CONCLUSION
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A Revolution may be conducted against a national government, if such a government has abused the power placed at its disposal by the people with the purpose of having justice administered, by using this power to drown out the public voice and at the same time to administer to its own convenience or caprice.1

-- Apolinario Mabini

While justifying the revolution against a constitutional government, Apolinario Mabini, the political thinker of the Philippines echoed Locke's theory of 'Right to Resistance' that found its manifestation in the great historic democratic revolution of the Philippines against the autocratic regime of President Ferdinand Marcos. The Filipinos rightly followed Mabini's justification of the revolution to justify their discontent with the two-decades of Marcos' rule that resulted in a great crisis.

The Philippines sailed close to the wind from Marcos's autocracy to the victory of democracy under the close-watch of the United States. The crucial decision of the United States to play a 'king-maker' role by shifting its support from Marcos to Corazon Aquino was very much intertwined with its longstanding interests to maintain itself as a 'Pacific Power'.

The Asian-Pacific region was considered as economic power house by the United States as it offered a tremendous scope for trade and investment than the Atlantic. It prompted the United States to pursue its objectives of stability, trade and access\(^2\) to become the predominant power by containing communism in the region.

The United States got a devouring interest in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Economically, ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, The Philippines, Singapore and Brunei) became very important because of their supply of rubber, oil, palm oil, tin etc., to the United States. It found a wide scope for great market opportunity for its products in the region.

Politically, while all the ASEAN countries are non-communist states Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore -- the three most important nations, are the members of non-aligned movement. They served the US interests by expressing moderate view to counterbalance any eventual anti-American and pro-Soviet policy lines within the movement. The ASEAN countries also looked forward for US protection against the attack of communism.

While the ASEAN suited US purpose by providing it a political and economic base, the Philippines in particular, became the proud partner of the United States by offering the two most important Bases -- Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base, the gateway to all of the South Asia and the backdoor of the Middle East. Both the facilities in the Philippines served the following multifaceted interests of the United States:

They protected the sea and airlines of the region and provided logistical support for US forces in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The US military presence in Philippines facilitated a vital function in maintaining regional security and stability which, in its turn, contributed to the remarkable growth of free-market economy. Last but not the least, as an integral part of the US world-wide system of deterrence against nuclear war, they provided valuable monitoring intelligence and communication facilities and served as a proximate springboard for a wide variety of US strategic and conventional forces at the time of exigencies such as crisis or war.

The American policy fiasco in Vietnam in 1975, catapulted the importance of the Philippines. The ideological commitment of the United States in Vietnam was very much guided by 'Domino Theory' which offered the
argument that if a government fell in one Southeast Asian country to the communist power, it would trigger a similar fall in other countries. The post-war developments in Southeast Asia and Indo-china appeared to have followed the assumption of the 'Domino Theory' causing a great concern for the United States.

The Soviet access to Da Nang and CamRanh bases in Vietnam seemed to have altered the geo-political realities in the region. Laos fell a victim to Vietnamese imperialism. Kampuchea was taken over by an indigenous communist movement backed by Vietnamese forces on January 7, 1979. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was the most important event that rocked the United States violently in the same year. Thus, the series of events that came at the heels of Vietnam war made the 'Philippine Bases' the most sought after place to counter the Soviet build-up.

The US foreign policy had undergone a sea-change when Ronald Reagan was swept into power with the promise to reassert America’s global prestige and credibility. It acted as a catalyst to make the Philippines indispensable for Reagan administration's policy of challenging the Soviet Union in the Pacific. The position of the Philippines was rightly summarized by US Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger as he said that the defence of the Philippines was indispensable to the defence of the
free world.\textsuperscript{3} The very expression 'free world' should obviously be understood as the non-communist states. So the Reagan administration came closer to the Philippines to strengthen its control over the region.

While the Philippines became instrumental to renovate the 'US power house' in the region, the instrument itself got degenerated day by day under the government of President Ferdinand E. Marcos. Since the declaration of martial law in September 1972, the Crony -- an elite class that comprised of close associates and family members of Marcos was responsible for the crisis in every sphere of the Filipino society.

As the Marcos Government had alienated itself from the rural masses, the communists took the chance to build their strongholds in the interior of the country. The New People's Army (NPA) -- the armed wing of the communist party, organized peasants, trade unionists, and the poor people against the government. Frustrated by the government's crony politics, a major section of the people became attracted towards communists. The wholesome corruption of the ruling class strengthened the communist base which was also supported by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Philippine military -- the most organized sector in the country, also suffered from corruption and favouritism. Since the promulgation of martial law, the military became the handmaid of Marcos regime. Personal loyalty was given preference to merit. The appointment of General Fabian Ver symbolized an unprecedented politicization of the military as seventeen generals and thirteen colonels were made to retire to clear the way for him. A section of the defence forces who belonged to Ilocano -- the constituency of President Marcos, was favoured by the government in terms of salary and job distribution. The discrimination generated a split in the defence forces. The junior officers who had been assigned to deal with the guerrilla forces in the remote areas remained low-paid. The in-service rift in the army found its manifestation in 'Reform the armed Forces Movement' (RAM) that was organized with the objective of restoring professionalism within the armed forces.

