

The History and Evolution of Political Diplomatic relations between South Korea and The Republic of the Philippines

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Abstract: Diplomatic ties between South Korea and the Republic of the Philippines begun when Philippines diplomatically acknowledged South Korea in 1949. The diplomatic ties were further enforced when Philippines sent troops to South Korea to fight North Korea a communist country in the 1950's. From that time until now, these diplomatic ties have grown stronger attracting bilateral benefits for both countries on political, economic and social arears. Presently, South Korea is now recognized as one of the most prominent allies of the Republic of the Philippines among countries like the United States of America, Japan and China. The Philippine government keeps strengthening this diplomatic ties with South Korea by encouraging the presence and participation of South Korea companies, products and tourist in the Philippines. South Korea has hence greatly and influenced the Republic of the Philippines in terms of trade, funding, defense and security and culture.

Keywords: Diplomatic relations, communism, Korean War, PEFTOK, Bilateral Relations, Invasion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bilateral relations between the Republic of South Korea and the Republic of the Philippines were established on the 3rd of March, 1949 when the Philippines became the fifth country to extend diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Korea as a sovereign state. This diplomatic recognition was inaugurated on 15 August 1948 (Department of Foreign Affairs [DFA], 2017). The Philippines was the first ASEAN country to establish relations with South Korea and the third country to send ground combat troops to South Korea during the Korean War (The Seoul Times, October 28, 2017). The friendship was cemented by the Philippine deployment of the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) estimated around 7,000 soldiers to join an international coalition, during the Korean War in the 1950s to help South Korea defend itself from the invasion of the North (DFA, 2017).

The relations between the Philippines and South Korea have always been characterized by mutual trust and support. For over 60 years, the Philippines and South Korea nurtured this friendship, a partnership that began with military collaboration and lives on to this day in the form of deeper and more comprehensive cooperation in diverse areas such as trade, political-security concerns and socio-cultural exchanges. The ties that bind these two countries have become tighter with the expansion of their alliance in numerous sectors, from political, security, and economic cooperation to socio-cultural and development collaboration. People-to-people exchange is currently at an unprecedented high (The Seoul Times, October 28, 2017). The Philippines and South Korea continue to stand side-by-side, proud of their shared history, committed to regional peace, and united by a common future of sustainable progress and stability.

South Korea is currently a major trading partner of the Philippines. In 2006, South Korea was the top sender of visitors to the country, with more than half a million arrivals. Both governments have instituted various agreements at the bilateral level, including, for labor, the Employment Permit System. Cooperation between the two countries in the political, security, economic, socio-cultural and development fields is expected to continue as both parties strive to further strengthen relations.

The Philippines is an active supporter of the inter-Korean peace process and reconciliation efforts. It joins the international call for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula as a crucial step for the security and continued economic development of the region and strongly advocates a diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear issue, particularly through multilateral dialogue. High-level policy consultations between the Philippines and South Korea are done on a regular basis.

Filipino General Carlos Romulo, who was the president of the UN General Assembly when the Korean War broke out in 1950, staunchly advocated the international defense of South Korea. "The application of military sanctions in Korea is in itself an act of the greatest significance," he said before the Assembly on 25 September 1950, reflecting on the decision of the Security Council to take military action in the peninsula and on the need to strengthen collective action against acts of aggression. "The Philippine Government, for its part, has given concrete proof of its support of the principle of collective security by sending troops to help the UN forces in Korea," he added, referring to the first of five battalion combat teams from the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK), which rushed to Busan only six days earlier on 19 September 1950.

The Philippines sent 7,420 soldiers to South Korea over a five-year period, among them former President Fidel Ramos and two former ambassadors to South Korea. Today, the Philippine Embassy commemorates their sacrifices every September at the Philippine Monument in Goyang City and in Yeoncheon County, where two memorials were erected in the 1960s to honor their courage and bravery during the Battle of Yultong.

The Korean War is actually enshrined in the Philippine currency. At the back of the P500 bill amounting to approximately 12,000KWN is a picture of our hero, Benigno Aquino, Jr. Aquino was a war correspondent during the Korean War, and beside his picture is one of his articles entitled "First Cavalry Knives Through 38th Parallel." Aquino is the father of Pres. Benigno Aquino III, the 15th president of the Philippines. In the Philippines, two monuments about the Korean War attest to the longstanding ties between the two countries. The PEFTOK Memorial in Manila and the Marikorea Monument in Marikina City, where our soldiers trained before deployment to South Korea.

