President Ferdinand Marcos managed to effectively meet the primary goals of Philippine foreign policy during his presidency. As he swiftly responded to the international realities of his time, he carried out diplomatic measures to respond to the challenges confronting the Republic of the Philippines in this regard. Foreign Affairs Secretary Benjamin Domingo said:

To review the thoughts, actions and performance of President Marcos, is first to inquire into the political, economic, and social landscape as well as the environment of his time.¹

Prior to the declaration of martial law, Marcos made several key decisions that could impact the course of Philippine diplomatic history, among them the creation of ASEAN in 1967, dispatch of engineering battalions to South Vietnam,² and the expansion of Philippine-Asian relations, particularly with the socialist countries.

In the mid-1970s, there had been dramatic changes in the regional and global configuration. In Europe, these were seen in the restoration of the monarchial rule in Spain, revolutions in Portugal, and the rise of the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and Red Brigade which influenced dissident groups to sow terror in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and West Germany.

Within the African continent, the inception of civil wars in Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia, Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea caused much destruction and loss of lives.

Asia, in particular, was not spared from international upheavals and development as seen in ensuing battle between North and South Vietnam; the admission of the People’s Republic of China into the United Nations in 1971; the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1978; the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971; the border war between North and South Yemen; the Islamic Revolution in Iran; the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In view of these developments, President Marcos had to respond with a pragmatic reorientation of the country’s foreign policy to promote its own national interest. Years back, for its survival, Senator Claro M. Recto had said:
It is pathetic that over a decade our domestic policy has been subordinated to our foreign policy, or what passes for that, with our dealings with other countries… We must reverse this course, if the nation is to survive, by subordinating the foreign to domestic policy, by freeing ourselves from foreign dictation, by maintaining trade relations with any country irrespective of its ideologies, political institutions, and form of government, whenever such relations would prove beneficial to us. By industrializing with our own capital, generated from our savings and supplemented by foreign loans.\textsuperscript{3}

Interestingly, President Marcos’ foreign policy thrust echoed the view.

We seek a policy of mutual accommodation. We seek friendship with all countries of the world regardless of race, creed, ideology and social system, and we promote as much relations with them in all fields of activities. We establish friendly relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect for each other’s national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and the principle of non-interference in each other’s internal affairs. We seek to widen our relations with any country regardless of ideology to promote development and progress for mutual benefit, and the same time enhance our physical security.\textsuperscript{4}

The Cold War between the United States and the USSR has been challenged with the rise of economic powers such as the European Economic Community and Japan. These developments coincided with the changes in the international system when the bipolar world was being transformed into a multipolar one.\textsuperscript{5}

The global influence of the US and the USSR weakened as certain events took place such as the Vietnam War, the Sino-Soviet Conflict, and the rise of Japan and the European Economic Community as potential new sources of economic relations.

I. Communism in the Asia Pacific Region in the 1970s: Sparkplug of Crafting a Realistic Outlook In Philippine Foreign Policy

Aware of the political and ideological upheaval affecting Asia after World War II, Marcos remarked:

Post-war Asia is a continent in turmoil. The political upheavals that brought about independent statehoods in Asia left a trail of violence, discord and bitterness. Aggravating this is the confrontation of the super-powers which has drawn Asians, still weak with their newly won freedom, into the vortex of the cold war. Today, communism’s maneuvers and power plays press upon us, with even greater relentlessness than those of the western powers it has displaced.\textsuperscript{6}
The spread of communism in the Asian continent was unprecedented. After the Bolsheviks imposed a communist government under the Soviet Union in 1917, Mongolia soon followed in 1924 to become the Mongolian People’s Republic. From 1924 on, its policies echoed those of its patron and protector, the USSR. The Korean Peninsula was so convulsed with ideological conflict that after World War II, it was divided in 1948, with North Korea proclaiming itself a communist Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and South Korea became the Republic of Korea. In 1949 the communist armies under Mao Zedong seized power in Beijing and proclaimed the People’s Republic of China. In 1954, Vietnam was ideologically partitioned at the 17th parallel.