In the economic sphere, the government dramatically increased its monopoly to the extent which became known as 'Marcos Socialism'. Substantiating government's control of the economy, the University of the Philippines School of Economics had issued a report on the crisis which recorded that since 1972, six hundred and eighty eight presidential decrees and two hundred and eighty three letters of
instructions were issued by the government to reflect the various forms of government interventions in the economy.

All the key areas of private sectors were dominated by the crony groups. Coconut and sugar - the two most important agricultural products were, under the monopoly of Eduardo Cojuangco and Roberto Benedicto, the two close associates of the President. It resulted in grave discontentment among the ordinary farmers.¹

Decline in exports and investments caused deficit in the balance of payments. Continued borrowing from the foreign countries and heavy reliance on foreign trade had left the country highly dependent on international economic conditions and decisions of the developed countries.

The inflation rate reached fifty percent. The real wages continued to slide down. Though in 1970s the Gross National Product (GNP) had grown at an average rate of 6.6 per cent per annum, the graph turned downwards to an estimated rate of 1.4 per cent, a rate less than that of population growth in 1983. The unemployment rate for urban workers reached 25 per cent. Lack of direct and consistent mechanisms for income redistribution widened the gap between rich and the poor.

Initially, the worsening condition of the Philippines had little impact on the United States. The Marcos government was enjoying the wholehearted support of the Reagan administration in terms of aid and assistance. The then Vice-President George Bush, during his visit in 1981, did not hesitate to praise Marcos for his adherence to democracy in the Philippines. So Marcos monopolized the whole of the Philippines unchallenged and unheeded. But the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino -- the arch-rival of President Marcos in August 1983 galvanized the crisis in the Philippines. Considering the United States responsible for Marcos's authoritarianism, the Filipino nationalists and communists with the support of Church protested against the United States bases in the Philippines. Thus, the United States got entangled in the Philippine imbroglio.

The decadent Marcos regime turned the Philippines into a trouble spot for the United States as Communist insurgencies fed on the deteriorating situation of the Philippines. The very objective of Reagan administration to contain communism seemed to be losing ground under the very roof of the United States. The rising phenomenon of communism in the Philippines was a great cause of concern for the US Congress and Executive as well. But both the branches perceived the cause of communist insurgency differently. While the Congress considered President Marcos's misrule as the reason for the growth of communism,
Reagan saw the remedy of communism in the government of Marcos as the only alternative to communist takeover. The Congress contradicting the belief of President Reagan argued that the President’s statement was too simple to be accepted. US Representative Dante B. Fascell (D-Fla) said that the continuation of the President Marcos’s rule could not be justified as the alternative to communist rule. Instead, it would help to increase the chance of ultimate victory of communism.5

The United States was on the horns of a dilemma as it found the Philippine problem a hard nut to crack without taking a proper decision in time. While it was reluctant to withdraw its support from Marcos regime as it might cause chaos and confusion in the Philippines, a direct intervention to deter communist insurgency would lead towards international embarrassment as had been reflected by the Vietnam war. Thus, after a great deal of considerations, the Reagan administration, with the Congressional support, adopted a middle-path that was very much linked with the famous Nixon doctrine of self-help. The policy was called as a ‘well orchestrated policy of

incentives and disincentives to persuade Marcos government to go for all-embracing reforms that focused on revitalization of democratic institutions, dismantling of 'crony' capitalism and introduction of free-market forces, restoring professional apolitical leadership in the Philippine military to combat the growing communist insurgency.

The reform proposals were summarily turned down by President Marcos with the argument that the condition of the Philippines had been misread by the United States. Instead, he played the Soviet card by stressing on Soviet-Philippine relationship during Imelda Marcos's visit to the Soviet Union. The reaction of the Marcos regime was a great shock for the United States. To find out the reason behind Marcos's rejection of reforms, a reference should be made to Stephen Solarz's (D-NY) statement in which he stated that the reforms, if got materialized, would ultimately strike at the root of political and economic foundation of the corrupt Marcos government.  


When President Marcos disappointed the United States by refusing the proposed reforms, the US Congress-corridor vibrated with strong reactions in contradiction to President Reagan's cool attitude towards Philippine President. Stephen J. Solarz (D-NY), while focusing on instability stressed on delinking the dangerous link of US-Marcos dictatorship and warned Marcos that the US interests in Filipino democracy should not be held hostage to a rigged election. Senator Paul D. Laxalt was very much apprehensive of the communist take-over which would turn the Philippines into a stagnant society like Vietnam and Cambodia and pave the way for the Soviet Union to replace America as its military partner. President Reagan's status quo approach towards President Marcos created an uproar in the US Congress. Consequently, the Reagan administration's proposals for military aid to the Philippines was reduced substantially by both the Houses in the Congress with the demand of a free and fair election.

