

INTRODUCTION

The papers included in this collection were presented on the first day of a two-day (September 16-17, 1992) roundtable discussion on "Perspectives on Philippine Policy Towards China". Co-organized by the North Asia Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies, the roundtable was attended by representatives of the association, government officials from a wide range of agencies and private sector representatives engaged in trade with China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Undersecretary Rodolfo S. Severino, in his opening remarks, set the tone for the roundtable discussion by identifying issues to be addressed by Philippine policy makers. He pointed out the timeliness of the event in view of the significant changes taking place in China and in the international arena, not to mention the inauguration of a new administration in the Philippines. In the conceptualization of the roundtable, the choice of topics had been dictated by the desire to present various aspects of the Philippines' relations with China in the context of the current regional and international situation as well as the announced foreign policy objectives of the new administration of President Fidel V. Ramos. There is now, it appears, a more serious commitment to pursue a foreign policy that would enhance not only the sovereignty of the nation and its international standing, but also that would promote the economic recovery and growth of a weak Philippine economy.

The papers presented here touch on a vast array of topics pertinent to the formulation, or reformulation, of the Philippines' China policy. Needless to say, that policy must now also necessarily look at relations with Taiwan (in view of its tremendous economic development) and Hong Kong (in the light of its impending unification with China). Benito Lim, in his paper "China and Regional Security: Implications for Philippine Policy", provides a comprehensive background on developments in China (since the establishment of Philippine-China diplomatic ties in 1975) which should serve as a

take-off point for Philippine policy towards China looking forward to the coming century. He points out the crucial and significant changes in the domestic situation in China and in the international world order that would affect the role China envisions for herself in the region and in the world at large.

Aileen Baviera's paper on "China's New Role in Asia" refers to China's "productive diplomacy" and China's role in "the light of increasing interdependence and linkages among the economies of Asia." Complimenting some of the points raised by Benito Lim, the paper foresees an increasing role for China in the region and a commitment to enhance that role through continuing reform and economic progress which would, undoubtedly, contribute towards peace, stability and development in the region.

Theresa Cariño's paper, "China's Economic Development: Implications for the Philippines", highlights the tremendous economic growth taking place in China today, especially in the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, mainly as a result of China's "open door" economic policy and the strategy of decentralization of the management of the provincial economy. Special attention is called to the need for the Philippines to reexamine some of the structures and regulations that still govern Philippine-China trade relations and suggestions are made to look at China as a potential market for Philippine exports, especially food products, and as a source of investments in the Philippines. The Philippines could profit, she proposes, from the Chinese strategy of linking up agriculture and industry and in the process, inducing economic growth especially in the countryside.

The two papers on Taiwan – Julius Parreñas on "Taiwan's Economy: Short and Long-term Projections" and Willy Laohoo on "PRC-Taiwan Relations: Current Trends and Future Direction" – focus on the very important Taiwan issue in the Philippines' relations with China. Parreñas gives a concise presentation of Taiwan's economic development, a factor which will influence Philippine relations with China because of the need of the Philippines to source capital for investment and economic recovery. Willy Laohoo presents the possible scenarios in assessing the prospects for reunification between China and Taiwan. He paints a rather positive picture in view of what he considers to be significant political and economic developments in both countries which could facilitate the resolution of this ticklish and complex issue.

The paper by Segundo Romero points out the continuities and discontinuities which have governed the structure of Philippine foreign policy. He presents briefly the contours of our political and

economic life which have influenced our foreign policy decisions, especially with reference to China and Taiwan. He suggests a review of our China policy, taking into consideration not only the substantive merits (and demerits) of the policy but the current "participatory process" seemingly operating these days in the formulation of our foreign policy. He believes that there is need for more responsible command or control of the policy-making process if the country is to avoid a "muddled" policy on China.

Obviously, the papers collected here do not reflect official thinking or policy on China. At most they serve as suggestions and contributions to what we all hope will be a more responsible and responsive process on the part of policy makers in the shaping of foreign policy. Given the monumental changes that are taking place in the region, in China and globally, there is a growing imperative for the formulation of basic principles that hopefully will guide the actual conduct of relations with the People's Republic of China and Taiwan and avoid the pitfalls of the past. Beyond policy guidelines, the challenge confronting the new administration is the need to address problems of policy consistency and coordination between branches and departments of government so that foreign policy will not be a confused and confusing cacophony of discordant voices.

With regard to policy on China, we hope that the work of the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies has been and will continue to be positive contributions towards the development of mutually beneficial relations between China and the Philippines. The association, which was established in 1987, has been organizing conferences, seminars and published books towards this end. We are grateful to Mr. Virgilio Reyes, Director of the North Asia Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs for the opportunity of co-organizing the roundtable that generated this collection of papers.

We would like to express our appreciation to the contributors and to other members of PACS who have made it possible to publish this volume of the PACS Journal. Special acknowledgments go to Willy Laohoo and Marivic Babiano, staff members of the Philippine-China Development Resource Center, as well as the KAISA for their very valuable assistance in bringing this book to press. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Chinese Studies Program of De La Salle University in helping to defray the costs of printing.

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Co-editors

Manila
November 11, 1993