In 1975, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were overrun by Communist forces. This led President Marcos recognize the urgency of establishing diplomatic ties with communist countries, particularly the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, to prevent antagonizing these powers. Moreover, the establishment of diplomatic relations with the socialist states was prompted by global realities and the country’s economic development. President Ferdinand Marcos said:

The establishment of diplomatic relations with Socialist countries was based on a hard-headed assessment of our national interest vis-à-vis the changing global situation. At the same time, it was intended to broaden the Philippines’ economic windows to the world in anticipation of the expiration of the Laurel-Langley Agreement with the United States on July 3, 1974.

A. The Vietnam War and the Nixon Doctrine: Decline of American Prestige in the Asia-Pacific Region

Vietnam in mainland Southeast Asia became an ideological battleground between the US and USSR in the 1960s. Once under the French colonial rule, an earnest desire for independence reverberated throughout Vietnam with the birth of a communist movement in Paris, France under Ho Chi Minh in 1920.

The formation of the Indo-Chinese Communist Party in 1930 would set the stage for the anti-French and later anti-Japanese crusade. The Viet Minh was organized by Ho Chi Minh in 1936 to arouse anti French sentiment. When the Japanese took over Vietnam during World War II, Ho Chi Minh became the prime target for arrest. When the French rule was restored in Vietnam at the end of World War II, Ho declared the formation of a Democratic Republic of Vietnam (D.R.V.) on September 2, 1945. The French defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 8, 1954 resulted in the Geneva Conference where France signed the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam on July 20, 1954.
This marked the end of the French colonial rule in Indo-China. Vietnam became independent of France in 1954 with the recognition of the existence of two governments, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north and the Republic of Vietnam in the south.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, Vietnam was virtually divided on the 17\textsuperscript{th} parallel, with the north becoming communist and the south rejecting the elections that had been called for because Ho Chi Minh was very popular among the Vietnamese and he would surely win a popular vote.

The assassination of President Diem on November 2, 1963 triggered instability in South Vietnam. Following Diem’s demise the government of the Republic of Vietnam passed into the hands of the military, as American participation in the war escalated.\textsuperscript{12}

The US and North Vietnamese negotiators met at Paris on May 15, 1968 to discuss the terms for a complete halt of the bombings and to arrange a conference of all interested parties in Vietnam. A ceasefire was finally negotiated in January 1973.\textsuperscript{13} The withdrawal by the US of all its combat forces from South Vietnam in 1973 led to the eventual collapse of the Saigon government in April 30, 1975. The leadership in Hanoi witnessed the realization of its decade old dream of a unified Vietnam under the direction of the Vietnamese Communist Party.\textsuperscript{14}

With this turn of events, Marcos claimed:

Thus the immediate post-war period up to the 1960s saw the Philippine foreign policy virtually hitched to the American wagon. But Filipino leaders then felt no sense of betrayal of the national interest, for they fully believed that under the circumstances of the time, it was the prudent course to follow. As articulated then, this view of our foreign relations sufficed perhaps for the challenges of the immediate post war era, in the subsequent decades of the late 60s, the 70s, and the 80s, its limitations were to become glaring as the world moved into a conclusive tide of fervent change. And so we discovered the new environment for Philippine foreign policy.\textsuperscript{15}

President Marcos’ foreign policy in the 1970s was molded by the gradual American withdrawal in the Vietnam War. President Richard Nixon insisted on the reduction of American presence in the Vietnam War because of the increasing social and material cost for his country. He said:

... while the US would honor its treaty commitments, it would not get involved in any more wars like Vietnam and would reduce its military commitments and presence in Asia.\textsuperscript{16}

The formation of the ASEAN and the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations of the Philippines with the communist countries like the Soviet Union and
the People’s Republic of China were done specifically because of the gradual withdrawal of American forces from the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The renegotiation of the American bases was also a major result of the Nixon Doctrine.

From the 1970s, the Cold War started to slow down with both the USA and USSR engaging in negotiations. As Aileen S.P. Baviera points out:

The thawing of the Cold War brought to the fore new developments and variables that need led to be examined in the formulation of our foreign policy agenda. Foremost of this developments is the end of bipolarism and the sharp ideological division between ‘East’ and ‘West’.

B. Communism in Cambodia: The Surging Tide of Maoism in Mainland Southeast Asia

A powerful Hindu state of Funan emerged around 100-550 CE on the gulf of Thailand in what is now known as Cambodia. Jayavarman II established the Angkor Wat Empire in 802 CE. Oral tradition claims that a Brahman named Kaundinya built the capital and changed the country name to “Kambuja”.

