

# **A Review of Philippine Foreign Policy Under the Ramos Administration**

GINA RIVAS PATTUGALAN

President Fidel V. Ramos was welcomed into Malacañang amid dramatic political and rapid economic changes in the world and he was more than determined to keep up. The globalization of the means of production, labor, finance and services, and the increasing interdependence among economies gave Ramos his cue. Through foreign policy, Ramos embarked on what was called "Development Diplomacy," diplomacy aimed at enabling the country to access new markets and attract investors and tourists alike. This resulted in numerous trade agreements and reportedly billions in new investments and economic assistance. Ramos, through his rigorous conduct of economic diplomacy, ensured greater foreign business confidence in the country and greater access to the international market. These made for a resurgent economic performance and reinvention of the country's image in the international arena. In political and security matters, foreign policy stressed the importance of cooperation against non-conventional threats to security, such as migration and transnational crime. To maintain regional and domestic peace and order, the Ramos administration pursued bilateral and multilateral linkages, including a very controversial episode with the US and the Visiting Forces Agreement. However, Ramos' efforts on international linkages did not prevent China from pursuing its claims on the disputed islands. But it would probably take more than diplomacy to keep China within its borders.

Dramatic global and domestic changes welcomed President Fidel V. Ramos in 1996. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought to a close the Cold War era and ended decades of strained relations among the superpowers and their allies. This further led to the decline of the communist threat in the Asia-Pacific region and the weakening of the communist movements in the Philippines.

The external political environment of the 1990s offered opportunities for the Ramos administration and laid an unstable and less predictable context for the conduct of the Philippine international affairs. Fears of rising regional hegemony became an issue to contend with. Other security issues, like transnational crime, proliferation of nuclear weapons and territorial and maritime conflicts became more apparent. Thus, although the process of diversifying relations became the most logical step away from the Cold War mentality, building confidence with key countries was to become a formidable task.

World economics witnessed a more rapid globalization of the forces of production, finance, and services as well as increasing interdependence among economies. These developments made international markets more accessible, providing countries with more opportunities to expand economically. But these also resulted in the realization that a country's economic development cannot occur independent of the rest of the world. Hence, both gains and losses in the international market could impact on the Philippine economy.

The sweeping global changes gave the Ramos administration more room to experiment on approaches to development and security. On the domestic front, President Ramos took advantage of the situation and installed economic reform. On matters on foreign policy, the dramatic changes in international system presented to the Philippines an environment for expanding and enhancing international linkages with countries within and outside the Asia-Pacific region. As a result of the confluence of domestic and foreign policy initiatives as well as the favorable international environment, the "sick man of Asia" found an opportunity to join the ranks of healthier industrializing countries of the East Asia region without necessarily sacrificing a stable democratic society.

The ability of the Philippines to project a favorable image in the region was a consequence not only of domestic policy reforms but also of foreign policy initiatives the former president undertook. It could be argued that he effectively used foreign policy as an instrument in maximizing the opportunities offered and minimizing the challenges posed by the new international order and the changing domestic conditions. Having realized the importance of linking closely with the world, the Chief Diplomat utilized foreign policy as a tool for development.

The Ramos administration's concept of national security linked the development of the domestic politics and economics with international affairs and international involvements of the Philippines. As Siazon put it, the Ramos administration did not regard foreign affairs as something opposed or parallel to domestic priorities. The totality of national policies and development efforts intermeshed with foreign affairs. Hence, while domestic reforms were underway, the government was busy projecting a good image of the Philippines and finding a niche for the country in the global market.

Moreover, while the Ramos administration cultivated a strong awareness that the country's development cannot be made separate from the rest of the world, there was also a conscious effort by the government to broaden or make more comprehensive the notion of national security so that security and development are closely linked with each other. This broadened concept states that:

National security is now not only national defense, or protection of the nation's national territory or its immediate neighborhood from physical assault. To the traditional concerns of territorial integrity and external peace, the Ramos administration added other concerns which impact on the way of life and fundamental values of the people and their institutions, namely, socio-political stability, cultural cohesiveness, moral or spiritual, economic solidarity, and ecological balance.<sup>1</sup>

### **Major Foreign Policy Thrusts Under the Ramos Presidency**

#### ***A. Enhancing economic security through development diplomacy***

The extent and complexity of economic cooperation and competition in the next millenium demand more than domestic reforms. Therefore, economic linkages are also a key to progress. Given such awareness, President Ramos complemented whatever local initiatives with economic diplomacy, otherwise termed as "Development Diplomacy." This effort only emphasized the priority placed by his administration on the importance of economic development and the kind of strategic initiatives ventured upon.

