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LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR AND U. S. BASES IN THE PHILIPPINES.

On June 17, 1980, the Friends of the Filipino People presented a paper to the UN NGO Conference on Disarmament stating that U. S. bases in the Philippines contravened the principles having to do with national sovereignty, military intervention, and nuclear arms put forward by the Final Document of the 1978 UN Special Session on Disarmament. The Friends of the Filipino People declared that U. S. bases by their very nature and existence undermined Philippine national sovereignty, that they constituted launching pads for U. S. military intervention in the affairs of other nations, as in Vietnam; and that they served as storage depots for U. S. nuclear arms and weapons.

The present paper will serve to reaffirm these assertions for the Friends of the Filipino People. At the same time it will focus on a new feature of the present international situation that places these bases in even more pronounced opposition to the principles of disarmament enunciated by the 1978 Special Session.

Admiral Gene La Rocque (ret.) of the Washington, D. C. Center for Defense Information drew attention to the new state of affairs when he wrote the New Republic of May 30, 1981, "The Pentagon is planning for nuclear war, training its troops for nuclear war, and arming for nuclear war. Anyone who still believes that we are not planning, training, and arming to fight a nuclear war probably still believes in the tooth fairy."

Bearing this out, the General Accounting Office of the U. S. government made a report to Congress on August 5, 1981, the eve of the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. This report declared that the doctrine of countervailing strategy was current government policy, and that "countervailing strategy requires that strategic forces now have a clearly evident capability to fight a limited nuclear war as well as ensure large-scale retaliation." In its account of this report the next day the New York Times described countervailing strategy as "formulated by the Carter Administration and adopted by the Reagan Administration." In Tokyo on August 7 the English-language Japan Times wrote that the GAO report signalled the fact that "U. S. strategy had changed from one of 'mutually assured destruction' to one that includes limited nuclear exchanges."

The Reagan Administration's adoption of limited nuclear war as U. S. policy has important repercussions for U. S. bases in the Philippines. In the mid '70s Secretary of Defense Schlesinger predicated the Korean peninsula as an area for possible U. S. limited nuclear war; since the fall of the Shah of Iran U. S. officials more than once have mentioned the Mideast as a site for such war; the Defense Department has made clear such intentions for Western Europe in the discussion of the neutron bomb. Such plans affect U. S. bases in the Philippines because these bases would be important pivots or support points for U. S. limited nuclear war in two of the three areas so projected: the Korean peninsula and the Mideast. U. S. nuclear-armed Polaris submarines that reach the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf are berthed in Subic Naval Base in the Philippines and are directed in their operations from the related San Miguel Communications Center. U. S. Marine units stationed at U. S. bases in Japan and trained in nuclear weaponry would be the spearhead of a Rapid Deployment Force taking off for the Mideast from Subic Base. U. S. nuclear-capable F4E planes are located at Clark Air Base in the

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Philippines and are slated for use in a Korean conflict. Subic Base would support the 7th Fleet in operations relating to a Korean war.

Many authorities, including former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, believe that limited nuclear war runs a grave risk of escalation to full-fledged nuclear exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. An outstanding Filipino leader, Senator Lorenzo Tanada, speaking at the World Assembly of Religious Workers for General and Nuclear Disarmament in Tokyo April 1981, described what would happen to Subic Naval Base, Clark Air Field, and the Philippines in case of such a confrontation:

Once war is declared between America and another nuclear power, those bases will 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 the vast fertile lands of Luzon where these unwanted bases are located will become veritable waste-land due to widespread contamination of the air we breathe, the food we take, and the water we drink. Manila which is less than sixty miles from said bases will not escape this national disaster unprecedented in the history of our country.

The above material will make clear, we believe, why the policy of limited nuclear war now evidently adopted by the Reagan Administration compounds the contradiction between U. S. bases in the Philippines and the principles of disarmament laid down by the UN Special Session in 1978. Limited nuclear war brings within view an unprecedented national disaster for the Philippines, a dreadful blow to that country's sovereignty, its very survival; it carries the policy of Philippine-based U. S. military intervention in other countries to its extreme; and it magnifies the danger to peace represented by the U. S. nuclear arms and weapons stored on the bases in the Philippines.

It is for these reasons that we believe that U. S. bases and nuclear weapons in the Philippines are more than ever a proper subject for discussion preparatory to the Second Special Session of the UN on Disarmament.

Friends of the Filipino People
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