In the 14th century CE, an invading force from the Kingdom of Thailand occupied Angkor. In 1884, King Norodom I was forced by the French to subject the country under the colonial rule of France. From 1863 to 1953, Cambodia was a French protectorate.

In 1953, France granted Cambodia its independence after the tedious campaign of King Norodom Sihanouk. When he abdicated the throne to become head of state, he kept Cambodia neutral in the escalating war between Vietnam and Laos. However, on November 25, 1965, King Sihanouk instructed General Lon Nol, Chief of Staff of the Royal Khmer Armed Forces to sign a military treaty with the People’s Republic of China. Most notably, it stipulated the following terms: 1) Cambodia would permit the passage and the refuge of Vietnamese combatants in the border regions, granting them protection if necessary and permitting them to establish command posts; and 2) Cambodia would permit the passage of materials coming from China and intended for Vietnam.

While King Sihanouk was visiting the Soviet Union in 1970, he was removed from power by General Lon Nol. The coup d’état placed the country in political and economic turmoil. The consequences were severe economic disruption, corruption stimulated by massive American aid to the Lon Nol government, and an increase in popular support for the antigovernment communist insurgent Khmer Rouge, backed by China. On October 9, 1970, Premier Lon Nol established the Khmer Republic with himself as the new leader. Civil war ensued in Cambodia because the new
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The republic was pro-US and the communist Khmer aided by the USSR and the People’s Republic of China wanted the return of King Sihanouk.

Premier Lon Nol lost the bitter fight for Cambodia and was forced into exile on April 1, 1975. The Lon Nol government surrendered on April 17, 1975, just five days after the US mission evacuated Cambodia. In 1975, the communist Khmer Rouge took over Phnom Penh and changed the country’s name to Democratic Kampuchea. More than one million people died to begin with, including not only the victims of Pol Pot’s killing fields, where members of the ruling elite were cut down, but also hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children who died from diseases and starvation directly resulting from the regime’s misguided and draconian policies.

These massacres were done to create a classless communist society. Urban settlers were forced by the Khmer Rouge to work in communes patterned after those of the People’s Republic of China. The Pol Pot regime, whose ideology focused unthinkingly on the importance of national pride and self-sufficiency, perceived the Angkorean era as a time when an enslaved people, naturally endowed with creative skill, built hundreds of temples and kilometers of irrigation canals not for themselves as a group as they were in theory to do after 1975 but for their masters, whose ideology or style the communists made no effort to explain. With the communist takeover in 1975, the Khmer Rouge wiped out everything that reminded them of Cambodia’s history.

C. The Fall of Laos: A Communist Domino Effect in Indochina

It was the foundation of the Kingdom of Ayudhya in 1351 (north of modern-day Bangkok) and its military competition with Sukhothai to its north that provided the space for the formation of the Kingdom of Lan Xang in Luang Phrabang. In 1353 CE, a Lao Prince named Fa Ngun united all the Lao fiefdoms and formed the powerful Kingdom of Lan Xang (The Kingdom of a Million Elephants.)

In 1884, Auguste Davie, a French diplomat, saved the life of King Oun Kham of Luang Phrabang from the dreaded Hos (Chinese bandits from Yunnan). He persuaded Oun Kham to accept French protectorate. It was in 1893 that the three kingdoms of Luang Phrabang, Vientiane and Champasak united to form Laos under the French protectorate.

France granted independence to Laos on October 22, 1953. King Sisavang Vong became its monarchial ruler from 1953 to 1959. On his death in October 1959, he was succeeded by his son Savang Vatthana.

Laos was plunged into civil war when the Royal Lao government under Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma met destabilization plots from the communist Pathet Lao under Prince Souphanouvong. Attempts in 1957 and 1962 were initiated by Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma for a coalition government, but they failed. The
ceasefire signed in February 1973 and the formulation of another coalition
government in April 1974 proved to be futile.

