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# NEW AMBASSADOR TO THE PHILIPPINES?

by Dr. Daniel B. Schirmer

## Boston NCRCLP

Two months ago President Nixon nominated William H. Sullivan, former ambassador to Laos, as ambassador to the Philippines. Last May 10, Sullivan testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at a hearing on his nomination. Although scheduled to act in the near future, the Committee has so far hesitated reportedly reluctant to appoint Sullivan because of his identification with previous policies. Their hesitation is understandable.

## "VIETNAM VETERAN"

For Sullivan is one of the original architects of the Vietnam War. As head of the "Vietnam Working Group," he advocated the bombing of North Vietnam in the winter of 1963-64 before President Lyndon Johnson was ready for such an action. Instead Sullivan went to Laos. There as ambassador, he began the bombing that was to turn Laos into the world's most heavily bombed country. "It took all my time" Sullivan said later.

The bombing was doubly illegal: it subverted the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos, and contravened the Constitutional restrictions on war-making powers, since it was without Congressional authorization. Therefore, Sullivan had to carry it out on the sly. The air force men who programmed bombing reported to work in white shirts and business suits, posing as A.I.D. employees; they were to avoid visiting Congressmen, and fraternization with journalists was punishable by court martial.

## PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY

Eventually, the bombing became public knowledge. Questioned in 1969 by a Senate subcommittee as to its legal base Sullivan offered "the executive authority of the President." Pressed by Senator Symington, "Are you saying that the President has the right to put U.S. military troops in airplanes over a foreign country ... and direct the bombing of that country?" Sullivan replied, "Yes, sir." (In the same vein, Sullivan recently declared the legal justification for the bombing of Cambodia to be the re-election of President Nixon.

Responding to members of the 1969 subcommittee who queried the political justification for the Laotian bombing, Sullivan asked it was fair to be "singling out Laos," be taking Laos "out of con-

text of the extension of American interests and American presence in all of this area."

Whereas American interests in Indo-China were largely of potential significance, in the Philippines they are represented by an actual investment of over one billion dollars. Since, moreover, the Marcos martial law regime has quite openly identified itself with U.S. investors, and, since that regime is under threat from popular unrest and guerilla warfare, questions naturally arise as to the possibility of Sullivan's behaving in the Philippines as he did in Laos and Vietnam. These questions evidently bothered some members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on May 10, and Sullivan's answers were not re-assuring.

## MINDANAO: WOUNDED KNEE?

When for example, Chairman Fulbright asked him if he, as ambassador, would have the responsibility to issue orders to "U.S. military and civilian personnel in the Philippines...to advise or accompany Philippine Constabulary or para-military personnel on counter-insurgency or other operations," Sullivan replied that it would probably be his responsibility, "in consultation with the Department of State and the President."

To Sullivan, this ambassadorial responsibility would clearly be an extension of what he considers to be the Presidential prerogative. When asked by Fulbright whether the United States would intervene with troops, if requested to do so by Marcos under the SEATO treaty, Sullivan replied, "I think that depends on the decision of the President of the United States.

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... the army is using leftovers of the Vietnam war. Recently it received emergency supplies of helicopter gunships and armored personnel carriers, as well as other arms and ammunition. The U.S. Embassy in Manila explains that while the United States is not giving any unscheduled supplies, its deliveries have become "more prompt." The Philippine Air Force is using F-86 Sabre jets with fragmentation bombs for selective strafing and shelling of rebel positions. It has been accused of being "heavy-handed" in destroying a lot of property to no strategic advantage. . . ."

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[PHOTO]

## WILLIAM H. SULLIVAN

Formerly ambassador to Laos, he is Nixon's appointee to replace Henry Byroade, present ambassador to the Philippines

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He has the constitutional authority to make that decision."

Telling the Senators that Marcos felt capable of taking care of the insurgencies with his own forces, Sullivan went so far as to compare the situation in Mindanao with that at Wounded Knee. (Two days after Sullivan's testimony, however, Marcos ordered the first draft in Philippine history, "to provide," he said, "additional soldiers to deal with Moslem rebellion in the southern Philippines and with an insurgency north and immediately south of Manila.") As he sought his new post Sullivan very obviously played down the insurgency in the Philippines; thus a war—warly Senate is not aroused.

## WAR EXPERT

William H. Sullivan is a self-acknowledged champion of the executive usurpation of Congressional powers, in their ultimate, war-making capacity. In Laos, as ambassador, he directed all the military and intelligence operations of the U.S. government. Due to his experience there and in Vietnam, he has become the United States' foremost expert on counter-insurgency warfare in Southeast Asia. His public record in word and deed indicates that he would have no qualms about the commitment of the U.S. air force and ground troops to counter-insurgency operations in the Philippines, were he sent there as ambassador. The Senate would be wise to reject his nomination. The United States cannot afford another Vietnam.

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