



PROCEEDINGS

Hostaged? Philippine Foreign Policy After Angelo dela Cruz

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CLARO M. RECTO HALL, FACULTY CENTER
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(Professors Amado Mendoza Jr. and Rowena Layador of the Department of Political Science moderated the forum)

DR. ZOSIMO LEE (DEAN, UP COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-DILIMAN): I would like to welcome you all to this gathering to discuss the Philippine foreign policy after the release of Angelo dela Cruz and the consequent withdrawal of the Philippines from its membership in the “coalition of the willing.” As a member of the coalition, we were very much distressed by the hostage-taking incident. This compelled us to reflect on the real interests of the country in its foreign relations. Is national interest about the protection of Filipinos overseas? Or is it about the capacity to decide on our own and not just because we want to be part of a coalition led by a superpower—the United States? After the Philippine government pulled out its contingent from Iraq, we were strongly criticized by countries like Australia. We were even thought of us an “ally” who cannot be trusted. This leads us to the fundamental question of what exactly is the direction of Philippine foreign policy. More importantly, who should shape our foreign policy? The forum today will attempt to answer these important questions.

DR. TERESA S. ENCARNACION TADEM (DIRECTOR, THIRD WORLD STUDIES CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-DILIMAN): On behalf of the University of the Philippines College of Social Sciences and Philosophy, National College of Public Administration and Governance, Department of Sociology, Third World Studies Center, University Student Council, Focus on the Global South, and the Institute for Popular Democracy, I would like to welcome you all to our forum on Philippine foreign policy after Angelo dela Cruz. As pointed out in our concept paper for this forum, the controversies around the Philippine government's position to pull out its troops from Iraq to prevent the beheading of dela Cruz continue to bring out passionate debates not only on whether the decision was right or not, but what its consequences will be for our country. The dilemma confronted by the Philippine government highlights the crucial linkage of our country's domestic policies to the rest of the world. It has also brought to life and popularized the connections among such issues as the country's economic and employment situation, the plight of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), the government support for the US-led global war against terror, and the invasion of Iraq; as well as the close alliance between the governments of the Philippines and the United States.

This forum hopes to raise issues concerning the country's national interest and how it is determined, and to contextualize this with the embroiled questions on the role of the Philippines in a post-Cold War international order characterized by the military supremacy of a sole superpower. We look forward, therefore, to the discussion and the debates that will ensue today, which will touch on questions such as the main features of current Philippine foreign policy, the manner in which it was affected by the Angelo dela Cruz incident, and the political and economic implications of the government's decision to pull out troops from Iraq. Attention will also be given to our country's current national interest—the national interest which the Philippine government should advance through its foreign policy—and the consequences of the country's withdrawal of its troop from Iraq on our relationship with the United States. These issues will highlight the extent to which national interest of the Philippines and the United States converge, and the features of our revised or alternative Philippine foreign policy should our current foreign policy prove inadequate. A three-hour forum seems inadequate to answer all these relevant questions and burning issues. Nevertheless, we hope to generate a

comprehensive and passionate debate on the concerns mentioned for future enlightened exchanges to come.

HON. RIZA HONTIVEROS-BARAQUEL (PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE, *AKBAYAN!* AND FORMER MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT PEACE NEGOTIATING PANEL FOR TALKS WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES-NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY-NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT): One question we should ask in this forum is: Hostaged by whom and how? Hostaged by Islamic extremists, which powerful countries like the US have strongly asserted? Before I offend anyone's sensibilities further, I hasten to add that we should probably be more wary of Christian extremists such as George Bush and their impact on global politics. But in the case of these so-called "Islamic extremists," I think it was clear that the decision for an early pull-out of the Philippine humanitarian contingent was in order to save the life of a Filipino national—Angelo dela Cruz—and not to submit to terrorism. We can even argue about this. What exactly is the definition of "terrorism?" What is "terrorism" in different contexts? Anyway, for me, it was obvious that what the Philippine government made was a humanitarian decision.

In our country, we are also addressing this so-called "threat of terrorism" or "extremism," one of which is the peace process between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The whole nation, especially the Mindanao people, still awaits the full implementation of the peace agreement between the GRP and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). In the case of the GRP-MILF peace process, we will still deal with the challenge of ceasefire, and ultimately, permanent cessation of hostilities. More important is how the GRP and the MILF can forge an agreement on the substantive agenda of the peace talks, which refer to the concept of self-determination of the Bangsamoro people, and on how the "pieces of peace," achieved by civil society, can be tied together with the formal processes in order to realize just and lasting peace in Mindanao. It is also important to highlight the role of Malaysia, a Muslim country, in all these peace efforts and in the emerging geopolitical landscape in Southeast Asia. This is a positive development, especially when we look at the often exaggerated and sensationalized Boogey Man and the threat of Islamic extremism in the region. With this, I think a challenge for the Philippine government is to create more meaningful and constructive relations with other Muslim countries and formations, such as the Arab League.

Hostaged by the United States? By Australia and other like-minded countries? *Akbayan* believes that the recent actions of the Philippine government are a welcome opportunity to once and for all reject this colonial mentality, a big and heavy baggage from our colonial past with the Americans. Now is a chance to shape an independent foreign policy. In the House of Representatives, for example, several resolutions were passed regarding the criticisms from the Australian Prime Minister. The Congress intends to lodge a diplomatic protest with the Australian government and to recall temporarily the Philippine Ambassador to Australia. On another matter, there are resolutions filed in Congress expressing solidarity with the people of Burma on the occasion of the anniversary of the 8888 uprising and concerns over the forthcoming leadership of the Burmese military junta in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This is in relation to what I have said earlier, regarding the importance of nurturing bilateral and multilateral relations with other countries other than the United States, such as ASEAN, formations within the Asia-Pacific region and even with the European Union, Africa and Latin American countries. We are very much interested, for example, in the Brazilian model with regard to the alternative path on globalization. It is also relevant to look at the example of Colombia, especially on lessons we could cull from their experience in post-conflict transformation, especially on democratization processes and transitional justice.

I would like to look at the concerns of some sectors regarding the consequences of our withdrawal from Iraq, the most pressing of which is the apprehension on decreased economic and military support from the US. But this has been going on for a long time. According to *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, US assistance through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been progressively shrinking ever since, coincidentally, the Philippine Senate rejected the US Bases Agreement in 1991. In 1991, US assistance totaled US\$324 million. By 1992, this amount decreased by 40 percent to US\$199 million. In 1993, again it was slashed by 70 percent to US\$81 million. Another 44 percent drop in 1994 to US\$45 million. And yearly since 2000, assistance was valued at only US\$34 million. So, let us not be bothered by the US' threat of retribution.