On December 2, 1975, President Souphanouvong and Premier Kaysone Phomvihane
declared the People’s Democratic Republic of Laos. Laos was placed under
communist rule and it maintained close ties with the Soviet Union and Vietnam in
1978. According to Premier Kaysone Phomvihane:

That great event gloriously ended the national democratic revolution in
our country, completely terminated the yoke of the cruel and depraved
rule of the feudalist and colonialists and opened a new era – the era of
independence, freedom and socialism – for our nation.29

D. The Spread of Communism in the Middle East: The Case of South
Yemen

The ancient Romans called Yemen the Arabian Felix, which means “fertile” or
“fortunate” in Arabia. In the entire Arabian Peninsula, Yemen had the greenest hills
and most fertile lands. What is now Yemen was the Kingdom of Saba from the 10th to
the 2nd century BCE.30 It was on the 7th century that the Arabs in the north
introduced Islam. About 886 CE, the first Zeidi leader seceded from the Abbasid
Caliphate and proclaimed the independence of Yemen.31

The Ottoman Turks took over Yemen from the 16th to the 20th centuries. However,
the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I changed the political
landscape of Yemen. North Yemen became independent while its southern
counterpart became a British protectorate.

When Imam Muhammad al-Badr was overthrown on September 27, 1962, General
Abdullah Sallal proclaimed the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic in the
north. South Yemen came under the control of the communists. A strong communist
party was installed in 1970. In 1963, civil war ensued between the Communist
National Liberation Front (NLF) and pro-Egyptian Front for the Liberation of
Yemen (FLOSY).

President Qahtan al-Shaabi resigned on June 22, 1969. It is noteworthy to consider
that while communist parties exist in almost all countries, including those in the
Middle East; outside South Yemen they have little success.32 President Salim Robea
Ali was installed as the first Communist President of South Yemen. In November
1970, the state was renamed the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY).33

South Yemen immediately cut off diplomatic ties with the US. All foreign companies
were nationalized. The USSR and China generously gave aid and support to South
Yemen, which became the first pro-Communist Arab republic.34 The National
Liberation Front, which was a Marxist-Leninist party, became its sole legal political
body during the Communist takeover. Many Southern Yemeni dissidents were repressed, forcing opposition groups into exile.

Although communism became dominant in South Yemen, it was not widely accepted by other Middle East countries. South Yemen became the only country in the Middle East to accept Communism in the 1970s. Nationalism and Arab Socialism have also been strong competitors for leftists’ affections in the Middle East, and as elsewhere communists have been divided into pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese factions, furthering the splits and weaknesses of Middle Eastern communism.

II. The Spread of Communism in Africa in the 1970s: The Threat of Domino Effect in the Asia Pacific Region

Communism became prominent in Russia way back in 1917 when the Romanov dynasty was ousted by the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution. Mongolia, East Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Albania, Romania, and finally China became communist. Spreading like wildfire, it did not spare Africa in the 1970s. The enormous continent of Africa is situated in the northern and southern hemisphere, stretching over 11,685,000 square miles. The continent, which accounts for 20% of the world’s land area and is home to 11.1% of its people, is made up of 54 nations. Thus, this vast continent is also a fertile ground for communist indoctrination that could lead into a domino effect in the entire continent.

Referring to the threat of communism in the world, including Africa, President Dwight D. Eisenhower coined the term “domino effect” in 1954. He said:

Finally you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the “falling domino” principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you know over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.

The spread of communism has been magnified only in Vietnam of Southeast Asia and Cuba of Central America. But apparently, Africa has been the most lucrative place for communist insurgency since the 1970s. The African population has increased from 142 million in 1920 to 200 million in the 1950s and 600 million in the 1990s. Increased urbanization and improved transportation seem to have facilitated the spread of communist ideas.

European colonial masters like the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Portugal did not provide ample preparation for stable political structures, so that many of the countries in the African continent fell prey to the communist onslaught. Africa has been successfully infiltrated by communist ideology in Algeria, Burundi, Congo-
Brazzaville, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Somalia, Sudan and Tanzania. The success can be attributed to the ideology’s making its gains in a comparatively short period of time, and to the fact that, in contrast to the communist “revolution” in Europe, nationalism has been a powerful political force in the “revolutions” in Africa. The Soviet Union focused its ideological attention on Africa immediately after World War II. Soviet influence was confined mainly in North Africa. The People’s Republic of China’s first step in the propagation of communism started in 1956. It was estimated that there were 50,000 communists in Africa around October 1961.

Another left-wing wave was observed in the 1970s as the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Benin, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola and Somalia adopted Marxism-Leninism and pursued closer ties with the USSR.