##### ***1. Domestic reforms***

Lagging behind in a region of rapidly growing economies, President Ramos recognized that for the Philippines to catch up with its neighbors domestic policies must be reformed. For instance, protectionism failed to help local industries develop. In response, the Ramos government pursued decentralization, deregulation, and liberalization programs.

Decentralization, which devolved power from the national government to local government unit, was basically a political process. But its ultimate objective was to give provinces and municipalities greater command over

a wide range of socio-economic policies — environmental regulation, infrastructure development, investment attraction, and revenue generation. Meanwhile, both deregulation and liberalization aimed at leveling the playing field for both local and foreign investors. Deregulation encouraged competition in the domestic market by removing policies that inhibit new investments. These policies opened up — to varying degrees — the banking system, domestic shipping, the telecommunications sector, and air transport. The deregulation policies, coupled with extensive privatization, encouraged dramatic increase in investments. Meanwhile, liberalization sought to release the Philippines from its inward-looking orientation brought about by decades of protectionism towards trade-driven growth. The liberalization program brought down tariff rates in accordance with the Philippines' commitments to World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA).<sup>2</sup>

## ***2. Economic diplomacy***

To President Ramos, the wars of the coming decades will be more economic than political. The world therefore will depend more on economic linkages rather than on arms buildup. This also meant that domestic economic reforms are insufficient to achieve economic viability. To this end, his government complemented whatever local initiatives with economic diplomacy, otherwise termed as “Development Diplomacy.” Specifically, economic diplomacy was aimed at enabling the country to access new markets and to draw foreign investors and tourists alike to the country.

Economic diplomacy was conducted in two ways. The country-team approach, whereby state visits, trade missions, trade shows, business meetings, and related activities were facilitated, resulted in investor confidence and expansion of local enterprises' access to foreign markets. Concretely, these led to numerous bilateral economic agreements and investments into the country. In total, the country-team economic diplomacy of the Ramos administration has led to the signing of 13 bilateral trade agreements, 20 investment protection and promotion agreements, nine taxation agreements, 11 services agreements, and a host of other bilateral economic pacts.<sup>3</sup> It has brought in US\$ 22.4 billion in foreign investments. Most investments into the country came from

new industrializing economies and ASEAN states.<sup>4</sup> The P7.6-billion circumferential road (EDSA III) was a joint venture between Philippine National Construction Corporation and Indonesian construction giant P.T. Citra.<sup>5</sup>

Likewise, economic diplomacy resulted in the increase of official development assistance (ODA) to the country, although this cannot be considered a measure of economic progress. For example, the Philippines became the largest Japanese ODA recipient on per capita basis. Other than Japan, the European Union, the US, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank became major sources of grants and concessional loans.<sup>6</sup>

The major accomplishments of the Ramos government in economic diplomacy, however, were seen in the country's representations in global, regional, and sub-regional economic initiatives and arrangements that placed the Philippines on the economic map of the region.

The Philippine multilateral participation can be classified into three levels: extra-regional, regional, and subregional. At the extra-regional level, the Philippines sought active participation in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) round, which ended in 1994, and the WTO. The aim of the Philippines in joining the WTO is to access more markets for its products and facilitate its trade and investments with the rest of the world in the context of a liberal global economy.

It was also during the period of the Ramos presidency when the idea of bridging the gap between Asian and Europe economies through the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) took shape. The first of these meeting was held in Bangkok in 1996.

Complementing the WTO's objective of creating a liberal global economy is a regional economic cooperation via the APEC. APEC sought to achieve the following: trade and investment liberalization, trade and investment facilitation, and economic and technical cooperation. The hosting of the APEC in 1996 was one of the highlights of Philippine economic diplomacy. As Chair of APEC, the Ramos administration seized the opportunity to showcase the Philippines' economic and political gains.

The Manila Action Plan (MAPA), APEC's centerpiece, brought together Individual Action Plans, Collective Action Plans, and Joint Activities of the members-economies. With the MAPA, the Philippines successfully consolidated interests of various economies and brought its own initiatives into the substantive issues. Moreover, the Philippines as APEC Chair successfully cultivated a stronger private sector partnership through the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), prioritized sustainable development on the APEC agenda, and enhanced the development of SMEs through the inauguration of APEC Center for Technology Exchange and Training for SMEs (ACTETSME).