Another point I would like to raise is the subject of terrorist-listing. A news report this morning said that the US State Department renewed its listing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The position of *Akbayan* on

this matter is that the Philippines should pursue a position, independent of the US. While there have been an increase in the number of actions by the New People's Army (NPA), which *Akbayan* and other democratic Left organizations have openly condemned as nonrevolutionary—for example, attacks on civilians and collection of revolutionary tax and more recently, permit-to-campaign fees, we do not believe and accept that they are to be labeled as FTOs. In addition, if we are to make the CPP and the NPA accountable for violations of human rights (HR) and international humanitarian law (IHL), the terrorist tag would prove to be a major obstacle. According to experts like Cej Jimenez, it is difficult to hold the CPP-NPA accountable for their breach of HR and IHL instruments if we are to treat them as terrorists.

Lately, there have been discussions on a new Philippine humanitarian mission to Iraq. I think we should mull over this more carefully this time. At the very least, it is good that the Philippine government has now stated some preconditions for this—that it should be within the principle of multilateralism and with the authorization of the United Nations (UN). Of course, the government should always observe its constitutional mandate to renounce war as an instrument of national policy.

Finally, on the questions regarding overseas employment after Angelo dela Cruz, I do not know if the appointment of Vice-President Noli de Castro as Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipinos and concurrently, head of the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA) and Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) would mean more progressive, pro-active and efficient programs and policies for OFWs. There are several lessons from the Angelo dela Cruz incident concerning the plight of OFWs and the “hostage-taking” of a country like the Philippines—whether by extremist organizations or by its relations with the US. I'm sure you would all agree that the latter does not benefit the Filipinos, but rather legitimizes the geo-political interests and agenda of the sole superpower.

GILBERT ASUQUE (ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND SPOKESPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS): Before I proceed, may I distribute copies of the speech delivered by Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Domingo Albert this morning at the Manila Overseas Press Club (MOPC) Breakfast Forum. Her remarks, “Structure, Content, Form and Substance and the Three Pillars of Philippine Foreign Policy” would be very relevant for this afternoon's forum.

Thank you for inviting me to this special forum to discuss Philippine foreign policy after the hostage-taking incident in Iraq. An in-depth discussion on the subject is timely and necessary, as there appears to be much speculation on the impact of the Philippine government's decision, and the future direction of Philippine foreign policy. I believe our discussions this afternoon could provide useful results—in terms of a better understanding of the foreign policy process and the direction we are taking.

I presume that you have had previous discussions on the definitions of foreign policy—its actors, objectives, and processes. I also presume that you have had discussions on the meaning of the term “national interest.” My task is therefore made easier by your understanding of the meaning and the role that national interest plays in shaping our country's foreign policy.

The term “national interest” assumes greater meaning when we consider what we refer to as the three pillars of foreign policy: national security, economic diplomacy and the promotion and protection of our national interest.

The protection of our national interests, however, has to take into consideration the international environment we live in. Thus, effective foreign relations rely on our ability to protect and promote our national interests, within a changing international milieu.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has identified the eight realities in the present external and internal environment, which provide the guidelines for the foreign policy directions in the next few years. These are as follows:

1. That China, Japan, and the United States and their relationship will be a determining influence in the security situation and economic evolution of East Asia;
2. That Philippine foreign policy decisions have to be made in the context of ASEAN;
3. That the international Islamic community will continue to be important for the Philippines;
4. That the coming years will see the growing importance of multilateral and inter-regional organizations to promote common interests;
5. That the defense of the nation's sovereignty and the protection of its environment and natural resources can be carried out only to the extent that it asserts its

- rights over its maritime territory and gets others to respect those rights;
6. That the country's economic policy will continue to be friendly to both domestic and foreign direct investments;
 7. That the Philippines can benefit most quickly from international tourism; and,
 8. That overseas Filipinos will continue to be recognized for their critical role in the country's economic and social stability.

The events in Iraq and subsequent Philippine government decision demonstrated how the Philippines pursues national interest within the context of the eight realities.

I will not go into great detail on the Angelo de la Cruz hostage-taking incident, as much has been said and written about it. The bottom line is, the Philippine government recognized that the primary national interest at that crucial point was to save the life of a Filipino national, and given the international milieu, the only way to do so was to advance by a few days the earlier decision made to withdraw the Philippine humanitarian contingent to Iraq.

In the course of a nation's pursuit of its own interest, it is inevitable that there would be times when this would not be consistent with the interests of other countries. This is precisely when we exercise our sovereignty by determining our own interest, and act accordingly.

While the issue of our withdrawal from Iraq will definitely have implications on Philippine international relations, it is important to put this into context. The sending of the humanitarian contingent is one of many expressions of our foreign policy, particularly on two fronts: one, our commitment to help in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Iraq; and two, our partnership with the United States. The withdrawal of our troops, however, does not in any way diminish our commitment to Iraq or to the US. It merely indicates that in consideration of our national interests, we have decided to refocus on other areas of cooperation with both Iraq and the US.

With Iraq, we continue to work within the United Nations Security Council to ensure that the international community remains committed to its reconstruction and development. We are supporting a draft resolution extending the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which will play a leading role in assisting to prepare for the electoral process in Iraq next year.

Secretary Delia Domingo Albert and Ambassador Francis Riccardone recently held a very fruitful meeting, and both of them reaffirmed the continued importance, relevance, and resiliency of Philippine-US relations. Our relations with the rest of the world remain as dynamic as ever. Next week, Secretary Albert will join Ministers from other member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Durban, South Africa, where we will continue to work together on issues affecting developing countries. By the end of the month, we will be hosting a series of meetings among senior officials of ASEAN, to continue the work we have started in building an ASEAN Community. Summit meetings with leaders of ASEAN, China, Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the European Community remain in the President's agenda for the rest of the year.

In retrospect, the foreign policy that will emerge after all these discussions will essentially be the same foreign policy we have always espoused. Our foreign policy will continue to be guided by the Philippine national interest. We will continue to make our decisions—difficult and unpopular they may be—on the basis of what is best for our country and our people. We will continue to abide by our international commitments, in ways that are suitable to our situation, and in a manner where our assistance to the international community will be most effective. We will continue to contribute to the fight against terrorism, to secure peace in our country, in the region, and in the world.