The first African nation to accept Communism was the People’s Republic of Congo. When it became independent on August 15, 1960, the former French colony assumed the name Republic of Congo. In September of 1961, it was given membership in the United Nations. President Fulbert Youlou was the first leader of the Republic of Congo. As the political and trade union life of his country was dominated by Marxists, he introduced a one-party dictatorship that would give him full control of the country and effectively counter the communist elements.

Youlou was ousted on August 14, 1963 by the Congolese military, and a provisional civilian government headed by Alphonse Massamba Debat was installed. President Debat was unable to unify the various institutional and ideological factions, and his regime ended abruptly at an August 1968 coup d’etat.

On December 31, 1968, Marien Ngouabi became the country’s president. Ngouabi then established the People’s Republic of Congo and created the Congolese Labor Party. Thus, the former Republic of Congo became the first African state to become communist. The People’s Republic of China became instrumental in installing a communist regime in Congo. The government recognized Communist China, the first French speaking country in Africa to do so; and soon after Peking sent R36,000,000 (US $14,634,146) worth of goods to Brazzaville, a staggering amount considering that the country had only 1,000,000 inhabitants.

Benin was taken by communist forces in the 1970s. On October 26, 1972, Lt. Col. Mathieu Kerekou overthrew the republic and placed the country under Marxism. The absolute military dictator brought considerable change to the political and economic character of his country. It was in 1975 when the Republic of Dahomey became the People’s Republic of Benin. Communism became the state-approved ideology, and all foreign enterprises were nationalized. As a result, most foreign investors, particularly the Europeans and Lebanese, left the country.
On November 30, 1974, Kerekou proclaimed the formal accession of his government to Marxism-Leninism before an assembly of stunned notables. Benin thus became the second African state to fall into the hands of the communists in 1972.

On June 25, 1975, the People’s Republic of Mozambique was established by Samora Moises Machel. The new administration of President Machel created a single-party state based on Marxist principles. The new government received diplomatic and some military support from Cuba and the Soviet Union and proceeded to crack down on opposition. The People’s Republic of Mozambique established close ties with Angola and became a satellite state of the USSR in the African continent. It would be easy enough to see the first 15 years of Frelimo government as typical of the sort of Marxist dictatorship that has characterized post-independence Africa.

Angola soon followed suit. When the government of Portugal was overthrown in 1974, Angola was immediately granted independence on November 11, 1975. Agostinho Neto proclaimed the People’s Republic of Angola. Soon after, Angola was drawn into a civil war among the ruling MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola), FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola), and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

Under the leadership of the MPLA, Angola became a communist state. The new nation was granted immediate diplomatic recognition by Cuba, the Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact nations, Brazil, and about half of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Somalia became communist in the mid-1970s. The Supreme Military Council under Major General Mohammad Siad Barre took control of the country and renamed it the Somali Democratic Republic. General Barre created the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party in July 1976.

Since then, Somalia has been building up an impressive army with Russian support, which under an agreement provides a huge military aid of R22,000,000 (US $ 8,943,089) as well as tanks, M16 jet fighters, armored personnel carriers, anti-aircraft, field artillery, large quantities of infantry and heavy weapons. The People’s Republic of China immediately sent aid in 1976. communist China, also gave Somalia a R15,000,000 (US $ 6,097,261) interest-free loan and a R20,000,000 (US $ 8,130,081) budget subsidy when Britain withdrew its financial aid.

Ethiopia was not spared from the onslaught of communist takeover in Africa. In 1977, Mengistu Haile Mariam became the leading officer of the communist military junta. He later became President of the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 1987 to 1991.
By then, Mengistu and his men were building a people’s militia trained by North Korea and supplied by the Soviet Union, which the DERG had courted from the outset of its rule. Ethiopia was placed under a communist dictatorship guided by President Mengistu Haile Mariam. All major industrial, financial and commercial institutions, encompassing some two hundred companies, were nationalized without compensation in January and February 1975, and the very limited role of private capital in the economy was defined in the document entitled Government Ownership and Control of the Means of Production Proclamation of March 1975.