At the sub-regional level, the ASEAN has become the cornerstone of the foreign policy of the Ramos administration. In the area of regional security, not only has ASEAN become the cornerstone of the Philippine foreign policy, but it has also served as springboard for the country's relations with other multilateral bodies like APEC, ASEM, and with more prosperous economies like that of Japan and the US.

ASEAN from its inception was basically concerned with political matters. However, with the mushrooming of economic groupings around the world, ASEAN states progressively moved to economic cooperation. Evidence of this include the formation of ASEAN Free Trade Area, ASEAN Industrial Cooperation, the ASEAN Investment Area, and the growth areas such as the BIMP-EAGA. It is noteworthy that it was President Ramos who proposed the formation of the East ASEAN growth area, which included East Indonesia, East Malaysia, Mindanao and Brunei. The purpose of this growth area was to spur development in various parts of ASEAN countries. However, Mindanao is yet to experience the impact of the BIMP-EAGA.

### ***B. Creating a stable socio-political environment***

President Ramos realized the success of his economic endeavors could not be guaranteed without a stable socio-political environment. Given this perspective, the stability of the region and the country were equally important in the development agenda of the Ramos administration. To this end, Ramos tried to beef up the capacity of government agencies involved in one way or another with foreign relations. These include the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of National Defense

(DND), and the National Security Council (NSC). Indeed, the NSC was extensively utilized in formulating national security policy.<sup>7</sup>

### ***1. National reconciliation***

Putting one's house in order to maintain regional peace has been a major tenet of the relations of ASEAN members. The Ramos government made an effort to keep domestic problems at a manageable level because only after addressing pressing social and political issues could the government afford to pursue a sound foreign policy.

At the national level, the uncompromising stand of the Ramos administration to promote political and economic development simultaneously served as a model in a region where most states put economic progress ahead of human rights. President Ramos pressed for national reconciliation through the legalization of the communist movement and the granting of amnesty for rebels who wish to try mainstream politics. Also, President Ramos attempted to negotiate with the National Democratic Front (NDF), although no agreement between the two parties was reached.

Moreover, President Ramos ordered that the Mindanao peace problem be given adequate attention. The first step was undertaken through talks with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which led to the signing of the GRP-MNLF peace agreement in September 1996. This was followed by the promise of talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), although no substantial talks actually took place. A third group, the Abu Sayyaf, known to have international links, also remained outside the national reconciliation process.

Nevertheless, what was interesting about the Mindanao problem was the openness of the Ramos administration to the use international connections to help find solutions. The government was able to seek the support of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) that served as the third party in the peace talks between the government panel and the MNLF. The OIC, through the OIC Ministerial Committee of the Six (Libya, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Bangladesh, Somalia, and the Chair, Indonesia), has been tasked to monitor the implementation of the Peace Agreement. As in economic diplomacy, the personal dedication of President Ramos

to bring solution to the Mindanao problem was crucial. Even before his presidency, he undertook a secret visit to Libya, which led to the resumption of the stalled peace talks between the government and MNLF.<sup>8</sup>

## **2. External Security**

The termination of the basing rights of the US in the Philippines and the general decline of American military presence in the region created a general sense of anxiety for states that have largely benefited from the American security umbrella. There was also fear that a weaker regional commitment by the US would allow the more influential states to assert their supremacy in the Asia Pacific. However, there were also positive effects. States realized the importance self-reliance and the importance of regional cooperation. True enough, the Ramos administration had these as policy options. It seriously considered the modernization of the ailing military and substantially diversified linkages with other states.

**Military modernization.** In the past, any potential external threat to the Philippines became a responsibility of the US, thus allowing the Philippine Armed Forces (AFP) to focus on counter-insurgency campaign. However, with the withdrawal of the American forces in 1991, changing external security environment, and the decline of the communist threat there was an unavoidable need to reconsider defense policies. The first major step to this end was the separation of the police force from the military as mandated by a law creating the Philippine National Police (PNP). Specifically, PNP Law integrates the AFP's Philippine Constabulary into the police force and paved the way of transferring counter-insurgency campaign, except in specified critical areas, to the police force. With this reorganization, it was expected that the military be able to enhance its capability for external defense.

The first step to improving defense capability is the military modernization program. President Ramos, a former military man himself, lobbied extensively for the passing of the AFP Modernization Law. The law, enacted in 1995, specifically included five components in the AFP modernization program: (1) force restructuring and organizational development; (2) capability, material and technology development; (3)



bases/support systems development; (4) human resources development; and (5) doctrines development.