For over 60 years, the Philippines and South Korea nurtured this friendship, a partnership that began with military collaboration and lives on to this day in the form of deeper and more comprehensive cooperation in diverse areas such as trade, political-security concerns and socio-cultural exchanges. The Philippines and South Korea continue to stand side-by-side, proud of their shared history, committed to regional peace, and united by a common future of sustainable progress and stability.

2. THE REPUBLIC OF PHILIPPINES' PARTICIPATION IN THE KOREAN WAR

The Republic of the Philippines was among the sixteen United Nations-member countries that battled on the side of the U.S.-backed South Korean government in the Korean Civil War of 1950-53. Generally, Philippine involvement in the war efforts in Korea may be seen as a pivotal point in developing its foreign policy all through the emerging Cold War in the Fifties. In detail, active Philippine military participation in the Korean War echoed to a large degree, it's definitely pro-U.S. and anti-communist alignment in an international political environment that was heavily dominated by the post-World War II philosophical conflict between the so-called democratic and communist forces led by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., respectively. Preceding the eruption of the Korean War, the Philippine government under President Elpidio Quirino came close to framing a neutralist stand in the Cold War. In 1949, for example, when the idea of a Pacific Pact was suggested by Quirino, the Philippine government stooped to the cautioning of such neutralist countries as India and Indonesia, to exclude Taiwan and South Korea in the proposed Asian Conference. Henceforth, regardless of Quirino's original plan of alluring the strictly anti-communist governments of Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee to the conference, these two countries were plunged from the final list of partaking nations.¹ In fact, barely four months before the Korean War erupted on June 25, 1950, Quirino voiced out his neutralist decision when he affirmed to the press that he would not care should China and Japan go communist, however he will respect whatever government countries if the far eastern Asia will choose to have². The succeeding Korean War conversely, saw the absolute toughening of the Philippine stand contrary to communism at home and abroad. In the beginning, the Quirino government did not recognize the Korean

¹ Milton Meyer, *The Diplomatic History of the Philippines*, (U.S.A.: University of Hawaii Press, 1965), pp. 145-152. See also "Quirino Memoirs," *The Sunday Times Magazine*, Vol. XII, No. 31 (March 17, 1957).

² "Quirino Will Deliver Talk at Airport," *Manila Chronicle*, February 11, 1950, p. 1.

War as an instantaneous danger to Philippine external security. Quirino affirmed that he was more worried about the country's inner security-that is, the Huk³ raids, , as well as the feeble economy-than with the intimidations posed by the Korean War⁴.

On June 29, 1950, when the U.N. Secretary General conveyed the U.S.-drafted and Philippine-supported Council Resolution⁵ to all U.N. member states, Quirino and his cabinet chose to restrict Philippine support to the sending of commodities and medicines⁶. Quirino also affirmed the General Military Council of his country's choice not to use Filipino troops in military operations outside the country. He voiced out the fact that sending troops to a foreign country would institute an act of War. Later, Quirino explained that he would not involve the Philippines in a war against communism outside the country's borders since this would be an act of involvement in the internal affairs of another country. He further clarified that even though the Philippines was devoted to democracy, it would not try to interfere in the event that other country "of their own free will choose to turn communists."⁷

Quirino's preliminary statements and actions had a tendency to show that he was against the pledge of the Philippines to an active participation in a foreign war which could incite the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China. Quirino also mentioned inadequacy of funds to support his stand. Nevertheless, in spite of these initial official reactions, it is worth mentioning that forty-five days after the eruption of the war,

the first of several Filipino battalion combat teams set sail for Korea to fight on the side of the South Korean government against the communist North.

3. THE DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS TO SOUTH KOREA

The three factors that strongly influenced the official Philippine resolution to send combat troops to Korea include: First the Philippines' cooperation with the United States; Second, Romulo's presidency in the United Nation's General Assembly; and third the war frights and public pressure. In relations to the prevailing role of the U.S. in the Korean war, the attitudes and responses of other countries vis-a-vis the Korean War echoed their policy toward Washington, D.C. At the same period, it is also harmless to assume that the degree of these countries' response to and participation in the Korean conflict mirrored the degree of the U.S. government's influence on them. Evidently, the greatest influential factor which influenced active Philippine military participation in the Korean war, was the Philippines' cooperation with the U.S.