In 1975, the Provisional Military Administrative Council established a one-party Communist state in Africa which became known as the People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

**A. Philippine Diplomatic Response to Communism in Africa under the Marcos Administration**

President Marcos was aware of the possible domino effect of communism in Africa and in the Asia Pacific region. He stressed:

> It is unfortunate that crisis after crisis, conflict after conflict seemed to be a commonplace in Africa. What is more deplorable, however, are the possibility of Balkanization of the continent into 20th century sphere of influence and the growth of different brands of neo-colonialism in Africa.52

Marcos was well acquainted of the threat of communism in Africa when he said:

> In addition to the realignment of forces in the world order, and a decolonization process triggered by the post-World War II years that saw the emergence of a score of new nation-states in Asia and Africa, imperial forces are withdrawing from these two continents. Today there are many roads to communism, and nationalism is just as strong as a national force in the life and policies of communist countries of the world.53

With the hard realities of international politics in mind, Marcos crafted a diplomatic policy that was flexible, pragmatic and development-oriented. He pointed out:

> It is a policy that seeks to expand Philippine relations with other countries on the bases of national interest and of mutual respect and understanding, while at the same time avoiding dependence on any one country.54
The surge of communism in African countries would influence President Marcos to seek diplomatic relations with communist countries with the goal of preserving the national interest of the Philippines.

**III. The United Nation’s Recognition of the People’s Republic of China**

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took control of the mainland on October 1, 1949 and founded the People’s Republic of China. It was a people’s democratic dictatorship by the working class based on the alliance between workers and peasants. The communist revolution in China was part of a peasant-based movement against the vested power of the cities. In 1939, Mao Zedong said:

> Since China’s key cities have long been occupied by the powerful imperialists and their reactionary Chinese allies, it is imperative for the revolutionary ranks to turn the backward villages into advance consolidated base area . . . bastions of the revolution from which to fight their vicious enemies.

On December 8, 1949, the nationalists Kuomintang (KMT) led by Chiang Kai Shek fled from Chungking to Taiwan. After the exile of Chiang Kai Shek, the communist conquest of mainland China became complete, and after 28 years (1921-1949) of struggle, Mao rose to power.

The feud continued between the nationalists in Taiwan and the communists in the mainland. The new government in the mainland assumed control over a people exhausted by two generations of war, social conflict, and an economy ravaged by high inflation. After so many years of the separation of Taiwan from the mainland, the former has not recognized the legitimacy of the government of the People’s Republic of China as the representative of the whole Chinese people. This has been the origin of the Taiwan issue.

The unification of China has been the aspiration of the communist Chinese. The People’s Republic of China has worked persistently for reunification for the last 50 years. From 1979, the PRC has worked perseveringly towards that in the form of “one country, two systems.”

On the foundation day of the People’s Republic of China on October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong declared:

> This government is the sole legal government representing the entire people of the People’s Republic of China. It is ready to established diplomatic relations with all foreign governments that are willing to abide by the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for each other.
With this, PRC claims its legitimacy as the sole governing entity of the whole Chinese people. The PRC informed the UN that the KMT was an illegitimate government. Various countries supported the one China policy. In October of 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted at its 26th session Resolution 2858 which expelled the representatives of the Taiwan authorities and restored all the seats and all lawful rights of the government to the PRC in the United Nations.58

The Philippines concurrence on the issue of depriving the Republic of China (Taiwan) representation in the United Nations was a tactical move on the part of President Marcos to conduct diplomatic relations with the more than 850 million Chinese in the mainland for pragmatic purposes. The Philippines wanted to consider the People’s Republic of China as the paramount representation of all Chinese people without turning its back on the Republic of China. To the mind of Marcos:

In dealing with other nations, we operate on the principle that the world is no longer dichotomous . . . today is the era of multiple alignments. We are required therefore to make concurrent efforts to ease the way towards the establishment of relations with the People’s Republic of China. With that great power, we will undoubtedly have official and unofficial contacts with its representatives in the UN. In recognition of the rights of its more than 900 million people to be represented in the world organization, we supported their admission in the United Nations.59

Major nations of the world like the United States and Japan established cordial relations with mainland China. Up to now, 161 countries have established diplomatic relations with the PRC, including the Philippines.60