Fundamentally, the heart of the modernization program is changing the AFP from an internal security-oriented to external defense-oriented force. The modernization emphasizes the development of sufficient strategic capabilities to support a "Defense-in-Depth" policy. This means extending the AFP's capability to protect the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and to provide a "credible deterrent against outside threats to its territorial claims."<sup>9</sup>

In terms of budget, the Army was to get an allocation of P18.4 billion for 15 years, the Air Force to receive P59 billion, and the Navy P70 billion over 21 years.<sup>10</sup> For the first five years, the Congress decided on a P50-billion allocation. However, the Asian financial crisis reduced the modernization budget to merely half the original allocation. As a result, efforts towards self-reliant defense strategies basically did not bear fruit during the Ramos period. And with a toothless military, the Philippines could not reinforce its diplomacy over territorial claims in the South China Sea as well as patrol its vast waters.

***Bilateral relations with regional and external powers.*** While the building of one's capability was necessary, the Ramos administration saw that unilateral undertakings such as the military self-reliance would not be sufficient to cope with threats to Philippine security. Hence, the need to strengthen defense relations with as many states as possible.

The DND and AFP actively sought cooperation with small and major powers within and outside the region. A series of intelligence and personnel exchanges, border patrol, and joint training exercises were held between ASEAN members. There was also cooperation with Australia and South Korea. With its ASEAN partners and Asia Pacific states, the Ramos government shared the view that an interlocking web of bilateral relations was a necessary step toward building a healthy security community in the absence of a Southeast defense alliance. Outside the region, the Philippines sought defense cooperation with the United Kingdom, France and Spain.<sup>11</sup> With these states, cooperation was driven primarily by the need to expand the country's arms supply.<sup>12</sup>

The Ramos administration also embarked on improving the cold Philippine-American relations. Though there was a perceived reluctance of the US to remain actively involved in the region, most Asia Pacific states, including the Philippines, view it as the most important defense ally against potential regional hegemony. Hence, negotiations were held on military exercises and a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), now known as Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), and on giving more teeth to the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT). However, the VFA materialized only after the Ramos period, as the President himself felt that any further arrangements with the US was a political risk in the midst of strong anti-American sentiment.

Meanwhile, with the growing apprehension towards China, improving China-Philippine ties was a critical challenge to the Ramos government. In 1995, the Ramos government got a wake-up call with the Chinese occupation of the Panganiban Reef (Mischief Reef). The following year, China ratified the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and declared its intention to abide by it in the South China Sea. In addition, President Jiang Zemin in 1996 even assured the Philippines of China's peaceful intentions and friendliness. These pledges resulted in a renewed optimism in the region — that disputes could be resolved peacefully. Then in April 1997, China sent two armed frigates to the Spratly areas claimed by the Philippines and Vietnam. Because of a weak military, the Philippines responded only with diplomatic protest. It urged China to abide by the 1992 Manila Declaration on the South China Sea and UNCLOS. The DFA could only reiterate the call for the demilitarization of the area and joint development of its resources. President Ramos could only advance the idea of "placing the disputed islands under the stewardship of the claimant country closest to it geographically, on the understanding that the stewardship accommodates other claimants' needs for shelter, anchorage, and other peaceful pursuits." To this day China has not expressed any interest in these alternatives.

***A multilateral approach to regional stability.*** The complex and uncertain nature of the post-Cold War era brought one positive impact, that is, a realization that the security of one state cannot be made separate from the security of its neighbors. Hence, one way of dealing with common concerns and dilemmas is for states to come together through a multilateral decision-making. The Asia Pacific region exemplifies the phenomenal growth of multilateralism in the post-cold war era.

Multilateral efforts, either initiated by ASEAN or otherwise, have become a complementary approach to ensuring some stability of the regional environment. As former Director General of National Security Council Jose Almonte asserted, "We cannot have peace in isolation from our neighbors. Interdependence is the wave of the future. All countries, big or small, must accept that our fates are linked together more closely than they ever been."<sup>13</sup>

The Philippines made substantial contributions to the multilateral cooperation both in Southeast Asia and the greater Asia-Pacific. Indeed, the active participation of the Philippines in multilateral security arrangements could be considered a major highlight of the Ramos administration's foreign policy.