As formerly cited, the Quirino administration was primarily against the deployment of troops to Korea. As an affiliate of the U.N. nonetheless, the Philippines keenly reinforced all the significant U.S.-drafted resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and the General Assembly in protection of South Korea against the North, and later, contrary to Communist China. As a gesture of robust backing for the U.S.-backed South Korean government, the Philippines, in agreement with the Security Council Resolution of June 27, 1950, gave contributions entailing of war tanks and other commodities like vaccines, fresh blood, soap and rice⁸, in spite of its own unwarranted economic condition. Quirino's effort to express Philippine support through such contributions while upholding a policy of military non-intervention, yet still, failed to attain its purpose. This was primarily owing to stress from the predominantly pro-U.S. Filipino legislators as well as from the U.S. government itself. In a speech backing Concurrent Resolution 16⁹ before the Philippine Senate, Senator Camilo Osias labelled Quirino's antagonism to spreading military assistance to Korea on the basis that it would be an offensive act, as an "effeminate foreign policy"¹⁰. Senator Osias went on to announce: "We are drawn into the present conflict for reasons varied and sundry. But the most important is that this has clearly become a struggle between communism and democracy. . . we are on the side of the democratic forces of the world."¹¹

³ The Philippine acronym for Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon, the anti-Japanese guerilla force during the Japanese occupation. Later renamed Hukbong Magpapalaya ng Bayan, the military arm of the Soviet-influenced Philippine Communist Party.

⁴ "Declaration of Taruc Stirns Hornets' Nest," Manila Times, July 6, 1950, p. 1.

⁵ The Resolution recommended that the U.N. members furnish such assistance to South Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack from the North and to restore international peace and security in the area.

⁶ "Cabinet Votes to Send Food, Medicine, Goods," Manila Times, July 8, 1950, p 1; also refer to U.N. Document 1584.

⁷ "EQ Will Not Embark PI on War Against Red Outside Country," Manila Times, July 18, 1950, p. 1.

⁸ United Nations Yearbook, 1950, (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1951), p. 227.

⁹ This Resolution called for the extension of Philippine military assistance to South Korea.

¹⁰ Camilo Osias, Philippine Support of United Nations Forces Against Communist Aggression, (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1950), p. 7.

¹¹ Ibid.

Amidst the motives mentioned by Philippine legislators for sending Filipino troops to Korea, stress was placed on showing "our sincerity in satisfying our part of the bargain in the military assistance treaty and military bases agreement arrived into by the Philippines and the United States"¹². On the other hand, U.S. stress in the course of a more active Philippine involvement in the American war efforts in Korea took the form of augmented aid incentive. After the outburst of the: Korean War, President Truman demanded the U.S. Congress for an supplementary \$30million for military aid to the Philippines and other "friendly countries"¹³. Though the Philippine Senate was debating on the Korean matter, Filipino Colonel Andres Soriano evidently stated to the press upon his coming from the U.S., that a pleasing outcome in that special Senate session would impact American choice to grant economic assistance to the Philippines.¹⁴ In a chain to Senator Jose Yulo on August 2, 1950, Miguel Elizalde, the Philippine Ambassador to Washington, highlighted the advisability of Philippine military aid to Korea. Elizalde said that the U.S. government was "extremely anxious and would welcome an offer [from you] of even one battalion absolutely equipped with whatever equipment we now have there, given to us under the military assistance agreement."¹⁵ He additionally clarified that regardless of the shortcomings of sending "poorly prepared and badly equipped soldiers to be overrun and possibly suffer defeat" it would be "obviously advantageous in our relationship with the United States and to bring about a welcoming atmosphere in the Congress if you could see your way to go even a little further than what you consider sensible at this time and offer at once even two thousand men and officers to be prepared in the least time probable to embark for Korea."¹⁶ Elizalde then guaranteed Yulo that such move "would be more than cherished here."¹⁷

The endorsement of the said resolution on Korea was approved on August 10, 1950.¹⁸ The official statement by President Quirino of the Philippine resolution to send troops to Korea was established with reprieve by Filipino officials in Washington, D.C. In a laudatory cable. Quirino, Elizalde emphasized the pleasing response in Washington to the Philippine decision, and he guaranteed the President that the U.S. "will recognize our sincere efforts and problems."¹⁹

Romulo's Presidency in the U.N. General Assembly among the arguments given in support of the Philippine Congress resolution to send troops to Korea was: the duty of the Philippines to fulfill its obligations to the U.N. is accentuated by the fact that the Philippine chief delegate to the

U.N., Secretary Carlos Romulo, is the president of the U.N. General Assembly.²⁰ In his dual role as the concurrent Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs and President of the fourth session of the U.N. General Assembly, Carlos P. Romulo was caught between two courses of diplomatic actions regarding Philippine participation in the Korean War.