AILEEN BAVIERA (DEAN, ASIAN CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-DILIMAN): I would like to limit my remarks to three interrelated questions: Does the Angelo dela Cruz affair signal a change in Philippine foreign policy vis-à-vis “terrorism” and relations with the United States? Can this change be properly characterized as a significant shift, a turning point, or a crossroads for our foreign policy? Should the lessons of the Angelo dela Cruz affair lead to further changes in our foreign policy, and if so, towards what directions?

Allow me to address the first question: Does the Philippine government's decision to advance the withdrawal of our contingent in Iraq in order to save the life of one overseas Filipino worker signal a change in policy vis-à-vis the US-led war against terrorism? Yes, it does. Our government, supported by nearly uniform public opinion (which is in itself a rare occurrence), is finally articulating limits to our support for US policy and its foreign policy misadventures in the name of anti-

terrorism. We have begun to realize that this support is not without its cost and that there is a price we should rightly consider too high to pay. The price that I refer to is not the life of one man, a certain Mr. Angelo dela Cruz, but rather, the perceived prospect of political instability in the Philippines itself should the death of dela Cruz—who in his ordeal came to be seen as the “Filipino everyman”—lead to an eruption of the social volcano that this country has so often been described to be. To have done nothing for dela Cruz would have underscored the fact that not only has government failed to generate jobs that would keep Filipinos safely at home, but that government is helpless in protecting them once they have gone abroad in search of work. I say this having in mind both the high emotions of the Flor Contemplacion affair of 1995, and the forces of urban poor frustration that were more recently unleashed in “EDSA 3.” In particular, as a newly re-elected President still facing the challenge of contested election results, Arroyo could not afford such a crisis so early into her new term. In other words, I believe that a main reason for the decision to withdraw from Iraq was the first primordial interest of the state—regime survival in the face of a then very fluid domestic political situation. Naturally, this concern was not debated within public view.

The other cost that government seems unwilling to risk, and one that could publicly and convincingly be argued, is the safety and security of hundreds of thousands of other overseas Filipinos in the Middle East and abroad who are vulnerable to terrorist reprisal. There are after all, an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos in the Middle East. There are over 900,000 OFWs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia alone, this country being the seat of Islam and therefore the breeding ground and natural magnet for terrorist groups associated with various forms of Islamic extremism. Thousands more OFWs are scattered in other hotspots and potential hotspots for political violence in the region—including Israel, Lebanon, Kuwait, and of course, Iraq itself. Again, to have sacrificed the life of dela Cruz, for the sake of upholding our support for the US-led war on terror and our participation in the “coalition of the willing,” could send the message to terrorists that the Philippines’ support for the illegal occupation of Iraq and loyalty to the United States was without bounds. This would likely increase, rather than reduce, the risk of other Filipinos being taken hostage or being targeted for acts of reprisal by insurgents fighting against foreign occupation.

Given that the government is now giving second thoughts to our role in Iraq, are we seeing a shift, and are we at a turning point or crossroads in the relations with the United States, as some are arguing? Will the recently-enunciated principle of “Filipino first” mean a more nationalist and independent stance in Philippine foreign policy? At this point, it is probably too early to say, but I suspect that any change will be less in terms of the way we conceive our role in the so-called war on terror or the alliance with the United States, and more in terms of more careful decisions on the deployment of OFWs in hotspots and more emphasis on UN solutions to what is fast becoming a quagmire in Iraq.

The fact is, the Philippine government’s decision to withdraw troops from Iraq was a response to a crisis situation and occurred under very special and complex circumstances rather than as a result of a thorough policy review. On the one hand, there were issues of human security for OFWs, recollections of the Flor Contemplacion affair which was indeed traumatic for our foreign policymakers (the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Labor and Employment and Malacañang under Fidel Ramos’s watch), plus the problem of securing the new regime’s stability—all of which could have justified giving in to the Iraqi hostage takers to save dela Cruz. At the same time, the Philippine contingent was due to return home within a few weeks anyway, the transition that would have replaced the “coalition of the willing” with a UN-sponsored mechanism was already underway in Iraq, and the US itself was starting to think of a graceful exit strategy in light of decreased domestic support for their involvement in Iraq. On the other hand, other governments whose nationals had been taken hostage by Iraqi insurgents had stood firmly against giving in to terrorist demands, and there was pressure on the Arroyo government, which had been among the first and most outspoken supporters of Bush’s “war on terror,” to stay on course particularly given the windfalls such support had reportedly brought in terms of Washington’s renewed security assistance to Manila.

There were also other factors that should have been considered as part of an assessment and review of Philippine policies in Iraq. We can not say if the 9/11 report by the US Congress, the exposé on the US military’s violations of prisoner’s rights in Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib prison, or indeed the past good relations between Iraq and the Philippines itself, factored significantly in the Philippine decision to withdraw its contingent. Paraphrasing, the 9/11 report said that there

was little evidence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq and no linkage between al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein that could have warranted the US war against and occupation of Iraq. My own fear is that what has all along driven our participation in the occupation of Iraq as well as our alliance with US is not so much the need for a principled response to the suspected terrorist/WMD threat from the Saddam Hussein regime, but the deep-rooted dependency of our military on the US for military assistance and a habit by many of our leaders and elites of closely mimicking US foreign policy (despite the Senate's path-breaking decision to close the US bases in the country in 1991). Moreover, regardless of the truth about the threat from Iraq that was so grossly exaggerated by Washington, many would argue that there is no choice for realists but to accept the fact that the US being the world's sole superpower and hegemon is more useful to us as an ally than otherwise. If this is the case, I doubt that we are looking at a real turning point or a crossroads in relations.

Should the lessons from the Angelo dela Cruz affair lead to a change in Philippine foreign policy—as far as our role in the US-led war on terror and the occupation of Iraq is concerned? To address this, we need to come to a conclusion on what was wrong and what was right about the policy to begin with.

What was right? The way I see it, the need to fight terrorism is right, but Iraq is not the proper arena and key persons in the US know it now, if they have not known it all along. The Bush government was clearly motivated by other interests in Iraq, arguably including private and institutional interests that have been passed off as American national interest and even as what is necessary for the good of “the international community.” The Philippines should similarly be able to make an assessment of the situation in Iraq, independent of that of the United States' and based on its own interest in the anti-terror campaign. For instance, why is the Philippines vulnerable to so-called international terrorism in the first place? Are not the continuing problems of insurgency, social injustice, poverty, and perceived support for misguided US policies itself, among the root causes of international terrorist activity in the Philippines, as in many other developing countries? Other factors such as the uncontrolled entry of people, poor banking regulations allowing suspect funds to circulate, and the lack of airport security are just conditions that aggravate the problems of terrorist activity, and here indeed the US is welcome to help us. But the root causes we will have to solve ourselves, and solve primarily through local

actions with reference to what is happening within our borders. In general, our government has been quick to look to the United States as if it were the solution to our terrorism woes (for example, *Balikatan*), when all along we should realize that US policies in the Middle East and elsewhere are among the root causes of terrorism and that the United States itself is the principal target of terrorist activity and therefore part of the problem, rather than being the solution.