In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN became a springboard for President Ramos' foreign policy initiatives on regionalism, organized transnational crime, and the South China Sea dispute. On regionalism, the Ramos administration initiated the concept of Southeast Asia-10 (SEA-10), which gradually brought together Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia into the ASEAN circle. He believed that a more unified Southeast Asia would bring about greater regional stability, more prospects for economic cooperation, and bigger voice by smaller states in the international arena. However, political gains from ASEAN expansion are yet to be experienced. In fact, Southeast Asian relations with Western powers suffered with Myanmar's entry into the ASEAN. In this instance, the ASEAN policy does not necessarily contribute to economic and political well-being of the Philippines and other Southeast Asians.

More on ASEAN cooperation, the Philippines strongly supported the expansion of dialogue and consultation at the Asia Pacific level through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Formed in 1993 through ASEAN's initiative, the ARF was conceptualized to serve as a "high-level consultative forum that can make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in a security environment characterized by uncertainty, the ARF provides at most a convenient diplomatic point of contact for small and major powers in the region. It facilitates the dialogue between regional and non-regional actors, which otherwise might not be politically possible. From its side, the Philippines made a few impressive contributions to the slow institutionalization of the ARF process. In March 1997, it co-chaired with

China the ARF Intersessional Group on Confidence Building Measure (CBM) in Beijing, which reached a consensus on a number of CBMs to be undertaken by the ARF countries. In this meeting, the Philippines put priority on the discussion of landmine issue. Also within the ARF, it also proposed the creation of a regime, called ASIATOM (modeled on the European Atomic Energy Community, or EUROTOM), aimed to manage the use and shipment of nuclear energy in the Asia-Pacific. In 1998, the Philippines also served as Chairman of the ARF. In general, however, the ARF as a body, still has to prove a greater role in harnessing cooperation on more pressing security concerns of the region.

### ***C. Meeting the challenge of non-conventional threats to security***

#### ***1. Combating Transnational Crime***

Transnational crime has become one of the more serious issues the Philippines had to contend with in post-cold war era. The country is said to be one of the connecting points for drug traffickers and human smugglers in East Asia. To deal with these matters more effectively, the Philippine government has sped up bilateral and multilateral efforts with others states. In fact, the Philippine government has contributed extensively and has been in the forefront in the fight against transnational crime in the Asia-Pacific region.

For instance, the state visit of Ramos to Myanmar included a signing of a cooperation agreement to prevent trafficking of drugs and other related substances. In terms of multilateral activities, the Philippines sponsored in December 1997 the ASEAN Conference on Transnational Crime. Eventually, this and the succeeding ASEAN efforts on transnational crime resulted in the establishment of the ASEAN Center on Transnational Crime in Manila, aimed at promoting intelligence sharing, harmonization of policies, and coordination of operations. Towards the same end, the Philippines also initiated several development cooperation projects with its ASEAN dialogue partners, such as campaign against drug addiction among ASEAN youth.

Outside the ASEAN circle, the Philippines joined and was host to the meeting 1997 INTERPOL, a worldwide network for exchanging information on transnational crime. Likewise, the first Asia Regional Ministerial

Meeting on Transnational Crime was again held in Manila in the same year. It adopted the Manila Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Transnational Crime, which expressed the region's concern over increasing organized crime and supported the strengthening of domestic institutions as well as regional and global cooperation to combat transnational crime.

## ***2. Welfare of overseas Filipino workers<sup>15</sup>***

One of the realities of the Philippine socio-economic condition is the continued diaspora of Filipino workers all over the world. According to DFA statistics, there are now about six million overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), around two million have become permanent residents of other countries. They have become a major contributor to the country's gross national product (GNP).

But, the protection of the welfare and rights of the OFWs has become a very demanding and difficult task for Filipino diplomats given the huge number of migrant workers over a wide expanse of the globe as well as given the differences in labor, legal, and cultural practices between the Philippines and host countries. It has also been proven that the manner by which the Filipino workers are treated abroad could be a sensitive issue in foreign relations. It can be recalled that the death of a Filipino worker, Flor Contemplacion, in Singapore in 1995 led to strong outrage of the Filipino public against Singapore and to the temporary severance of diplomatic relations between Singapore and the Philippines.

Basically as a result of the controversial Contemplacion case, the Ramos administration pushed for greater attention on migrant workers. Along this line, Republic Act 8042 was signed into law in 1995. This law mandated the DFA and other relevant government agencies to undertake activities that would protect migrant rights and courses of redress under international and regional human rights systems. In addition, it provided for the creation of Office of the Legal Assistant for Migrant Worker Affairs under the DFA. This office will be responsible for coordinating all legal assistance services for nationals abroad.

