decision was a political issue that the Philippine government used to pressure the U.S. to be more responsive to President Marcos' desires.³² Following martial law, the American Chamber of Commerce also expressed their support to President Marcos.³³ The American business community remained optimistic that President Marcos would formulate policies that favored their interests.

President Marcos served these business interests promising to reverse both the Quasha and Luzon Stevedoring decisions. Three days after martial law, President Marcos outlined his economic policy to foreign journalists. These included provisions such as permitting foreign nationals to hold executive office. Another included permitting holdings, whose titles were nullified by the Supreme Court, to be disposed over a long period of time to individual Filipinos.³⁴ President Marcos fulfilled these promises issuing decrees in 1973. Martial law allowed Marcos to serve American business interests more effectively.

Ambassador Byroade praised Marcos for proposing these measures, but expressed concern that President Marcos would settle these problems through Presidential decree.³⁵

³¹ Document #261, "Memorandum of Conversation" dated September 26, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 559.

³² *Ibid.*, 558.

³³ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, "Preliminary Reactions to Martial Law," September 28, 1972, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, *Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, DC, 3, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151466/.

³⁴ Celozza, *Ferdinand Marcos and the Philippines*, 116.

³⁵ Document #262, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 27, 1972 in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 561.

He felt it would prove to Marcos' opposition that the U.S. supported martial law. Byroade believed that maneuvering the Philippine Supreme Court into handling the problems would have been preferable because it would provide more legitimacy than Marcos himself.³⁶ Nonetheless, Byroade felt that these decrees were beneficial because it cleared significant obstacles to foreign investment in the Philippines.

American officials experienced some difficulty with creating policy towards the Philippines, but consistently supported President Marcos while his legitimacy was seemingly put into question. They felt that he would create policies that continued to serve American business and military interests. The Constitutional Convention did not pose a threat to U.S. bases. While American business interests were threatened, Marcos would successfully fix these programs through decrees. American officials continued to express concern with Marcos' plans for martial law, but tried to help him declare it while working within the Philippine Constitution. A potential successor could try to undo everything that President Marcos sought to do. U.S. officials needed Marcos to remain in power not only because he served American interests, but because he provided stability that preserved these interests. While Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson know that Marcos served American interests, they did not know that President Marcos and Ambassador Byroade met one day prior to martial law to discuss how to resolve Quasha and Luzon Stevedoring. This reinforces their position that Marcos effectively served American interests. U.S. officials such as Byroade and Kissinger felt optimistic that martial law would be beneficial to Americas interests in the Philippines.

³⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Under martial law, President Marcos continued to serve American business interests and his own. He supported a March 1973 foreign investment law that guaranteed investors new rights, which eased anxieties over the situation in the Philippines.¹ Marcos' government never forced Americans to relinquish their properties. Martial law did not change the status quo with respect to the American business activities in the Philippines.

In addition to business interests, President Marcos agreed to keep American bases, which remained important to strategic interests in Asia. The end of American involvement in the Vietnam War led to the loss of a former Asian ally to the Communists. The Carter Administration agreed to \$500 million in aid for the Philippines in exchange for base rights.² President Jimmy Carter felt that the Philippines remained strategically significant. This would compromise his foreign policy rhetoric, which stressed human rights. American officials knew they could not lose its military bases after ending American involvement in Vietnam.

¹ Gabriel Kolko, *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 258.

² Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing With a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 210.

Marcos lifted martial law in 1981 with Proclamation No. 2045.³ However, habeas corpus remained suspended in various provinces such as Mindanao. Marcos also retained legislative and emergency powers. His other presidential decrees remained legal and binding. President Marcos also called for elections in 1981, to legitimize his hold over the presidency. However, the opposition did not participate because they felt it was illegitimate. Marcos won with eighty-six percent of the vote.⁴ Despite the formal end of martial law, Marcos continued to rule like a dictator.

President Marcos' legitimacy crumbled after the assassination of his biggest political rival. In 1983, Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., arrived at Manila International Airport spending many years in exile. Upon exiting the plane, an unknown gunman shot and killed him. While not confirmed, one of Marcos' men was allegedly responsible. This shocked the Filipino public, who became more disenchanted with Marcos.

Aquino's widow, Corazon, ran against Marcos in the 1986 snap elections. The results showed that President Marcos defeated her with a majority. Despite this, the Filipino public felt the results were invalid. The People Power Revolution emerged, which consisted of clergymen, Liberal Party members, and leftist activists. They protested for three days. Secretary of State George Shultz recommended to President Reagan that Marcos step down.⁵ They also agreed to grant Marcos asylum in the U.S. The Marcoses fled to Hawaii, where Ferdinand died in 1989. Shortly after the ousting, Mrs. Aquino was sworn in as President.