What was wrong? The fact that the Iraq war lacked basis in truth, in legitimacy, and in morality was wrong. The fact that we opted to participate in it even for the most pragmatic reasons may be understandable, but not defensible. We are a weak state, having no real instruments of power in the international arena other than the norms and principles of international law and the accepted processes in the United Nations. We should have defended those norms and processes instead of having acquiesced to their outright violation.

What should change in our world outlook? We need to do away with our defeatist realism and psychological attachment to the US and strive to develop more principled, more independent, and more informed foreign policy choices that are reflective of our own collective values and our own collective interests as a nation and people. In this day and age of the global village, we also need more debate and consultation among domestic stakeholders affected by the foreign policy choices of our elites. When it comes to the challenges we face in the international arena, government should guide and help educate the people, but with respect to the principles and directions of our foreign policy, it is the people who should guide and help educate government. If the Angelo dela Cruz affair will lead to an expanded constituency of interest groups actively participating in efforts by government to develop a more independent, responsive, and effective foreign policy, then and only then can we start viewing this whole episode as a turning point.

RAYMUND QUILOP (ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES-DILIMAN): All too often, we have heard the words “national interest” as the government’s justification for its decision to pull out the Philippine humanitarian contingent from Iraq in exchange for the life of Angelo dela Cruz.

But what exactly does the concept of national interest mean? In its most basic sense, national interest refers to the interest of the people

as a collective group of individuals. As the two words comprising it, “national” and “interest” would tell us, it is never supposed to refer to the interest of any particular group within the nation or worse a particular individual but of the nation as a whole.

“National interest” is also not supposed to be understood in a narrow sense as being driven solely by “domestic considerations.” It is also equally necessary to see it as having an international dimension, shaped by certain considerations beyond domestic factors. It is unfortunate, however, that the government’s decision to pull out its forces from Iraq now gives the impression that national interest is a uni-dimensional concept, which in this case, appears to have been limited merely to saving the life of a Filipino.

National interest could rationalize any decision or action of a government, as any government could practically claim that it undertook a particular decision in order to pursue its “national interest.” But to hold on to such a narrow view of national interest could result in a global system that is more dangerous as any country could just practically do anything it wants to do all in the name of pursuing its “national interest.”

But let’s face it. The increased interdependence that is very much apparent in today’s global environment simply means that states could no longer pursue their national interests unmindful of how other states would react. In short, states have now become more constrained or as others may want to put it, more tempered in pursuing their own national interest. To simply ignore how other states in the global system would react could in fact be disadvantageous to a particular state; that instead of being able to pursue its national interest, the opposite results.

In other words, governments, including the Philippine government, could no longer and should no longer simply hide behind the cloak of “national interest” to justify their actions, hoping that their partners abroad accept such decisions at face value. A more substantive explanation as to why the government decided the way it did is therefore necessary. Its absence would simply lead the Philippines’ foreign partners as well as the more critical citizens to think of the government’s argument of pursuing national interest as merely a lame excuse.

When the government decided to be part of the US “coalition of the willing” and opted to send troops to Iraq, it also claimed that its decision to do so was in pursuit of “national interest,” which meant to

have done otherwise, would have been detrimental to the country's national interest. It is claimed that joining the "coalition of the willing" would benefit the country's national interest, primarily in terms of assistance from the US. But now, the government claims that it is in the national interest to pull those troops out. One is tempted to ask: What then actually constitutes national interest?

But what is more interesting is to ask what actually is the difference in the circumstances surrounding the decision to send troops and the later decision to pull them out? If I may offer a hypothesis, it is actually the intensity of public opinion that made the difference. While public opposition in sending troops to Iraq may have been present, such opinion was not as intense as the public opinion demanding that the troops be pulled out so that Angelo dela Cruz is saved. Thus, the government decided to pull its troops out simply because of the strong domestic public opinion demanding for a pull-out; that if Angelo dela Cruz's plight were not highlighted by the international and domestic media, the government may not have been forced to decide in his favor.

This leads to a more disturbing implication—that the Philippine state remains to be weak, held captive by particular sectors in society, which were able to convince the government to decide the way it did, primarily by generating public opinion. While the government in a way should remain responsive to public sentiment, it would also be counter-productive for the government to be succumbing to popular pressure, making it unable to adopt policies that may be unpopular but necessary. It must be remembered that even in democracies like the Philippines, what is popular may not always be for the benefit of the nation over the long term.

Another disturbing implication is the fact that "politics of survival" continues to haunt the government, thereby indicating that the stability of the government is still not founded on solid grounds, even after the 2004 elections. As noted by a senior professor at the Department of Political Science, the government may have decided to give in to domestic public pressure because for the government to have done otherwise could have given a reason for anti-government forces to unite, using Angelo dela Cruz, as a rallying point, and launch hostile actions against the government, which could have probably resulted in political and social instability. In this case, the decision to save Angelo dela Cruz was based not simply on the government's policy to protect overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) but on a more pragmatic consideration, the need for the Arroyo administration to survive against a coalition of anti-government forces.

It is true that the protection of the welfare of OFW's is one of the three pillars of the government's foreign policy, the other two being preservation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and pursuit of economic development. But protecting the welfare of our OFWs is not simply limited to saving the life of one person, particularly if such a decision could practically make other OFW's not only in the Middle East but in other places more susceptible or prone to being held hostage by militant groups that would want to get certain concessions from our government or from other governments.

The decision to pull the troops may not have been a totally wrong option for the government. The Philippines practically has not lost anything tangible yet as the benefits from being a part of the US "coalition of the willing" remains to be pledged, which are still to be realized, some argue. And the US appears not to have a very good record in fulfilling what it pledges. Take the case when the US bases were still in the Philippines. US compensation for its bases had a component called Economic Support Fund (ESF) in addition to the military assistance program and foreign military sales credit (FMS). For the period 1985-89, the US government pledged US\$475 million as ESF. But the actual amount approved by the US Congress and what was actually given to the Philippines was much less as this amount was merely a pledge by the US executive branch (Preeg 1991, 5-6).