On the one hand, as Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he had to inform U.N. Secretary General Trygvie Lie of the Philippine policy not to send battle troops except on a voluntary basis, owing to the tenacious needs of domestic peace and order. On the other hand, as chief Filipino U.N. delegate keenly supporting U.S.-drafted resolutions on Korea, and more also as President of the fourth session of the General Assembly, Romulo put forth effort to work for full Philippine collaboration in the U.S. headed military efforts in South Korea. It was in his latter capability that Romulo commanded the movement for Philippine military involvement in Korea. In so doing, he carried

his proposal to the Philippine Senate. Romulo campaigned robustly to persuade the government and the public that the war against communism must be shepherded not only within the Philippine territory but also on the international ground. In his speech before a public hearing of the joint Senate committees on Foreign Affairs and the Army regarding the Korean matter, Romulo stressed: "We have a stake in that struggle by virtue of our membership in the international community. But our stake rests upon a more intimate, and in a sense, a more compelling consideration. It was inevitable that the United States of America, in its role as a leader of the Free World, would assume the major responsibility in the field for any enforcement measures that may be taken in accordance with the charter of the United Nations. Our country is

¹² Ibid., pp. 12-14.

¹³ "More Defense Funds to SEA and the Philippines," Manila Times, August 3, 1950, p. 1.

¹⁴ "PI Aid to Korea to Influence U.S. Economic Help," Manila Times, August 6, 1950, p. 1.

¹⁵ Cable to Hon. Jose Yulo from Hon. J. M. Elizalde, dated August 2, 1950, in Quirino Presidential Papers File, Ayala Museum and Library, Metro Manila, Philippines.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ "Quirino Advises Washington of Decision to Send Soldiers," Manila Times, August 11, 1950, p. 1.

¹⁹ Cable to President Quirino from Ambassador J. M. Elizalde, August 7, 1950, in Quirino Presidential...

²⁰ See Resolution No. 16, Second Congress of the Philippines, Second Special Session, Manila: August 1, 1950.

similarly bound as a member of the U.N. to offer such assistance. But our special relations with the United States, which have sprung from a common love of liberty, a shared allegiance to democracy and a battle-tested comradeship, contribute an element of urgency in our obligation. Pervasive and powerful in peace, these relations exert an even more potent influence in times of war."²¹

Therefore, it is clear that Romulo's opinions were reflective of an unquestionably pro-U.S. stand in a conflict which designated the growing contention of the superpowers in an international Cold War milieu. Far along, in a letter to Quirino dated December 19, 1950, Romulo wrote from New York: "The pledge of American protection has been given repeatedly by President Truman and Secretary Acheson. We have responded loyally and gratefully in kind. We have supported the America policy in Korea, and it should be stated for the record that our government decided to send Filipino troops there not only as a faithful member of the United Nations but as a loyal ally of the United States. We did what no other Asian country, with the exception of Thailand, dared to do."²²

The news of a war in Korea hardly five years after the trauma of World War II came as a shock to the Filipinos. The relative geographic nearness of Korea to the Philippines-Manila being about three and a half hours away by plane from the South Korean capital city of Seoul triggered a war panic among the Filipinos. There was also the troubling fear that if Korea turned communist, the Philippines might follow suit, particularly in view of the intensification of the Huk raids in the countryside after the outburst of the Korean War. As Romulo pointed out in his speech before the public hearing of the Joint Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Army: "Korea is next door to us and the outcome of the struggle there will have immediate and unavoidable influences, for good or for evil, upon our country. What has happened in Korea can happen here."²³

The instantaneous general reaction of the Filipino public was to rally behind the United States' Korean war efforts instead of behind their own government. This sentiment was voiced out nationwide. In Laoag, the proximity of Ilocos Norte to Taiwan and Korea caused great fear among the people. They showed hope that the U.S. will prosper in preventing further conflicts in the region.²⁴ In Iloilo, the president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, William Yotoko, advised all Jaycees to rally behind the United Nations and be ready "to spill their blood in protection of democracy."²⁵ In Batangas, Congressman Numeriano Babao had to assure the people against worries of any Red invasion in the country during his Independence Day address;²⁶ while in neighboring Cavite, a resolution backing U.S. efforts in Korea was solidly passed by the discharged civilian employees of the U.S. navy in that province.²⁷

