



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.1/45/7
23 October 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session
Agenda items 56 and 69

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Letter dated 19 October 1990 from the Permanent Representative
of the Philippines to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the text of President Corazon C. Aquino's speech on the current negotiation on the Republic of the Philippines-United States Military Bases Agreement.

I would be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 56 and 69.

(Signed) Sedfrey A. ORDÓÑEZ
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Text of speech by Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines, on the Republic of the Philippines-United States Military Bases Agreement

My fellow Filipinos:

Tomorrow, 18 September, our Government panel will begin discussions with its counterpart from the United States. While the impetus for the talks comes from a mutual desire to decide the fate of United States military facilities after 1991, our Government shall in these talks operate within the larger framework of redefining Republic of the Philippines-United States relations; defence and security issues shall only be one among many other important considerations.

In May of this year, we served the notice of termination of the Republic of the Philippines-United States Military Bases Agreement. With this action, we signified to the United States that the time had come to close the books on a document that is a lingering vestige of our colonial past: we asserted, and they agreed, that the time has come for our two nations to craft a new relationship - one more equitable, mutually beneficial, and respectful of each other's sovereignty. In a world where the cold war has ended, and events in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have altered the traditional geopolitical order, the decades-old parameters of the Republic of the Philippines-United States relationship no longer hold. The old cannot continue, the new must now be born. This new relationship shall be the subject of the talks that begin tomorrow.

We expect the United States to come to the talks with proposals on this new relationship; we are likewise prepared to respond to them, as well as put forth our own counter-proposals. Whatever the outcome of these discussions, we are pledged to decide on the basis of national dignity and national interest.

I am confident that we shall succeed. Our panel, headed by Secretary Manglapus and Secretary Bengzon, comes to these talks thoroughly prepared. We have reviewed the 50-year history of talks and agreements between us and the United States. We have examined similar agreements that the United States has concluded with its other allies across the globe. We have developed feasible options for our own defence and security. We have analysed the costs and benefits of the bases. A legislative-executive bases council has prepared plans for the conversion of the bases in anticipation of United States withdrawal. A special operations team has detailed preparations for implementing these plans. Finally, we have co-ordinated closely with the members of Congress, local government officials, and affected communities and sectors.

We are determined to chart our nation's course in this, as in all other matters. The United States military facilities are an influential fact of our national life, but they are not the heart of our economy nor the soul of our political well-being. Certainly they do not define our society. So we must regard them in that light, they are important, but they are not everything.

In one year, on 16 September 1991, the Republic of the Philippines-United States Military Bases Agreement expires. Our Constitution mandates that, unless a treaty is signed, concurred in by the Senate, and ratified by our people if Congress so requires, no foreign military facilities shall be allowed after that date. This is our nation's fundamental law and we shall stand by its provisions. It is now necessary for our Government to work with the United States for arrangements regarding the orderly withdrawal of their forces from our country. In the coming talks, this Government is determined to work together with the United States for an outcome that respects our aspirations as well as our responsibilities, our dignity as well as our welfare, our due as a sovereign nation as well as our friendship with an ally.

We stand at a crucial juncture in our history. This is for us a time of testing, a testing of our resilience as a people and our commitment to our country. We must learn to conquer our fears, shed our complacency, establish a principled consensus, and steel our collective will to pay the price for our aspirations. Our intent is sound, our motive pure, our course clear. In solidarity lies our strength, in unity lies our best hope for building our future as a nation that is peaceful and prosperous, sovereign and free. May God bless our efforts and reward us with the fruits of our labours.