The case of the Multilateral Aid Initiative (MAI) or the Philippine Aid Plan (PAP) is also another example. The MAI or PAP was a five-year mini-Marshall plan conceived by the US to help the Philippines in its economic recovery. The idea was for other nations to put together the amount of US\$10 billion for the Philippines (Solidum 1991, 195). Conceived in 1988, the program was to start in 1990. The US, for its part, originally pledged US\$200 million annually but it was reduced to US\$160 million in 1991 (Kraft 1993, 11). Of course, it could be claimed that the reduction was a consequence of the Philippines' decision not to extend the stay of the US bases in the Philippines, but this also illustrates that what is actually released is usually less than what is pledged.

The decision to pull the troops may not have been a totally wrong option for the government as it was wrong to send them in the first place, so some argue. But the circumstances surrounding the decision to pull them out, in my opinion, are not appropriate. We could have pulled out for some other reason. But to pullout simply because a group demands that the Philippines withdraw its troops otherwise a

hostage dies would not speak well of the government. It practically gives the impression of a government that decides to send troops, knowing too well the risks involved in making such a decision both to its troops and to its civilian nationals working abroad, and yet one that retreats when push comes to shove. This case has given the Philippines' partners abroad the reason to question or at the very least be skeptical of its reliability as a partner.

On a more positive note, the Angelo dela Cruz case showed that the Philippine government after all could withstand the pressure from its partners abroad including the all-too-powerful United States. And it is good to note that even for a brief period in our history as a people, the Philippine government reminded the Americans that the Philippines could still decide not in favor of the US. But the big challenge that confronts the Philippine government at this point is for how long and until when would it be able to withstand the pressures coming from the US and its partners. Would the Philippines be able to sustain and maintain what it now projects as an "independent foreign policy" anchored on its "national interest" that is solely driven by domestic considerations? It would be a sad development if after all is said and done, the Philippines once again decides to take the opposite track, just as it did when after deciding to let go of the bases in 1991, eventually decided to remain within US security umbrella and felt happy with whatever assistance the US could give. When that happens, we should no longer wonder why other countries would find it difficult to take the Philippines seriously.

ELLENE SANA (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR MIGRANT ADVOCACY-PHILIPPINES): Was the decision of President Arroyo indicative of a foreign policy that truly puts premium on the rights and welfare of our overseas Filipinos?

Yes, but apparently with a qualification and a context to it. As she said in her State of the Nation Address (SONA) very recently—that was last July 26—her government's highest priority is economic growth and job creation. With this assertion, to save the life of Angelo dela Cruz was merely incidental. Allow me to refresh your memory on the President's statements in the past regarding the withdrawal of the Philippine contingent from Iraq.

What she mentioned in her speech, "Why did I bring our Filipino troops back home from Iraq?" is actually premised on the fact that we have a different or special circumstance unlike the other members of

the “coalition of the willing.” That special circumstance is our eight million overseas Filipino workers—or about that figure is in the Middle East. About 4,000 Filipinos are currently in Iraq. In fact there is strong pressure on the POEA at the moment because of its recent announcement that there are actually 6,000 Filipinos wanting to go to Iraq despite the hostage-taking incident. Within the government and among groups dealing with the concerns of OFWs, there is a debate on whether to lift the ban now or to impose it for a while. “Why was Angelo dela Cruz saved? Because I stuck to my oath,” President Arroyo said.

As early as 2001, the President has been saying, “My declared foreign policy focus has been to protect the vital interest of the nation including our eight million overseas Filipinos.” In her SONA 2004 speech, she stressed the importance of overseas employment, “We need to create an economic opportunity at home and abroad.” She now uses the word “abroad.” She does not want one or the other. She wants both. Essentially, what she is implying is to generate jobs—remember, she promised six to ten million jobs in her SONA 2002—not only in the country, but also overseas. “At the end of my term, the question will no longer be whether we can compete but where else in the world shall we take undisputable competitive advantage.” That was what she said exactly. This statement is rather disturbing. It is as if she wants to disperse all of us to every corner of the world.

The Vice-President was appointed as Presidential Adviser for Overseas Filipino Workers and at the same time head of Overseas Workers’ Welfare Administration (OWWA) and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA). Why the Vice-President? Traditionally, the Vice-President is in charge of foreign relations or foreign policy. It is not surprising therefore that the Vice-President was appointed for these posts, because the subject of overseas Filipinos has also something to do with foreign relations and foreign policy. Furthermore, Vice-President de Castro is said to be populist.

At the same time, the other development is we were delisted from the “coalition of the willing” by the United States. That was actually what caused the tension between the US and the Philippines. That was quite unfortunate and, of course, it was brought about by the hostage-taking. Unfortunate because as early as June, when we presided over the United Nations Security Council, we adopted Resolution 1546. The US actually proposed this resolution, which states the plan for a complete and democratic turn-over of government to the Iraqi people.

The timetable indicates that by December of this year, preparations for an election are already in place. At the same time, the United Nations approved a reconstruction program for Iraq costing about 18 billion dollars. This was also initiated by the US. The main companies which were awarded and are currently sub-contracting and looking for workers are US corporations, such as Kellogg Brown and Root, which is identified with the Vice-President of the United States. So, there really are private interests in the reconstruction of Iraq. Given this, it is not shocking that despite the political instability in Iraq at present, the number of Filipinos applying for employment in Iraq increased.

Just to give you some facts on the breadth of overseas Filipinos in the whole world, in 2003 there was an estimated population of 7.76 million overseas Filipinos scattered in 192 countries and destinations. The Philippines is world's biggest sender of workers for overseas employment. Daily, more than 2,000 Filipinos are bound for different destinations. Annual departure is about 800,000. Actually the target is one million. Another alarming trend is that there is increased feminization of Philippine labor migration. Majority of workers who leave annually are women—73 percent in 2002. Usually, they are in the service sector—85 percent of them are domestic workers, “professionals,” which often turn out to be entertainers in Japan. Eighty six percent deployed nurses are women. We have the migrant workers, the irregular or undocumented workers, and the permanent residents and other Filipinos overseas. In terms of remittances, eight billion dollars through formal channels, double it to include those through informal channels, and you will have an idea of how much money is generated by labor migration.

