

---

## Interview: Deputy Foreign Minister of the Philippines

---

# 'There are some who want to turn the Philippines into a new Kampuchea'

*The following interview with the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Philippines, Pacifico Castro, was conducted in Manila in the first week of June by EIR Bangkok Bureau Chiefs Sophie and Pakdee Tanapura.*

**EIR:** Apparently the Philippines had some difficulties in dealing with the Carter-Mondale administration in 1976, especially on the question of "human rights." Could you please comment on what went on in the Philippines at that time, and how that policy affected the relations between the United States and the Philippines.

**Castro:** Under the Carter administration, there was a misreading, a misperception of the problems of developing countries. There was an overemphasis on human rights as an instrument for American global diplomacy without taking into account the problems of the developing countries—and there are more than 120 developing countries in the world where two thirds of the world population live. This overemphasis on the human-rights issue has led to a misrepresentation of the inherent strength of [existing] democratic institutions, especially at a time when the Philippines was confronted with three major problems: first, the secessionist movement in southern Philippines that was supported by foreign powers with money as well as armaments.

**EIR:** Could you name the foreign powers?

**Castro:** Libya has not hidden the fact that it was supporting the so-called Moro National Liberation movement. Libya has never hidden this fact. In fact, all the official documents that they showed us eventually in Libya when we went there to talk to Colonel Qaddafi indicated that they were supporting the Moro National Liberation Movement in the same manner that they were supporting the IRA, the Irish Republican Army, in Northern Ireland. They are not ashamed. In fact, they were very proud of the fact that Libya supports all revolutionary movements in the world.

But going back to our problems during the Carter administration. At that time, the Philippine government was confronted with three very critical problems. First, the secessionist movement in southern Philippines. Second, the New Peoples' Army, the military arm of the outlawed Communist

Party of the Philippines. Of course, finally, the fact that we were hit with the energy crisis when the price of petroleum had quadrupled for the first time and the Philippines was unfortunately one of the nations that was blacklisted by the major suppliers of crude oil in the Middle East. So, in the midst of all these problems, the human-rights issue was, to say the least, misplaced.

Therefore, we had to adopt very strict security measures to ensure the protection of our sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the lives and property of the majority of our people. The security problems of 50 million people in a developing country are not very easy to meet. This was the negative side of the Carter administration.

But there were also some positive aspects of the Carter administration because it was President Carter who finally agreed to recognize Philippine sovereignty over Clark Air Base and Subic Bay and their dependents. It was President Carter who wrote President Marcos pledging compensation for the use of these two military bases, and it was during the time of President Carter in 1979 that we also concluded a trade agreement within the framework of the GATT. So it was not all negative during the time of President Carter. But, in general, it may be said that the negative aspects outweighed the positive, if we are to make a balanced accounting of the Carter administration's relations with the Philippine government.

**EIR:** Seven Latin American countries sent a joint letter to the London Summit in the beginning of June on the question of debt renegotiation. Is it conceivable that the Philippine government will join Latin America on this question?

**Castro:** First, let me give you a historical background of the Philippine relations with the Latin American countries. Because of our long colonization by Spain, we have a common heritage with all Latin nations. In fact, the Philippines is the only Asian country that participates in Latin American organizations. For instance, in Paris, there is the Maison de l'Amérique Latine on the Boulevard St. Germain. The only other member country outside of the South American region is Equatorial New Guinea in Africa because it was also a Spanish colony for a long time.

So we share more or less the same cultural background as all Latin American countries. In fact, it is little known that in the World Bank, as well as in the International Monetary Fund, the Philippines was, for a long time, classified with Latin American countries in the regional voting block system of both international organizations. For a long time, the Philippines shared its vote with Colombia. If the executive director in the World Bank was a Colombian, the deputy executive director would be a Filipino and vice versa. Therefore, in the World Bank, as well as in the IMF, we have had very close links with all Latin American countries.

