

The Decision-Making Process on the Withdrawal of American Military Forces from the Philippines

Samuel C.Y. Ku

Abstract

American military forces had stationed in the Philippines for nearly one century. When the Cold War ended, the U.S. government still decided to maintain her military forces in the Philippines, for the Bush administration contended that America's continual stationing in the archipelago was helpful not only for the protection of U.S. interest in the West Pacific but also for a stable political order there. Likewise, President Aquino maintained that the Philippines still needed America's political support and economic resources brought by U.S. military forces.

However, both the Philippines and the U.S. had voices against the continuity of American Forces in the Philippines. As for the Filipinos, the opposition was represented by the Senate and the nationalists. Their arguments encompassed the political, economic and social aspects. The opposition in the U.S. mainly focused on economic consideration. Secretary of State James Baker was thinking to readjust America's Asian policy based on a multi-national security network instead of the present bilateral security ties.

Yet, when the explosion of Mt. Pinatubo seriously damaged the two military bases, since the repair of which would cost more than US \$2 billion dollars, the U.S. then determined to withdraw all military forces from the Philippines. The author argues that the natural disaster played a major role in changing the U.S. policy in such a short period of time.