In Manila, five days after the commencement of the Korean War, an anticommunist confederation was formed by the members of the Committee on Un-Filipino Activities (CUFA), the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), and numerous Filipino-American civic organizations. The members of the American Legion in the Ermita district validated the league, and the Philippine press labelled it as the "first tangible proof here of a popular movement against communism."²⁸ Also in Manila, the board of directors of the National Federation of Philippine Scout Veterans in lieu of some 31,000 veterans offered "to fight once more for the democracies headed by America" and solidly passed a resolution reiterating their loyalty to both the Philippines and the United States.²⁹ The Korean conflict also provoked reactions from Filipinos residing in the United States. A radiogram was conveyed to President Quirino by the Filipino community in Los Angeles through its president, Paul Vidal, notifying him that the Filipinos there were ready to volunteer their services in the United States Army as an "indirect way of reiterating [their] loyalty to the Philippines."³⁰

²¹ Text of Romulo's speech before a Public Hearing of the Joint Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs and the Army, August 3, 1950, Manila Times, August 4, 1950 p. 1.

²² EQ Correspondence: "Quirino-Romulo Letters," in Quirino Presidential...

²³ Text of Romulo's Speech before a Public Hearing of the Joint Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs and the Army, August 3, 1950, Manila Times, August 4, 1950, p. 1.

²⁴ "Anti-Communist League Formed," Manila Times, July 1, 1950.

²⁵ "Jaycees to Rally Behind the U.N.," Manila Times, July 3, 1950, p. 12.

²⁶ "PI Committed to World Force," Manila Times, July 4, 1950, p. 14.

²⁷ "Ex-U.S. Navy Employees Offer to Serve Anew," Manila Times, August 7, 1950, p. 1.

²⁸ "Anti-Communist League Formed," Manila Times, July 1, 1950, p. 1.

²⁹ "31,000 Scout Vets Pledge Loyalty, Offer Services," Manila Times, July 7, 1950, p. 1.

³⁰ "Filipinos in States Ready to Join USA," Manila Times, July 6, 1950, p. 1.

This was the war scare among the Filipinos that actions had to be taken to avoid unwarranted national alarm. The National Emergency Committee of the Civilian Emergency Administration decided to put up a nationwide information service to counsel the people on the real war situation and at the same time notify them what had to be done in case of emergency. This service was given principally in the provinces through mass media and the community councils.³¹

A public hearing supported by the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and the Army sounded off public view on the question of Philippine enactment of the U.N. decision with respect to the Korean War. On this specific issue, public opinion was principally for the move to send Philippine forces to South Korea. In Iloilo, the provincial board approved a resolution appealing to the President to send a token force to Korea "to assist American forces there who are fighting under the U.N. Banner";³² while in Manila, the councilors showed displeasure over the delay of the national government in sending troops "while the allies' U.N. forces were already in a dangerous situation."³³ In a letter to Quirino, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) sanctioned the same move and even recommended the formation of a committee composed of representatives from civic and welfare organizations in the country to campaign for voluntary contributions for the U.N. forces and civilians in South Korea.³⁴

The approval by the House of Representatives of a resolution for Philippine military participation in the War, plus Quirino's affirmation that the Philippines was ready to dispatch 5,000 to 6,000 men to Korea, provoked widespread public support. The Supreme Council of the National Confederation of Trade Union (NACTU), for example, passed a resolution promising full support for the President's choice.³⁵

In the middle of public endorsement of the Philippine decision to send troops to Korea, there were a few unconventional voices. In Congress, Representative Arsenio Lacson spoke in contradiction to the resolution, saying that it would be "silly" for the Philippines to fight communism on foreign soil when the country could not even contain communism, like the Huk issue, in its vicinity.³⁶ The Congress of Labor Organization (CLO) was also a vocal rival. This was an organization of workers' unions which opposed the Philippines' decision on the grounds of "non-intervention."³⁷ These revolutionists, specially the CLO, were tagged by the media as extremists.

Philippines which was part of the sixteen U.N.-member countries that sent a total of four battalion combat teams (BCT) within a period of three years during the common the Korean War. Philippines around one hundred soldiers during the Korean War within that.³⁸ There were about 1,200 men from each combat team that were recruited by the Armed Forces voluntarily.³⁹ The AFP submitted a bill to the Congress that requested the troops deployed to South Korea should be given double their base salary coupled with allowances and longevity compensation as an incentive to these PEFTOK member. The enlisted individuals were to have a higher ratio rate to be computed on the basis of the following formula: the sum of the base pay plus subsistence and quarter allowances times two plus fifty percent of the product was to be given to the enlisted soldiers.⁴⁰ This bill on PEFTOK compensation was obviously designed to motivate these volunteers.