The delay in taking a hard decision on the part of the Reagan administration towards the Marcos regime evoked much criticism from the distinguished historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. of the City University of New York. He was not satisfied with Reagan's reform proposals to bring the

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8Ibid.

9Ibid.
Marcos regime to the right track which he termed as 'constructive engagement'. President's policy of 'constructive engagement' with the repressive regime of President Marcos was called in to question by the renowned academician as he equalised Reagan's position towards the Philippines with President Jimmy Carter's stand on Shah of Iran and Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua. He pointed out that though Ronald Reagan, during his presidential campaign had criticized President Carter's policy of persuasion, he was adopting the same policy in the Philippines by urging the Marcos regime to bring all round reforms and democracy.¹⁰

The overall dissatisfaction against the Marcos government made the US President to stress for a free and fair election in the Philippines as the panacea for the prevailing crisis. President Marcos accepted the US proposal for election and surprisingly called for a snap election on 7 February 1986, to catch the opposition unwarranted. After much deliberations the opposition parties unitedly supported Corazon C. Aquino -- the wife of former Senator Benigno Aquino, as their presidential candidate against Marcos. The Philippine President also offered an invitation to the US for an observer team to have a close-watch of the electoral process. In response, the Reagan administration agreed to send nineteen-member

The historical election took place on 7 February 1986. But after the rejection of reform proposal, the US diplomacy received a great blow once again as President Marcos declared himself elected through a rigged election. Initially, the Reagan administration supported President Marcos by stating that the fraud could have occurred in both sides which provoked a strong and critical reaction from key members of the Congress including Senators Richard G. Lugar and Sam Nunn and Representative Dante Fascell, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The executive branch also seemed to be divided over the Presidential statement. The Secretary of State George P. Shultz lost no time to convince the President about the electoral anomalies in the Philippines for which he held Marcos responsible.

The Congressional outcry and threat against aid, coupled with fresh reports from US Embassy in Manila and the report of US observers resulted in a shift in stand by the White House after the Philippine National Assembly declared Marcos winner. President Reagan issued a statement accusing the ruling party of the incredible election. In the meanwhile, the US Congressional policy-making reached
its watershed when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee overwhelmingly passed a resolution on 19 February 1986 rejecting the Philippine Presidential election and the House Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs on 20 February 1986 voted to put military aid in a trust fund until a legitimate government would take charge.

The litmus test of US policy objective of the restoration of democracy came when Marcos' loyal soldiers led by General Fabian Ver was about to crush the innocent people and rebel soldiers led by Filipino Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Army Chief Fidel Ramos who walked out of Marcos government to join with the people. The Reagan administration had to make a choice between dictatorship and democracy as Marcos had been isolated by a major section of Filipino Army, Roman Catholic Church in particular and of course the Filipinos in general.

The crucial decision was made when Senator Paul D. Laxalt, the close friend of President Ronald Reagan, advised President Marcos to give the way to the popularly elected government of Corazon Aquino. So the White House supported democracy by recognizing Aquino as 'People's President'.

Here one should note that though gradual in nature, the shift in emphasis was forced with great realities. While supporting Ferdinand Marcos, President Ronald Reagan
was guided by the lines offered by Jeane Kirkpatrick, the then US Representative to the United Nations. She had drawn a line between autocratic rulers and totalitarian communist government by preferring the former. She was very much against the downplaying of the abuses of the communist rulers that had been followed by the US President Jimmy Carter. She did not appreciate Carter's policy of being too hard on right-wing rulers which, according to her, had paved the way for the collapse of Shah of Iran and Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza, throwing the door open for even worst despotic regime. Initially, Kirkpatrick's line seemed to suit Reagan administration's purpose of containing the power of Soviet Union. As a result, he was very hard on left-wing regimes in Poland and Nicaragua and took comparatively softer lines for governments in Chile, South Korea and the Philippines. The shift in US stance in the aftermath of the 1986 Presidential election in the Philippines was guided by a more pragmatic approach offered by the Secretary of State George P. Shultz.

The inference that US plea for restoration of democracy has always been subjugated to its own national interests which prompted the Reagan administration to shift its support from the dictator friend President Marcos to the opposition candidate Corazon Aquino can be drawn on
following considerations:

Initially, the Reagan administration could not see the best alternative to Marcos regime to thwart communist insurgency. So it adopted the status quo policy of standing by the friend. But the strategy was proved obsolete by the growing opposition in the Philippines. In the course of time, the United States could realize that the power base of President Marcos had shrunk to the point where his support was broadly confined to his own family members and a few favoured soldiers led by General Fabian Ver. There was complete collapse of confidence in his regime.

