

A much underestimated factor, which Dr Leifer does not fully address, is the kind of impact that the ASEAN diplomatic success in the last decade has had on member-states. Dr Leifer acknowledges that ASEAN's standing in the international community has been greatly enhanced as a result of successfully mobilizing diplomatic opposition to Vietnam at the United Nations and other international forums. The best compliment for ASEAN, in fact, comes from the Soviet Union. While in the past it had derided ASEAN for being a tool of U.S. imperialism, the Soviet Union now seeks to be one of ASEAN's dialogue partners. Surely, there are benefits that can accrue to member-states with the enhancement of ASEAN's status in the world community. Early in 1989, Malaysia won a non-permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, while Singapore secured a place on the important U.N. Committee on Contributions. While these could have been due to the excellent lobbying efforts made by the two countries, one cannot dismiss the proposition that their diplomatic successes owe something to the respect other countries have for ASEAN and its constituent members. If ASEAN is reckoned to be more than just a vehicle for enhancing members' security through political co-operation, it would be foolish of them to allow ASEAN to revert to the pre-Cambodian conflict working arrangements through neglect or members' preoccupation with other ventures such as Thailand's proposed pursuit of the *Suwanabhum* or Golden Peninsula concept.

Though Dr Leifer has not explored such ideas here, he has written an immensely informative book on ASEAN's perception of security in Southeast Asia, particularly on the arguments that went into the making of ASEAN's stand on Cambodia. Unfortunately, the book may not appeal to the general reader because of the ponderous language.

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Regime Change in the Philippines: The Legitimation of the Aquino Government. Edited by Mark Turner. Political and Social Change Monograph 7. Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 1987. Bibliography, Index, vii, 154 pp. ISBN 0-7315-0140-3

In reviewing a book concerning contemporary political affairs eighteen months after the book is published, it would be somewhat unfair to the

authors to examine it in the light of subsequent events. In fact, the temptation to second-guess the authors of the pieces in this book did not often arise. This is a tribute to the fact that they were able to offer some wider perspectives derived from academic literature for contemporary events, as recorded in the mass media. Three of the four essays are studded with references to the Philippine press, focusing on the February 1986 snap presidential elections, the February 1987 constitutional plebiscite, and the May 1987 congressional elections. The fourth essay concerns women's issues and the 1987 Constitution, and does not rely much on media accounts of current events. It alone disappoints.

Anne Mackenzie leads off with "People Power or Palace Coup: The Fall of Marcos". After chronicling events from the early 1980s through the "snap" presidential election of 1986 and the change of regime, she goes on to arrive at several conclusions (all of which I respect). First, although the 1986 presidential election seemed like a "demonstration" election similar to those sponsored by the United States in Central America, and although the peaceful conclusion to the EDSA (Epifania de los Santos Avenue) events certainly were favourable to U.S. interests, "there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the U.S. played anything more than a secondary role in the course of events" (p. 34). Secondly, she argues that EDSA was not a military coup led by the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) officers around Defence Minister Enrile — although here it is not entirely clear whether her conclusion rests on the lack of "elements" of a coup as offered in a definition drawn from literature about the military in politics, or on the empirical fact that the officers were rescued by crowds of civilians. The latter interpretation would be bolstered by her treatment of "People's Power" as the end result of church-sponsored non-violent usage of "political *jiu-jitsu*". Here, her use of related literature is more deft than on the coup question. For instance, she argues that with a non-violent response:

The oppressor is exposed in the worst possible light. This often results in outrage. . . amongst uncommitted third parties, the opponents' supporters, and those already sympathetic to the grievance group (p. 46).

In this atmosphere, the response of so many to Cardinal Sin's appeal to join at EDSA was natural.

Finally, utilizing Tilly's idea of "multiple sovereignty", Mackenzie classifies the February 1986 events as a "political revolution", since there was clearly a breakdown in Marcos' claim to exclusive sovereignty, the breakdown of which was followed by a transfer of power. Still, she does agree with most observers when she says that "In the long-term structural

sense, the struggle of February 1986 cannot presently be called revolutionary. . . ." (p. 51).