IV. Worldwide Oil Crisis Brought About by the Arab-Israeli Wars and the Iran-Iraq War

On May 14, 1948, the existence of the State of Israel was unilaterally declared by the Zionist leadership. At the time, the Jewish community only legally purchased approximately 6.8% of the land of Palestine, and three-quarters of a million Arabs were ethnically cleansed in order to create the demographically “Jewish state.” The first phase of the war started on November 30, 1947, the day after U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181, which recommended that Palestine be partitioned into two states, was passed. The second phase began at the end of the British Mandate, when the neighboring Arab states responded to the declaration of Israel’s existence by taking up arms. It ended on July 20, 1949 with the signing of the last of the armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Again in 1956, 1967, and 1973, hostilities broke out between Israel and its Arab neighbors, resulting in heavy damage to property and loss of innumerable lives.
From October 29 to November 5, 1956, Egypt, Syria and Jordan formed a united front against Israel, which had conspired with the United Kingdom and France to wage war against Egypt after it nationalized the Suez Canal. The Soviet Union demanded that hostilities end to further prevent another global conflict. The alliance of Egypt, Syria and Jordan likewise succumbed to massive damage and loss of lives.

The famous “Six-Day War” started on June 5, 1967, and ended on the 10th. Egypt closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli maritime ships. Israel’s reply to Nasser’s challenge was the air attack on Egypt’s airfields on the morning of June 5, 1967, starting the Arab-Israeli War.

The fourth Arab-Israeli War began on October 6, 1973, when Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked Israeli forces in the occupied Sinai and Golan Heights. It being the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur, the Israeli military were caught by surprise, causing them to mobilize their forces only after three days. Many Israelis regard the three-week 1973 war as more consequential than the war of 1967. The tank battles fought between Israel and Egypt were the largest since World War II and the losses on both sides were massive. Almost 15,000 Egyptians and Syrians and more than 2,600 Israelis were killed in battle. A ceasefire was called on October 25, 1973 after Soviet and American intervention to prevent further escalation of a regional conflict.

The Middle East was not only beleaguered by wars between Israel and Arab nations but also by conflicts among the Arab nations themselves. When the government of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi ended on January 16, 1979, Iran’s religious leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, took over Iran under theocratic rule. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein saw the opportunity to take control over the Shatt al-Arab waterway.

On April 2, 1979, the Iranians complained of violations in their airspace by Iraq and on April 7 they reported of Iraqi artillery attacks on the border town of Qasr-e-Shirin. There was a destabilization of relations between Iran and Iraq in 1979, exacerbated by the accession to the presidency of Iraq of Saddam Hussein in July 1979.

In the next few months, the Iranian-Iraqi conflict entered a more provocative phase. This escalated in August into heavy fighting, involving tanks and artillery duels as well as air strikes. The Iran-Iraq War formally ceased on August 8, 1988 with the signing of U.N. Security Council Resolution 598 ending all combat operations between the two countries. It cost the Iranian government more than 1 million casualties and the Iraqi government around 250,000 to 500,000 deaths.

The repercussions of the Arab-Israeli Wars and the Iran-Iraq Wars were not only on the number of casualties involved but also the economic implications to the world, especially in Asia. On October 1973, the members of the Organization of Petroleum
Exporting Countries (OPEC) proclaimed an oil embargo to the United States of America for supporting Israel.

The Philippines was adversely affected by the oil crisis because of its close ties with the United States. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a policy statement on November 18, 1973 which clearly defined the Philippine stand on the Middle East issue. This included: 69

1. A condemnation of Israel’s occupation of Arab lands as an act of aggression in violation of the United Nations Charter;

2. A declaration of Philippine support for UN Security Council Resolution No. 247, dated 22 November 1967, calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories, the termination of all claims or states of belligerency, recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area, and the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threat or acts of force.

3. A call for the restoration of legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Philippines was identified by the Arab countries as eligible for oil embargo for the reason that petroleum refineries in the country were all American owned in the 1970s. The rise in world oil prices by 400% between 1973 to 1974 threatened to derail progress as the Philippines imported all of its oil. 70

To accommodate the vast quantities of oil for fuel and industrialization, the Philippines decided to open diplomatic ties with Socialist countries. According to President Marcos’ concept of “The New Diplomacy”:

Ideology will no longer be a constraint in the widening of our relations with any country, whatever its political systems or ideological persuasions maybe. We shall endeavor to develop these relationships in order to promote development and progress for mutual benefit, which at the same time enhance our physical security from both internal and external threats. The linchpin that holds together these policy formulations is national interest, and none other. 71

President Marcos’ view of foreign relations was thereby anchored in the national interest and the realistic outlook at that time. Without other sources of oil, the Philippine economy would surely collapse. Another option was to secure barrels of oil from the socialist countries, particularly the People’s Republic of China.

