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# Bombs For Bataan

The irrational and horrifying concept of "limited nuclear war" now being promoted by the Reagan administration cannot be divorced from the historic position of the US corporate empire at this time. It is an empire in decline. Its economic and political influence waning, it turns to the ultimate weapon of terror, nuclear war, in a blind and desperate attempt to redress the balance and preserve US commercial and military superiority. And the US military-industrial complex appears to be willing to risk the lives of the Filipino people (and everybody else's, for that matter), for this ignoble cause.

The policy of "limited nuclear war" has special relevance for the peoples of the Third World. The record shows that since Hiroshima, the US government has considered the use of nuclear weapons some seven times. Six of these seven occasions have had to do with the Third World, only one with Europe.

The Reagan administration plans to use the Philippines as a pivot or support point for theater nuclear war in two of the three areas projected for such a war: the Mideast and Northeast Asia. The Philippines harbors US nuclear installations important both to these ventures and to a first strike against the Soviet Union.

At the US naval base at Subic Bay, for example, nuclear-armed Polaris submarines—first strike weapons—are hidden in bomb-proof caverns dug into the Zambales mountains. The nearby San Miguel communications center is said to control the movements of these submarines in the Indian Ocean up to the Persian Gulf. The USS Steret, a guided missile cruiser and flagship of the Seventh Fleet, puts up at Subic Base, as does the nuclear-armed aircraft carrier *Midway*. Subic Base would be a jumping off point for US Marines spearheading a Rapid Deployment Force incursion into the Mideast. Such marines, now based in Japan, are trained in the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Clark Air Field, while serving as an air supply source for Subic Base, is also home for the Third Tactical Fighter Wing and its nuclear-capable F4E fighter planes. Clark served as a support base for the first Korean War, so it is likely that these Clark-based fighters would be used in any future nuclear war in Korea. Last August, a joint exercise in Northeast Asia was held by the US Air Force and the Japanese Self Defense Corps. Eight F4Es from Clark took part in these exercises. Subic itself would be involved in any regional nuclear conflict because it provides logistics support for the Seventh Fleet, which has operational responsibility for the region.

Should a theater nuclear war in the Mideast or Asia erupt into a general nuclear exchange be-

tween the United States and the Soviet Union (as is entirely possible), US nuclear installations at Clark, San Miguel and Subic would drag the Philippines in with disastrous results. Philippine Senator Lorenzo Tanada, speaking at the World Assembly of Religious Workers for General and Nuclear Disarmament, held in Tokyo in April 1981, described what would happen in such a situation as a result of US nuclear installations at Clark and Subic:

*Once war is declared between America and another nuclear power, these bases would be the first targets of attack, and you who have studied nuclear wars know of their horrible consequences. Millions of Filipinos will be killed like ants, many more will die of cancer and leukemia and vast fertile lands in Luzon, where these unwanted bases are located, will become veritable wastelands—uninhabitable due to widespread contamination of the air we breathe, the food we take and the water we drink. Manila, which is less than 60 air miles from said bases, will not escape this national disaster unprecedented in the history of the country.*

The outstanding Filipino nationalist, Senator Claro M. Recto, spoke against allowing the United States to establish missile sites in the Philippines in the 1950s, saying that any such agreement "signed away the lives of our people without previously asking them if they were willing to commit suicide." Recto's words gather even greater force when applied to existing US nuclear installations in the Philippines today. The *Manila Times Journal* reported on August 12, 1981, that as a result of a 1979 agreement, "The US can now stock as many nuclear missiles in Clark and Subic as it wants, so long as the stocking is done silently and discreetly."

Those of us who came from the United States to the Philippines by way of Japan and the 1981 World Conference Against A and H Bombs, were heartened to learn that a broad coalition to rid the Philippines of US nuclear weapons, bases and the Westinghouse nuclear power plant is being built today, the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition. And the Philippines and Japan are not the only countries plagued with US nuclear installations. Countries like south Korea, Australia, Guam and Palau are also concerned. The strength of each national antinuclear movement would be increased by cooperation with the others, in an overall and unified move to rid the Pacific of nuclear weapons and nuclear plants. Herein lies the promise of the movement for a Nuclear Free Pacific.

—Boone Schirmer,  
Friends of the Filipino People