The next chapter is Mark Turner's "The Quest for Political Legitimacy in the Philippines: The Constitutional Plebiscite of 1987". He presents "constitutionality as a leading element of political legitimacy in the Philippines" (p. 62), making imperative the drafting of a new constitution. After discussing the appointment and deliberation of the Constitutional Commission, he describes the February 1987 plebiscite campaign, featuring some strange bedfellows (Marcos "loyalists" and Leftists) campaigning for a "no" vote against a popular president campaigning for a "yes". He includes the important observation that local élites were reluctant to campaign against the constitution, since the constitution's defeat would have postponed the elections desired by them. In the end, the constitution won everywhere except in the two regions of northern Luzon, Marcos' Ilocos and Enrile's Cagayan Valley. "With her overwhelming plebiscite victory, President Aquino, had, in less than one year, succeeded in her quest for legitimacy" (p. 95).

When assessing Turner's argument we encounter the limitations of the method employed in this book — placing journalistic accounts into broader perspective. "Legitimacy" is variously defined by Turner as "a belief in the obedience-worthiness of" the rule of a government (p. 59, quoting S. White), or "the popular acceptance of political institutions as both lawful and moral" (p. 67, quoting J. Abueva). Reliance is placed on what persons believe, and journalistic accounts of what ordinary citizens believe can be wildly inaccurate. For instance, Turner makes the statement that the provision in the constitution regarding Aquino's term "commanded the most attention" (p. 96). While this is possibly true in terms of column-inches, a sample survey in Baguio City found that much more attention was paid by the average citizen to the provision on "free education". The point is that, given a definition of "legitimacy" that relies on mass opinions, lack of data on such opinions is a distinct limitation. We cannot assess the importance of the constitution's ratification in the Aquino government's legitimation. Note that this comment points to the need for further research, rather than a criticism of what Turner has accomplished.

A shorter account (only one-half the length of the pieces by Mackenzie and Turner) is Alan Robson's "The 1987 Congressional Elections in the Philippines: Context, Conduct and Outcome". Robson manages briefly to characterize the four main coalitions which ran candidates for the nationally-elected Senate, and to convey the confusion at the district level caused by the proliferation of candidates (many claiming to be administration backers) for the locally-elected House of Representatives.

When discussing the conduct of the polls, he includes the intervention of the Church (Cardinal Sin's endorsement of certain administration candidates for the Senate) and the suspicious circumstances surrounding the defeat by the left-most administration candidate, former Labour Minister Sanchez.

In his wrap-up of the results, Robson first emphasizes victory by pro-Aquino forces in both the Senate (22 of 24 seats) and the House (136 of 190 declared winners at the time of his writing). (With hindsight, it would seem that the House has proved more receptive to Aquino's leadership than has the Senate.) He also tries to assess the durability of opposition coalitions to Aquino, stating that the threat of Right opposition is undercut by a lack of organization at the same time that it is bolstered by the threat of a coalition between civilian rightists and military dissidents. He feels that the Left opposition will be more durable, since this is based on ideological commitment by its members. He raises the question of the extent to which the Left opposition can indeed be expressed within the legal arena.

By far the weakest piece is Marian Simms' "Women, Women's Issues and the 1987 Constitution in the Philippines". It offers a brief discussion on feminist politics and women's groups, focusing on GABRIELA as the "best known women's organization outside the Philippines" (p. 104), and of women-related debates in the Constitutional Commission. At the end of the piece is a table with some basic data (position, age, marital status, class and occupation, past political involvements) of the seventeen top women in the Aquino administration. Discussion of these data is limited to two paragraphs.

Women's issues are important in the Philippine context, and deserve better treatment than this. For example, after examining differences between "traditionalists and non-traditionalists . . . over the so-called 'right to life issue'" (p. 105) she states "it is necessary to avoid categorizing feminist debate in the Philippines in Western terms" (p. 106). What she means, when she repeats that "Debates over women's issues in the Philippines do not fit neatly into Western categories" (p. 107) is that prominent anti-Marcos women who otherwise supported women's organizations are opposed to artificial family planning methods and abortion. To state it thus is surely to use Western categories. And, if we are not to use these categories, what shall we use?

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