As a developing country, we have been following closely the developments in Latin America. In fact, we have embassies in practically all the major Latin American countries. We have residence embassies in Mexico City, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Lima, and we used to have an embassy in Caracas. These are all countries that have a very strong position on the external indebtedness of developing countries. As you know, for the Latin American countries alone, the total indebtedness is \$350 billion. We did not associate ourselves with the letter of the Latin American countries. But we have had very close contacts with Prime Minister Nakasone who has offered the services of Japan as a spokesman for the developing countries in Asia, particularly the ASEAN nations. We believe that Prime Minister Nakasone spoke on behalf of the developing countries of Asia in the last summit in London in the same manner that he did this in Ottawa last year. And before him, Prime Minister Suzuki also spoke in behalf of the developing countries at the time. So, it has been more or less a traditional role that Japan has imposed upon herself to speak on behalf of the developing nations which we in the Philippines appreciate.

**EIR:** Do you think that the Soviet Union or some other power had a hand in the assassination of Benigno Aquino, in order to jeopardize the American bases and U.S.-Philippine relations?

**Castro:** In the 1963 assassination of President Kennedy, there have been many theories as to who was behind the assassination. As you will recall, even in the book of Theodore William Manchester, *The Death of a President*, they have referred extensively to the links of Lee Harvey Oswald to the Soviet Union and his marriage to a Soviet national Marina Oswald.

In the same way, there have been many theories on the assassination of the late Senator Aquino. Of course, the Armed Forces intelligence services is of the view that the late Senator Aquino was assassinated by Rolando Galman who was an NPA [New Peoples' Army] agent, a hired assassin, and this would tend to confirm what you said. There is only one power that would benefit from any form of destabilization of the Philippines and this is a power that would like to dominate the Pacific region, which is already assured of a firm position

in Kampuchea. There is sufficient evidence to confirm what you are suspecting. There is a power or there are some powers behind the act who want to promote a fratricidal conflict among Filipinos, and in any situation where an organized society is destroyed, as we have seen in Cambodia, there is only one force that will have the capability to take over and this is the ideologically motivated force preaching equality to all citizens. That is why all the books and writings by President Marcos have been warning our people not to create any situation leading the Philippines to the tragic situation of Kampuchea.

This is what President Marcos said in his latest book, *The New Philippine Republic: A Third World Approach to Democracy*: "I would like to review the incidents in Kampuchea leading to the liquidation of almost half of the population of that unfortunate country. When the United States supported the Lon Nol administration, Prince Norodom Sihanouk was compelled to support the communist element, the Khmer Rouge, in the belief that they would install him as the head of state after victory. Unfortunately, after the victory of the Khmer Rouge, and the flight of Lon Nol from Kampuchea, Prince Sihanouk became practically a prisoner for the Khmer Rouge. The bloodbath committed by Pol Pot forces followed, and this was picked up as a reason for Vietnamese intervention into Kampuchea. This tragedy has been repeated in African countries as well as in South American countries. The pattern is now obvious that when a democratic or a liberal regime falls, it is usually not the moderate political party that considers itself the legitimate opposition which takes over power. But rather, it is usually the more militant, the more forceful and ruthless party, that is, the communist party, which takes over. There is no compromising with the radicals and the communist party. . . ."

Probably there is a scenario to this effect: To promote disharmony in the Philippines, to make the Filipinos continually fight each other, which may create a situation like Kampuchea, where the communist forces finally took over the Cambodian society and opened the way for Vietnamese occupation. It is probably believed that after this internal fighting and a civil war among Filipinos, a new set of leaders would come in that would facilitate the entry of a foreign occupying power in the Philippines.

**EIR:** Would you like to add anything for our readers?

**Castro:** If we have politicians like Senator [Ted] Kennedy and Congressman [Stephen D.] Solarz, we might as well write off Southeast Asian countries as the last bastion for democracy. The United States government should now look into the strong possibility of dealing with socialist or communist leaders from Southeast Asia if politicians like Senator Kennedy and Congressman Solarz would be allowed to pursue their fight against the few remaining leaders of democratic countries in Southeast Asia.