The original military weapon for the Filipino troops in Korea was purchased from the mutual security funds allocated to the Philippines by the United States. Succeeding weapons were on a refundable basis through the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea.⁴¹

4. EVOLUTION OF THE DIPLOMATIC TIES

The preceding factual discussion strongly indicates that Philippine military involvement in the Korean War of 1950-53 was primarily a function of its pro-U.S. orientation, both in the domestic and the international levels. Viewed against the

³¹"Filipinos Free to Volunteer for Korea War, Say EQ," Manila Times, July 11, 1950, p. 1.

³²"U.S.-PI Unity is Pledged Anew," Manila Times, August 4, 1950, p. 14.

³³"Councilors Urge PI Troops to Korea," Manila Times, August 4, 1950, p. 1.

³⁴"Y's Men Suggest Korea War Fund," Manila Times, August 7, 1950, p. 4

³⁵ Korea Force Decision Lauded,"; "Labor Supports EQ Stand on Korea," Manila Times, August 23, 1950, p. 1 and p. 2.

³⁶"Solon Urges Aid to Korea," Manila Times, August 4, 1950, p. 1.

³⁷"CLO Will Oppose PI Action in Korea," Manila Times, August 8, 1950, p. 2.

³⁸"PEFTOK War Activities." Armed Forces of the Philippines. Office of the Chief of Historical Activities, Camp General E. Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

³⁹ For personal impressions of the members of the first BCT to Korea, see the press interview by Amante Bigornia, "PI Force Girds for Korea War," Manila Daily Bulletin, August 2, 1950, p. 3.

⁴⁰"10th BCT to be First in Korea," Manila Times, August 24, 1950, p. 1.

⁴¹ House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hearings on Mutual Security Act of 1953, 83rd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 775-76, in Meyer, Diplomatic History ..., p. 131.

backdrop of the emerging bipolarized Cold War politics in the Fifties, this involvement in a basically ideological conflict on the Korean Peninsula, irrevocably aligned the fledgling Republic with the anti-communist camp under the leadership of the U.S. As noted earlier, the Philippine government under Quirino made attempts to explore alternate ties with other Asian neighbors of varying ideologies prior to the Korean War. This was clearly shown in the composition of participant nations to the Baguio Conference held

on May 26, 1950. Such neutralist countries as India, Indonesia and Pakistan were present while rigidly anti-communist countries like Taiwan and South Korea were not invited to the Conference. The outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, however, created constraints that compelled the Philippines into making a decision which necessarily aligned her with the anti-communist forces in a Cold War environment. Thus, when the Philippines finally sent troops to Korea on September 19, 1950, it decisively signified its international commitment to the democratic forces under the U.S. banner. Within such framework then, it was not surprising that in the sixties, the Philippines (along with South Korea) was one of the few Asian states that directly supported another American war effort in divided Vietnam.

5. CURRENT STATUS DIPLOMATIC OF THE DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN ROK AND SOK

The 2012 elected President of South Korea Park Geun-hye sort to improve cooperation with “very important” Asian countries such as Indonesia, the Republic of the Philippines and Vietnam in the areas of trade, security and aid during his tenure as president. A year later, South Korea had the privilege of hosting the first Philippine president to visit South Korea in the first governing year of Park Geun-hye, President Benigno Aquino of the Republic of Philippines. These two heads of state signed three agreements on October 17, 2013. Inclusive in the agreement was military equipment trade with the Philippines, sports collaboration, and a loan amounting to \$80 billion allocated for a flood alleviation project in the province of Pampanga.⁴² Jasmin Lee honored for her work in gaining the consent of relief and rehabilitation aid from South Korea intended for the victims of Typhoon Pablo in the Philippines.⁴³ President Aquino made it a point to show appreciation to Jasmin Lee for the role she played in bridging the bilateral relations between the Philippines and South Korea in his meeting with the representatives of the more than 50,000 Filipino diaspora community on his second day of the state visit to South Korea. Jasmin Lee was praised for her leadership of the Filipino community in Korea and “for bringing pride to the Philippines through her election to the 19th National Assembly, and becoming the first naturalized Korean to be a member of the Korean parliament.” President Aquino convened the Order of Lakandula with the rank of officer in honor of Jasmin Lee’s role in championing the cause of Filipinos and other foreigners living in South Korea at a ceremony in Seoul.⁴⁴ This honor consisted of an appreciation on Jasmin Lee’s part as a affiliate of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Trade and Unification and the Committee on Gender Equality and Family of the National Assembly.⁴⁵

President Park furthermore commended Jasmin Lee and presented her at the state dinner as a human bridge between the two countries.⁴⁶ She showed delight in the fact that the people of the two countries can become part of the same family in addition to being neighbors, mentioning that the amount of people-to-people exchanges exceeded 1.3 million and that the number of Filipino spouses married to Koreans reached 15,000⁴⁷ the previous year⁴⁸.