Beyond unilateral initiative, bilateral labor agreements were also forged by the Philippines and some host countries, especially Middle Eastern countries under the Ramos administration. The government has

also signed social security agreements with some major receiving western countries, like the US, Canada, France, and a few others. The DFA also set up Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) centers, designed to extend assistance and other services (such as human resource development), in selected capitals, particularly in Middle East and Asia. At the global level, the Philippines actively lobbied for more states to sign the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families, which is a major initiative of the country in the United Nations.

Though the Ramos administration did much to help improve the plight of Filipino workers abroad, the DFA continues to struggle in coping with problems encountered by these migrant workers. The DFA resources, both material and human, cannot cope with sheer number of migrant workers.

### **Conclusion**

Central to the ability of the past regime to succeed in foreign policy were President Ramos' positive and internationalist outlook and personal dedication in improving the international image of the Philippines. As Foreign Affairs Secretary Siazon observed, "President Ramos has not only been very much involved in the formulation of foreign policy, in keeping with his reputation as a hands-on manager, but also he has immersed himself in its implementation."<sup>16</sup> But, the success of Ramos foreign policy was to some extent a function of the conditions within which it operated. The post-Cold War international order laid a favorable environment for President Ramos to experiment with domestic and international policies and strategies.

The success of foreign policy of the previous administration could also be traced to the Chief Executive's ability to rally the government and the public towards a strategic goal and his conscious attempt to merge domestic concerns with international affairs and international involvement of the Philippines. Foreign policy was clearly a tool to enhance internal economic development and stability.

The backbone of Philippine foreign policy was the president's rigorous conduct of economic diplomacy. He extensively led trade and other economic missions abroad, and found a place for the Philippine

participation in multilateral economic fora within and outside the region. Indeed, Ramos' proactive economic diplomacy resulted in greater foreign business confidence in the Philippines.

In political and security matters, the Ramos leadership reasonably performed well. It emphasized the importance of cooperation against non-conventional threats to security, such as in migration and transnational crime. The administration also used international linkages to help deter internal threats, as shown in the national reconciliation efforts. In addition, while it also attempted to enhance its country's defense capability, the Ramos administration was very well aware that bilateral linkages and multilateral linkages were necessary not only to maintain regional stability but also the domestic peace and order.

However, despite rigorous diplomacy with China, the Ramos administration has failed to mitigate the threat posed by the Chinese expansion in the South China Sea, a threat now in the hands of the Estrada administration. ❁

### Endnotes

- 1 Siazon, Domingo "Foreign Affairs," *Fidel Ramos, The Ramos Presidency and Administration* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1998).
- 2 See Alexander Magno, "Between Populism and Reform: Facing the Test of May 1998," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1998.
- 3 Siazon.
- 4 Almonte, Jose "National Security," *Fidel Ramos, The Ramos Presidency and Administration* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1998).
- 5 Estrella Solidum, "The Philippines: Moving the Country Forward," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1994, p. 250.
- 6 Siazon.
- 7 President Ramos convened the NSC seven times, whereas Presidents Garcia, Macapagal, Aquino convened the body only three times. He also made efforts to reorient the national consciousness from cold war mentality to internationalist and non-conventional, such that defense and territorial issues were not the only issues directly impacting on the lives of the Filipinos.
- 8 For a more elaborate discussion of the peace process, see Federico Magdalena, "Peace Process in Mindanao: Problems and Prospects," *Southeast Asian Affairs* 1997.
- 9 "The Philippines," in Charles Morrison, ed., *Asia Pacific Security Outlook 1997* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange).
- 10 *Ibid.*, 1998, p. 113.
- 11 Fortunato Abat, "National Defense," *Ramos, The Ramos Presidency and Administration*, 1998.
- 12 For instance, with the U.K., the Philippines co-produced 53 SIMBA armored vehicles through co-production in 1996.

- 13 Almonte, p. 185.
- 14 Chairman's Statement of the First Meeting of the ARF. Quoted from M.C. Casimiro-Ortuoste, "The ARF: Multilateralizing Security in the Asia-Pacific," *Kasarinlan* (2nd Quarter 1995), p. 39.
- 15 See Siazon, "Foreign Affairs," 1998, and "1996 Philippine Foreign Policy Overview," A Presentation to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Manila, January 7, 1997.
- 16 *Ibid.*