But in the aftermath of the election, it took the fact of communists' neutrality into consideration. The apathetic attitude of the communists towards the election of Corazon Aquino made her as the best alternative to President Marcos. The White House became optimistic about Aquino because of her non-communist background which convinced it that she would not go for any blatant alteration of the age-old politico-economic and security relationship with the United States. So it would guarantee the stability of the Philippines -- an essential pre-requisite for the United States to maintain balance against communism in the region. Thus a stable Philippines with a moderate pro-American government got a preponderance over the support to an autocratic government that was about to collapse because of the popular uprising. Finally, when the United States found Corazon Aquino suitable to perpetuate its own
interests in the region, it shifted its stand and recognized her as the President of the Philippines and proved its mettle as the proud supporter of democracy. As to maintain one’s own national interests in another country requires the stability and support of the native government, the Reagan administration shielded the new government of the Philippines during its difficult hour of attempted coup and communist insurgency.

To sum up, the decisive role of the United States in the democratic revolution of the Philippines was a corollary to its long-cherished interests to remain as a ‘Pacific Power’ which would ultimately facilitate its control over the dynamic economy and politico-security developments of the region. The ‘Philippine Bases’ had been used as a springboard to achieve this objective by countering the Soviet strategy and bringing the whole region under its close surveillance. Thus, a unique drama of democratic revolution was executed in the Philippines in which the United States acted as a king-maker to crown ‘People’s Power’ as the zero hour approached.
FUTURE OF THE US-PHILIPPINE RELATIONSHIP
AN AFTER THOUGHT

With the fall of Berlin Wall the winds of change that swept the globe clattered the Philippines when its Senate voted against the renewal of military bases treaty with the United States by twelve to eleven votes, thus severing Mother America's umbilical cord. The two military bases (Subic Bay Naval Base, Clark Air Base) had been serving as the pillars of Cold War policy in the Pacific. The end of Cold War and the implosion of the Soviet Union, the speeding up of Cambodian Peace Proposals and economic expansion of Asia have altered the political landscape in the Pacific which originally gave rise to the need of the bases.

The dismantling of US bases in the Philippines marked the beginning of a new era in the US-Philippine relationship due to the following factors:

The sweeping change in the post-Cold War era has not swept the communist regimes in Vietnam, North Korea and

China. The United States is very much interested to keep a close watch on the future developments in these countries to avoid any type of instability in the region which otherwise would harm the US free market policy, trade and investment in this zone.

The current US interests in the region is predominated with economic interests instead of age-old military supremacy. In the early 1970s the US trade with the region was less than its trade with Latin America. But recently, the trans-Pacific trade of the United States amounts to $300 billion a year, which is more than 40 per cent of US-trans Atlantic trade. The US trade with ASEAN has mounted upto $50 billion that exceeds its trade with Germany. Thus, it would zealously guard the stability of the region to maintain its economic supremacy.

As the Pacific region is marked with diverse religious, cultural and ethnic groups, the stability in the region has been confronted with various challenges which requires to be tackled with great care and consideration. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been regarded by the United States as the principal structure of stability to maintain a balance in the region. So it would strongly rely on the ASEAN to pursue its interests.

The Philippines, one of the important members of the ASEAN is an exception as it has been rocked with Communist
insurgency from time to time. Ironically, the Communist movement is very much indigenous to the Philippines as they do not rely on extra-regional power to help them. They have been carrying their struggle by feeding on the abject poverty of the Filipinos. The insurgents have successfully gained the support of the people by pursuing a pragmatic approach with their emphasis on domestic problems and nationalism. So the collapse of communism cannot sweep them into oblivion and would last till the domestic anomalies have not been eliminated. This peculiar characteristic of the Philippine insurgency is a matter of grave concern for the United States as it can not afford to see the disruption of its economic and security interests in the Pacific with the rising of communist insurgency in the wake of Philippine government's failure to solve them efficiently.

The importance of the Philippines has been evident from the joint statement released after the meting of the Philippine -- US Mutual Defence Board in Manila in November 6, 1992. US Co-Chairman Admiral Charles R. Larson, Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific command and Philippine co-Chairman, General Lisandro C. Abodia, Chief of Staff, AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), are of the opinion that the crisis in the Persian Gulf, the unresolved search for peace in Cambodia and the continuing threats such as
international drug trafficking constitute the main challenges that confront their common security.\textsuperscript{12}

Therefore, the end of Cold War and the closure of the US bases in the Philippines have enunciated a renewed future in the horizon of US-Philippine relationship with a continued US stake in the economic and political success of its little friend -- the Philippines.