⁴² Marlon Ramos, “PH, South Korea sign 3 agreements on 1st day of Aquino state visit,” Philippine Daily Inquirer, October 18, 2013, accessed August 25, 2014, <http://globalnation.inquirer.net/88127/ph-south-korea-sign-3-agreements-on-1st-day-of-aquino-state-visit>.

⁴³ “Aquino confers ‘Order of Lakandula’ on 1st Filipino South Korean National Assembly member Jasmine Lee,” Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO), Republic of the Philippines, October 19, 2013, accessed February 15, 2014, <http://www.pcoo.gov.ph/southkorea2013/news.htm>.

⁴⁴ Honors Code of the Philippines (Executive Order 236, 19 September 2003). In Section 5, II of the Honors Code, the following is provided as the criteria for the conferment of the Order of Lakandula: “The Order of Lakandula is conferred upon a Filipino or foreign citizen:

- a. who has demonstrated by his life and deeds a dedication to the welfare of society;
- b. whose life is worthy of emulation by the Filipino people;
- c. for deeds worthy of particular recognition, including suffering materially for the preservation and defense of the democratic way of life and of the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines, for devoting his life to the peaceful resolution of conflict, or for demonstrating an outstanding dedication to the fostering of mutual understanding, cultural exchange, justice and dignified relations among individuals; or
- d. for acts that have been traditionally recognized by the institution of presidential awards, including meritorious political and civic service

⁴⁵ 74 “Aquino confers,” Presidential Communications Operations Office.

⁴⁶ “President Park hosts State Dinner in honor of President Aquino in South Korea,” Office of the President of the Philippines, Republic of the Philippines, October 18, 2013, accessed March 22, 2014, <http://president.gov.ph/news/president-park-hosts-state-dinner-in-honor-of-president-aquino-in-south-korea/>.

⁴⁷ Separately, by the end of 2012, there were 9,334 marriage migrants and 5,481 naturalized spouses. By the end of 2013, close to when the summit took place, there were 10,039 marriage migrants and 5,912 naturalized spouses. See Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Interior annual reports on foreign residents at http://www.mogaha.go.kr/frt/bbs/type001/commonSelectBoardList.do?bbsId=BBSMSTR_000000000014.

Jasmin Lee held significant positions in the National Assembly and is known as a meticulous devoted lawmaker. She prioritizes representing immigrant families in Korea in the policy platform: "I was nominated to represent the growing number of immigrants in Korea, being their voice in policy making decisions as well as to be the link to help Korea in the transition to a multicultural society." Her presumed primary objected was to design and implement a practical roadmap for multiculturalism in Korea by creating a congressional department within the ten years that would develop and oversee legal and policy changes toward multiculturalism.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Jasmin Lee had a diverse range of interests. Instead of the single matter on multiculturalism, she lengthened her efforts to support Korean veterans of war as well as proceedings filed by "comfort women." She worked with other immigrants to aid children of North Korean defectors.⁵⁰

Judith Hernandez, another naturalized immigrant from the Republic of the Philippines who came before Jasmine Lee also contested for the National Assembly in 2008.⁵¹ Together, Hernandez and Lee became active leaders for migrants' rights and welfare before proceeding into politics. They earned the political and moral backing of immigrant communities in Korea regardless of they not representing these communities officially by district of. Migrant communities were becoming recognized as a de facto interest and identity group in Korean electoral politics, a movement that as likely to mature.