The advocacy of migrant groups, not only in the Philippines but everywhere in the world, is for equal treatment and rights of all foreign nationals. In terms of protective mechanism for overseas Filipinos, we have four major legislations. One that was already mentioned by Dr. Baviera is Republic Act 8042 or the Magna Carta for OFWs which was passed hurriedly in 1995 because of the Flor Contemplacion incident. But, interestingly and I think this is a good record on the part of the current government, in 2003, three major legislations were passed—the Anti-Trafficking Law, Absentee-Voting Act and the Dual Citizenship Act. However, all of these laws are only applicable within the Philippine territory. Once you are outside the country, or outside its jurisdiction, protection is almost absent. That is why what Dr. Baviera mentioned earlier is very important. You need the international norms. So, we

have the UN Migrants' Workers Convention but, unfortunately, while it has been enforced since July this year, only labor-sending countries ratified it. We also have the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions. What is interesting about the ILO Conventions is that even the Philippine government has not ratified the ILO Conventions 97 (Migration for Employment Convention) and 143 (Migrant Workers' Convention) which we want the labor-receiving countries to accede to. That is what's ironic about the whole thing. We keep on reminding the labor-receiving countries of their obligations to our people and yet, we do not ratify the major ILO Conventions on Migrant Workers. We also have the bilateral labor agreements, which unfortunately we only have 12. Interestingly, we have an agreement with Iraq, which was forged in 1982. With the war on-going, I do not think you can enforce the bilateral labor agreement. But, for the record, Iraq was one of the countries which forged a bilateral labor agreement with the Philippines to protect our overseas Filipino workers.

The implementing agency with the foremost task of protecting overseas Filipinos is the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). Under the DFA, again, our concern is the protection of Filipinos when they are overseas. Remember, OFWs are scattered in 192 counties and destinations. But in terms of government's presence, we only have 61 embassies, 19 consulates, one extension office in Bonn, three Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) offices, and three permanent missions—Geneva, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) both in Geneva and in New York.

In addition, we have the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), which is also present in different embassies and consulates. The Office of the President is very much visible especially during crisis situations. We saw this during the Middle East crisis when we had the Middle East Preparedness Team. Recently, the Presidential Anti-Illegal Recruitment Task Force was created to go after the illegal recruiters. And of course, we have the immigration and deportation bureaus. So, these are the executive agencies which play prominent roles in the protection of our OFWs.

Based on Republic Act 8042, "The state does not promote overseas employment." But President Arroyo just mentioned in her SONA that she will advocate for jobs abroad as a means to sustain economic growth and achieve national development. It is also said in Republic Act 8042 that deployment of OFWs by local service contractors shall be encouraged and appropriate incentives may be

extended to them. Moreover, in the same law, there is a comprehensive deregulation plan on recruitment activities wherein migration will become strictly a matter between the worker and the employer. This of course is something that we oppose. A House Bill was already filed by *Akbayan* to strengthen the regulatory powers of the POEA.

What are we saying here? While we probably expect some shifts, there is still the challenge, the pressure to create justice not only here but also abroad. So, despite the situation in Iraq right now, jobless are still looking at it as a potential destination. The hostage-taking of Angelo dela Cruz was really unfortunate.

But anyhow, after all these events, we would want to see a foreign policy with a clear and comprehensive plan for OFWs. Their protection, as far as foreign policy is concerned, has become incidental. With more than eight million Filipinos living and working abroad, the exodus will continue. It is the constitutional obligation of the state to guarantee protection of its citizens wherever they are. Definitely, the conduct of foreign relations must be consistent with this obligation and commitment. Finally, it is to our national interest to take the lead in promoting world peace, stability and multilateralism.

HERBERT DOCENA (RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AND FOREIGN POLICY ANALYST, FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND MEMBER, GATHERING FOR PEACE-IRAQ SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN): In 1948, George Kennan, then a director of planning at the US State Department, wrote what has become a classic quote among foreign policy circles. “We have about 60 per cent of the world’s wealth but only 6.3 per cent of its population,” he said. Our real task in the coming period (will be) to maintain this position of disparity. We will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.”

These days, as we are forced to assess our country’s foreign policy in light of the Angelo dela Cruz episode, we should listen to Kennan: Let’s dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming. Now is the time for a clean break in our foreign policy and reviewing it requires nothing less than an honest and accurate assessment of the world we’re living in.

Refusing to be hampered by slogans, many foreign policy analysts and commentators around the world have been left with no choice—what with the invasion of Iraq—but to refer to the United States using

the “e”-word: “Empire.” Even in the United States, where most commentators have developed an allergy to the word, many people have now taken to openly talking about their country as an “Empire.” In fact, one of the most-talked-about books in the US these days is Niall Ferguson’s *Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire*. A professor of history at the New York University, Ferguson looks back in history and argues “not merely that the United States is an empire, but that it has always been an empire.”

The best way then for us to begin charting a new direction for our foreign policy is to come to terms with what we’re dealing with and not to see the world through ideological blinders. We can argue over the semantics and the nuances of the label. We can debate about the differences among the Roman, British, and American styles of empire. In talking to the press or in diplomatic circles, we can call it by other names. We can try to be polite and talk about “unilateralism” or “dominance” or “hegemony” even if we actually mean “imperialism.”

But in seriously rethinking our foreign policy, let us listen to Kennan and deal in straight power concepts: How else do we explain the actions of a superpower that, according to former State Secretary Madeleine Albright, will be “multilateral if we can but unilateral if we must;” that flouts international law and goes unpunished; that over the past century, according to the US Congressional Research Service, has engaged in over 200 military interventions abroad; that has a military presence in over 100 countries in order to, as the Pentagon itself puts it, “impose the will of the United States and its coalition partners on any adversaries.”

We live in a world in which a sole superpower does not hesitate to use its being the world’s sole superpower in order to remain as the world’s sole superpower. The United States is the strongest, most powerful empire in history—more powerful than both the Roman and British empires—and it does not hesitate to use its massive economic and military might to advance and defend its interests around the world. The first step in reexamining our foreign policy is to acknowledge this, to deny it is to conduct foreign policy in another planet. Whether we like it or not, our foreign policy will have to respond to this reality.

Angelo dela Cruz has merely forced us to confront the overarching question for our foreign policy yet again: Are we on the side of Empire? Or more precisely, should we continue to be on its side? This in turn leads us to the bigger question: Do we want to live in a world with Empire? And does being on the side of Empire help us in building that

world? Our answer to these questions determine the direction of our foreign policy.

On a pragmatic level, the cost of siding with the United States far outweighs the benefits. Sure, we get millions of dollars in military aid and trade concessions. But even NEDA Secretary Romulo Neri himself has admitted that the amount of aid we get from the US has been “overrated.” Professor Raymund Quilop of the Department of Political Science, UP Diliman, has confirmed that the war materials we get are hand-me-downs that the US needs to throw away anyway. Instead of making us more secure, our being a major non-NATO ally has only made us a target of reprisals as the enemies of the United States also become our own. If for every ten bombs we get from the United States, we also make ten new enemies determined to bomb us, does that make us secure?