³ Rosario Mendoza Cortes, ed., *Philippine Presidents: 100 Years* (Manila, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1999), 236.

⁴ Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator*, 306.

⁵ Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 421.

Between 1969 and 1972, three issues defined the U.S.' relationship with the Marcos government. The first was the significant political unrest that threatened to undermine President Marcos' legitimacy. The second concerned U.S. application of the Nixon Doctrine to the Philippines. The third issue related to how Marcos maintained military and business interests in the Philippines. These three issues were crucial to understanding American support for President Marcos.

The political unrest in the Philippines contributed significantly to American support for Marcos because they were concerned that the current situation could undermine his legitimacy. The First Quarter Storm concerned American officials, who recommended that the Philippine government introduce reforms to alleviate the situation.⁶ They hoped this would prevent the situation from exacerbating. During this time, the Communist movement would become more prominent in the Philippines. However, U.S. officials felt that they did not pose a serious threat to Marcos. Nonetheless, American officials also believed that the current situation was encouraging for the Communists.⁷ The political unrest helped understand the U.S.' role in the Philippines because it would lead to American support for President Marcos. The U.S. needed stability, which was an important aspect of the Nixon Doctrine.

U.S. officials applied the Nixon Doctrine to the Philippines by reducing its military presence and ensuring that Marcos remained President. The U.S. sent riot gear to

⁶ Document #207, "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon" dated February 7, 1970, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 440.

⁷ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, "Philippines: The Radical Movements," May 3, 1971, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986, Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., iv, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142982/.

the Philippines around May 1970.⁸ By doing so, the United States aided the Philippines in its own self-defense with financial support, instead of sending in U.S. troops. This let U.S. officials use its resources more efficiently to protect its allies. U.S. support also ensured that Marcos stayed in power. In January 1971, Nixon told Byroade that he would support Marcos if he were to declare martial law preserve liberty.⁹ Nixon interpreted martial law as a means for Marcos to preserve order and defend himself from internal enemies. The U.S. would provide indirect support through financial aid, which allowed Marcos to use American resources for his benefit. The Nixon Doctrine was significant to understand U.S. officials' relationship with the Marcos government because it helped ensure that Marcos remained in power by emphasizing stability.

President Marcos served U.S. military interests, which consisted primarily of preserving American base rights. Vietnamization increased the importance of America's Filipino bases because fewer troops meant more naval presence. Subic Bay would become a more important hub of operations. Pro-Marcos Constitutional Convention delegates drafted a paper that supported keeping the U.S. bases, arguing that it was in the Philippines self-interest.¹⁰ Marcos' preservation of base rights were important to understanding his relationship with the United States because the U.S. needed these

⁸ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, "AID Funding for Riot Control Equipment in the Philippines," May 21, 1970, *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986, Digital National Security Archive*, George Washington University, Washington, DC, 1, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142142/.

⁹ Document #233, "Memorandum of Conversation" dated January 15, 1971, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 497.

¹⁰ Embassy of the United States of America, Manila, Philippines, "Status of the Foreign Bases Question in the Philippine Constitutional Convention," July 1, 1972, in *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986, Digital National Security Archive*, 6, http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679151267/.

bases, which were important hubs of American military operations in Asia. American officials needed to support Marcos, in order maintain access to its bases.

U.S. officials also continued to tacitly support President Marcos because he served American business interests. Byroade praised Marcos' economic advisors, whose fiscal controls saved American companies \$600 million.¹¹ This also reinforced Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's narrative. The Philippine Supreme Court also threatened American business interests through its Luzon Stevedoring and Quasha decisions. However, President Marcos agreed to reverse these decisions.¹² Shortly after martial law, Marcos issued decrees that allowed American citizens to retain property in the Philippines and hold executive office in their companies. This affirms Bonner and Hamilton-Paterson's narrative that Marcos was effective for serving American interests. American business interests were important to understanding the U.S.' relationship with Marcos because

The Nixon Doctrine desired political stability, which depended on U.S. support for President Marcos, who served American business and military interests. While there were no prospects for revolution, the political instability could threaten Marcos' ability to remain President. Marcos also faced threats from the Filipino elite such as Lopez or Aquino, both of whom could depose him. President Marcos continued to aid business concerns, while permitting base rights. His removal could threaten much of this, which meant that the United States needed President Marcos to remain in power.

¹¹ Document #233, "Memorandum of Conversation" dated January 15, 1971 in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 496.

¹² Document #259, "Telegram From the Embassy in the Philippines to the Department of State" dated September 22, 1972, in *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1972*, Vol. 20, *Southeast Asia, 1969-1972* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2006), 553.

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