The Republic of Korea and the Philippine Republic are bilaterally reaping the benefits of mutual strong and friendly relations. Starting from the year 2006, South Korea has been the biggest source of tourists to the Philippines with an estimated number 1.2 million tourist influx per year.⁵² In the year 2014, a total number of 1,175,472 Koreans tourist holidayed in the Philippines, contributing to about a quarter of total tourist arrivals to the country, with the second place being the United States with 14.95 percent and Japan with 9.59 percent.⁵³ In July, 2015, the Republic of Korea was the fourth prevalent trading partner of the Philippines after the U.S., Japan, and China. The exports from the Philippines to Korea rose by 40 percent between the year 2009 and 2013. The two countries have been refining security ties as the territorial dispute between China and the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal has strengthened. Closer government-to-government diplomatic ties relate also to the education sector as the ministries of education started in 2012 to have teachers exchange programs between the two countries for the purpose of educating teachers in both countries about the history, language, civic, and social studies of both countries. These teachers were expected to share best practices and help develop teaching materials on multiculturalism. After returning to their home countries, these teachers were expected to raise and promote cultural awareness of each other's countries. The Ministry of Education in Korea hosted the Asia-Pacific Teacher Exchange for Global Education program from September to November, 2014. Teachers from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines were assigned in Korean schools. Simultaneously, twenty Koreans went to the Philippines and fifteen to Indonesia to teach in the respective country's schools.⁵⁴

On April, 2015, the Philippine government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Woongjin Foundation and its partner Digital Skynet Inc. to raise public awareness of Filipino migrant problems and to promote Philippine culture to the broader South Korean public.⁵⁵ Staff from the Philippine embassy staff participated as guests and provided information to the Filipino diaspora in Korea. One of such participant was Gennie Kim, a Filipina-Korean who works as the DJ for the

⁴⁸ Tack-whan Wi and Sojung Yoon, "Korea, Philippines move toward deeper cooperation," KoreaNet, October 18, 2013, accessed March 21, 2014, <http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Policies/view?articleId=113844>.

⁴⁹ Jonathan M. Hicap, "Jasmine Lee: A Filipino in South Korea's Assembly," Manila Bulletin, May 10, 2014, accessed September 14, 2015, <http://www.mb.com.ph/jasmine-lee-a-filipino-in-south-korea-s-assembly/#lirp8eGdbg2BgoM3.99>; Dohun Kim, "How Jasmine Lee, One of The Most Hated Women In Korea, Is Changing The Country," Huffington Post Korea, May 7, 2015, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/07/jasmine-lee-korea_n_7214186.html.

⁵⁰ Sang-hwa Lee, "Jasmine Lee's First Year as First Naturalized Korean Lawmaker," Korea Focus, June 29, 2013, accessed July 10, 2014, http://www.koreafocus.or.kr/design2/layout/content_print.asp?group_id=104903

⁵¹ "Caviteña vies for seat in South Korea parliament," GMA News, March 28, 2008, accessed July 10, 2014, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/86677/news/cavite-a-vies-for-seat-in-south-korea-parliament>.

⁵² Fernando T. Aldaba, "Enhancing the future of the Philippines-Republic of Korea economic relations," Business Mirror, July 2, 2015, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.businessmirror.com.ph/enhancing-the-future-of-the-philippines-republic-of-korea-economic-relations/>; Andrea Chloe Wong, "Prospects in Partnership: The Philippines and South Korea," Philippine Foreign Service Institute, October 22, 2013, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.fsi.gov.ph/prospects-in-partnership-the-philippines-and-south-korea/>.

⁵³ Ted P. Torres, "2014 tourist arrivals up 3.25% to 4.8 M," The Philippine Star, February 18, 2015, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.philstar.com/business/2015/02/18/1424847/2014-tourist-arrivals-3.25-4.8-m>.

⁵⁴ Sojung Yoon, "Teacher exchange brings Asia closer together," Korea.net, September 25, 2014, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Policies/view?articleId=121877>.

⁵⁵ "PH Embassy, multicultural radio in South Korea ink accord to push PHL issues," Department of Foreign Affairs, Republic of the Philippines, April 20, 2015, accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.gov.ph/2015/04/20/ph-embassy-multicultural-radio-in-south-korea-ink-accord-to-push-phl-issues/>

signature program at the Philippines Language Multicultural Family Music Radio. She also manages a Facebook page with information on Korean immigration and citizenship policies, information on other relevant social areas of life such as vocational training, labor issues and multicultural civic organizations' events among others.⁵⁶

The Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Korea regardless of the many challenges are still looking forward to strengthening economic, political, social and cultural diplomatic ties in the years to come.

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⁵⁶ "Multicultural Family Broadcast for Filipinos-DJ Gennie," Public Facebook Page, accessed July 15, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/Multicultural-Family-Broadcast-for-Filipinos-DJ-Gennie-587276964615980/timeline/>; "Wendyflor.com Blog," Public Facebook Page, accessed July 15, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/wendyflorblog?fref=nf>.