Part of the “assistance” we get from USAID should be banned, not welcomed. This aid usually comes in the form of grants for projects that aim to transform our laws and institutions to become more favorable to US investors to the detriment of our economy. Remember the USAID-funded AGILE. Despite our much-vaunted special relationship with the US, our trading relationship with them remains unequal and unbalanced.

It is not only that the costs exceed the benefit but that the ones who get the benefits are not the same ones who bear the costs. The abduction of Angelo dela Cruz and our support for the invasion of Iraq is a case in point: in exchange for equipment for the military, reconstruction contracts for some Filipino businessmen, and support for Arroyo’s presidency, we endangered the lives of millions of our overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East. It is the businessmen who get their million-dollar contracts and the generals who get their guns—but it is the likes of Rodrigo Reyes, the forgotten Filipino driver killed in Iraq, who pay with their lives. The interests of the military, the interests of business, and the interests of the President should not be equated with the “national” interest.

But no matter what the benefits are, it is simply wrong to support the illegal and immoral actions of an Empire. We should not get the things we get from the US by helping it illegally invade another country. The price of the military aid we get from the US should not be the sovereignty of other people. It is precisely by being identified with the US’ aggressive and self-interested military aggressions and interventions in pursuit of empire-building that we become legitimate

targets of those branded as “terrorists.” By partaking in the invasion of Iraq in exchange for contracts, we lost the moral high ground, making it difficult for us to tell the “terrorists” that what they are doing is reprehensible. We cannot be an accomplice to an illegal war that has killed over 10,000 innocent civilians and preach compassion.

The foreign policy consensus is that it’s better to be on the side of Empire because it’s always better to be on the side of the powerful. We’re just a weak, impoverished country after all and the world out there is nasty, brutish, and short. We don’t like it that way and it could all be better but that’s just the way it is and let’s just get the most from it. We don’t necessarily approve of how the US runs the world and how it treats us but the alternative to not being on its side is so much worse.

The question, however, is this: If we really believe that as a country, we would really be much better off in a world without empire, then doesn’t our support for Empire perpetuate precisely the kind of world that we don’t want to live in? Empires don’t last without loyal vassals like us. The Empire needs us more than we need it.

George Kennan said their task is to maintain the disparity; ours therefore is to dislodge it. It was time we withdrew from the coalition occupying Iraq. It is also now time we abandon the Empire.

RETIRED AMBASSADOR NELSON LAVINIA: We should not have a mendicant foreign policy. We should not put ourselves in a compromising position, especially when it involves conflict between two countries; we should know what national interest is. I submitted a paper entitled “Angelo and Philippine Foreign Policy—A Post-Mortem” but I will just refer to some premises, assessment and conclusion. We all know what happened to Angelo dela Cruz. But why do we have a Philippine contingent in Iraq, in the first place? The United States military action is without UN consent. It is against the Constitution of the United Nations and the present norms of international law. It is an invasion, a naked act of aggression.

When we joined the “coalition of the willing”—incidentally we are more than willing—we expressed our approval even before we were asked, and that was wrong. It was a patent mistake. Our decision was against our primary interest. And so, because it was an act of aggression, the Philippines together with the United States, Australia, and other members of the coalition, are liable under international law for whatever consequences we have done to Iraq. One of the justifications

of the United States in going to Iraq is that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction. Iraq does not have WMDs. But even if Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction, without *casus belli* and without provocation, no attack is justified. The United States obviously invaded Iraq because of oil for itself and for Israel. It is for Israel because Iran, Libya and Iraq, which Bush calls the Axis of Evil, stand resolutely against Israel. And so, there is that unstated objective of the United States in going to Iraq. Now, the action of the Arroyo government in so far as Angelo is concerned, is justified. It pursued its foreign policy commendably. But going back to the original decision, we shouldn't have gone to Iraq. We shouldn't have joined the "coalition of the willing." The decision was against our primary interest.

What would be the foreign policy after Angelo? I think it has just to go back to *ante-Angelo*. We do not get so much from our relationship with the United States. We should not be guided by sentiment but by national interest. National interest is constant. It is the perception of those who execute it that needs refocusing. Sadly, in our system of government, it is the President alone who makes foreign policy and executes it. Congress only becomes relevant when we go to war and initiate action relating to foreign policy and to instigate debate thereon. The Senate merely concurs in the ratification by the President of treaties. It does not make treaties. What is now the step to be taken after Angelo? The main magnet for hostage-taking has been reduced but it has not been completely eliminated by the withdrawal of Philippine troops from Iraq. The recent announcement by the Department of Foreign Affairs that protection of contract workers is now the third pillar of Philippine foreign policy is very much welcome. It is only now, during the term of Secretary Delia Albert that the foreign policy postulating protection of Filipino contract workers is in effect. We need not join any coalition again. We had to withdraw from Mr. Bush's wars on terror because they only expose us to more dangers.

OPEN FORUM

RASTI DELIZO (SANLAKAS/GATHERING FOR PEACE-IRAQ SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN): What do you think of establishing a Philippine Foreign Policy Council with members from the executive and legislative branches of government, foreign policy think-tanks, the mass movement and cause-oriented groups, and anti-war and peace constituencies to craft a collective policy line, framework and decision on all issues relating to our foreign policy?

AILEEN BAVIERA: Foreign policy has a very wide range of activities. Sometimes it has to be crafted in response to crises such as the hostage-taking. In this case, you cannot afford to have a democratic consultation because every minute counts. You have to be decisive and have to have reliable advisers and analysts who certainly understand what is going on. But, I think, in general I agree with the principle being proposed here that we do have to democratize as I mentioned in my presentation. Opening up the foreign policy making process is two-way. It is not just government preventing people from giving their side or preventing stakeholders from participating. It's also stakeholders sometimes being hostile to government at the outset. In that case, the positions are polarized rather than coming into the process of seeking agreement or expressing different sides of a question. We do have a so-called Foreign Relations Council, which is not very active. There are associations of retired ambassadors, groups of policy analysts, and strategic study groups in the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP). All of these can participate or can try to influence the process. The bottom line is that the President is the one who decides. The DFA people are very often at a loss. They are just there to implement or to serve as apologists after a policy has already been decided and enunciated. Foreign policy formulation deserves some study now—what we can do to open up this process to bring in more dialogue and consultation with the stakeholders.

GILBERT ASUQUE: A policy has a shelf life. When the objective of the policy has been achieved, then it ceases to exist. In the case of the deployment of the Philippine humanitarian contingent to Iraq, the policy that brought about the sending of the team has ceased when the contingent returned to the Philippines. In cases such as those pertaining to the reports on re-sending troops to Iraq, any decision on that will have to be made at the highest levels possible. The President of the Philippines, in consultation with the Cabinet, will have to make that policy decision. It should be taken in the context that, of course, there may be circumstances in the future when we have to look on the situation again. And when we look into that situation, there are factors that we have to consider when making a decision presented to the Philippine government. Among the factors that we have to consider is UN Resolution 1546. The fact that there is a sovereign government in Iraq, that there is an election that will take place in December, with a promise of a fully elected government, it will have the sole prerogative

to determine the course and the direction of peace and order and reconstruction in that country. Now, those are the factors that we have to consider in crafting any decision on that matter. On the question of Foreign Policy Council, I do recall that during the time of Secretary Salvador Laurel there was a Foreign Relations Council. The chief architect of foreign policy is the President of the Republic of the Philippines. And as President, he determines how that foreign policy is crafted as well as the mechanism by which that policy is developed. But when he develops a foreign policy, he looks at various factors, circumstances, realities and norms. Finally, I would also like to take the discussion of the Angelo dela Cruz case further. The President was guided on deciding this issue by existing policies of the Philippine government, which is the Constitution. The Constitution says that the president, the government, is bound to protect the Filipino people. The Department of Foreign Affairs and, of course, the government will have to assist Filipinos in distress. So, the President of the Philippines was in fact implementing such policy.

RAYMUND QUILOP: I definitely agree with the idea that we need consultations with key stakeholders. In diplomacy, there is Track 3 wherein you involve the civil society sectors. I don't think that to really democratize the process down to the level of the individual would be pragmatic because there are certain considerations that we just have to leave it to our governmental leaders. But, of course, that brings in the question: Do we really trust our political leaders to create the appropriate foreign policy for us?

Regarding the creation of a Foreign Policy Council, I'm a little bit allergic to the creation of additional councils. I think it would just add up to the already all too bureaucratized government that we have. Why not act within the mechanism of the National Security Council? We tend to associate the National Security Council only with a crisis situation or with the traditional notion of security being associated with military threats. The Philippine government itself has already defined national security to practically include everything under the sun. You might as well utilize that mechanism, which is the National Security Council for consultations with key stakeholders.

NELSON LAVINIA: We believe that the wider the consultation, the better the formulation of foreign policy. Of course, it is up to the President to decide what will be the foreign policy depending on

national interest. But there is no harm in hearing the recommendations firstly from the Foreign Affairs, from Congress, and this Foreign Policy Council. But in crisis situations, the President has to decide.

RISA BARAQUEL: There are alternative models of security such as human and ecological security. It does not help to expand the concept of national security to encompass everything else because when you place other broader frameworks and squeeze it into the delimited framework of national security, then the dynamic of national security tends to co-opt. I really feel that whatever the mechanisms we might propose as far as our governmental apparatus is concerned—specifically the foreign policy apparatus of government, I hold that debate will continue within civil or uncivil society and various sectors of our society in dialogue with government.

RAYMUND QUILOP: I would agree that we still have the tendency to associate our national security with the military. Whenever we hear the word “security,” we usually tend to conjure the pictures of the armed forces. But the government itself has already defined “national security” as comprising several aspects and dimensions to include not only ecology, but also cultural aspects, the environment, political stability, economic development, and external peace among others. There is also now a new concept of “human security.” I think it is also equally important to recognize that national security should now be seen within the broader context of what we now call as “comprehensive security.”

HERBERT DOCENA: This has been increasingly cited as proof that the occupation in Iraq has ended and that, in fact, sovereignty is being transferred to the Iraqis. UN Resolution 1546 was crafted by the US and imposed by the US in negotiating with Iraqis headed by a certain group, not by a genuine representative. First, all of the 160,000 troops are staying in Iraq indefinitely. They will be headed by the US not the UN and they will be immune from legal prosecutions. Second, a Prime Minister the Iraqis did not choose heads the US-installed interim government in Iraq. A third feature of this resolution is that all of the laws that the coalition authorities enacted in Iraq during the occupation will stay on, including the privatization of Iraq’s massive state-owned industries. The interim government could not overturn everything that the US has put in place in Iraq as a legal framework. The Iraqis were

not part of this UN Resolution, which deals with their own country. What the Iraqis really want is not encapsulated in this resolution. According to a survey we conducted and published in *Newsweek*, 80 percent of the Iraqis want the occupation to end. They want all the multi-national forces in Iraq to leave. I think that we shouldn't invoke this resolution to say that the occupation has ended and that we are in fact being invited by the Iraqis. Because until now, the Iraqis don't want coalition forces, whether they be from the US or from the Philippines, to be in their own country.

ELLENE SANA: If we are saying now that we should not follow the UN Resolution 1546, then what framework are we going to use in interpreting the Philippine government's justification for going to Iraq under the UN flag?

EDWIN BUSTILLOS (ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR): I would like to broaden the scope of discussion on foreign policy, not only in light of the post-Angelo dela Cruz case. It would be better for government, civil society and other social movements to examine our policies. The increasing outflow of workers can be attributed to the government's skewed policies on employment generation in the country. Examples are bilateral labor agreements that the government has entered into. We should focus on what our national interest is as a nation because this should serve as an anchor of our foreign policy. In the same way, our relations with other countries will not truly represent our national interest.

GILBERT ASUQUE: The Philippine contingent in Iraq is not a military force, although they are soldiers from the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces. They are there not to participate as combatants but to help in the reconstruction of Iraq. The participation of the Philippines in the rebuilding and the peace-keeping efforts should be taken in its own context. The Philippines has a much wider program on combating terrorism.

NELSON LAVINIA: This war on terror of the "coalition of the willing" is not really needed. They just need international support. We reject the notion that Iraq has terrorists. It is the "coalition of the willing," which is terrorizing the Iraqis.

JOEL MANGAHAS (COLLEGE SECRETARY, NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE): I guess I'd like to thank all the panel members, students and stakeholders who have graced this occasion. The discussions have been quite enlightening and informative. We know for a fact that even if we're discussing foreign policy, foreign policy could not be isolated with the rest of our concerns such as social security, economic development and even labor concerns. The challenge here is to define what the next steps are, how we take this dialogue forward and translate them into concrete actions. ❁

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