In the same way, the effects on the Philippine of the economic crisis of the 1970s was minimized because of more job opportunities and earnings from exports brought by
the new diplomatic ties with the Socialist countries, i.e., the USSR, PRC, and the Eastern European socialist bloc. In the 1970s, President Marcos stressed:

But the biggest diplomatic initiatives were with the socialist countries, the latest of which is the USSR; potentially these countries could provide vast, insatiable markets for Philippine products.\textsuperscript{72}

**Conclusion**

The unabated spread of communism in the Asia Pacific region was a bold manifestation that even the Philippines could fall in its domino effect anytime. The American defeat in the Vietnam War in 1975 saw President Richard Nixon espousing the doctrine of non-involvement in wars and the reduction of military presence in Asia. With this development, Marcos knew exactly what to do by seeking greater opportunities for other possible diplomatic ties. The downfall of Cambodia, Laos, and South Yemen served as wake-up calls for the Philippines to consider the possibility of communism being transplanted in the country. Even the vast African continent was an example on how countries became vulnerable to communist incursion and eventual dictatorship. Such was the case of the People’s Republics of Congo, Benin, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola and Somalia.

The worldwide oil crisis brought by regional conflicts in the Middle East also badly affected the Philippine economy. To serve as an economic cushion for the sudden oil price hike and oil embargo, a diplomatic and trade agreement was inked between the Philippines and the People’s Republic of China. With this, mainland China provided the Philippines with its much needed crude oil. At the same time, the establishment of Philippine-USSR relations paved the way for the importation of petroleum products as well.

In crafting a foreign policy, the promotion of national interests is always considered the paramount concern of every nation. Philippine foreign policy veered away from traditionally having close, intimate links with the United States and projected a flexible and pragmatic response to the realities posed by international events. Consequently, President Marcos directed the country’s foreign policy to be less dependent on the United States. Thus, Philippine diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, and eastern European socialist countries were established.
References


2 President Diosdado Macapagal’s resolve to have an Asian solution for Asian problems and his lukewarm support of the Vietnam War policy of the US were among the reasons that made him unpopular to the Americans. In the 1965 presidential election, he lost to Ferdinand E. Marcos, the Senate President at that time. During the election campaign, Marcos publicly opposed the plan of Macapagal to send an engineering battalion to Vietnam. Immediately after assuming the presidency in 1965, Marcos reversed his earlier stand against the sending of a military contingent to South Vietnam, after he obtained assurance from the US that the Philippines will receive equipment to support an AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) engineering brigade that would render civic action in remote regions of the country.


6 Ferdinand E. Marcos, “We Must Survive in Asia: Postulates of Philippine Foreign Policy” speech at the Manila Overseas Press Club on 24 February 1968.


9 Ferdinand E. Marcos. “Hallmark of National Sovereignty” speech at the 84th Anniversary of the founding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 June 1983.

10 Ho Chi Minh was a small and frail man, but a fearless and tough crusader of freedom. He was born of peasant parents on May 19, 1890, in the village of Kim Lien, Province of Nghe An – a Vietnamese province famous for scholars and revolutionaries. His name at birth was Nguyen Thai Thanh (Nguyen who will be Victorious). Later, he assumed other names, such as Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen the Patriot) in 1920, Ly Thuy in 1925, Tong Van Son in 1931, and P.C. Lin in 1936. As a liberator of Vietnam from French rule and as President of the Communist North Vietnam, he is known as Ho Chi Minh (Ho the Very Enlightened).


15 Ferdinand E. Marcos. “Hallmark of National Sovereignty” Speech delivered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 June 1983


19 King Sihanouk is the great-grandson of Norodom I, who accepted French protectorate in 1863. Norodom I ruled Cambodia from 1860 to 1904 and was succeeded by Sisowath (1904-1927), his son Monivong (1927-1941), the first Asian general in the French army, and Norodom Sihanouk (1941-1955), who was proclaimed King of Cambodia by the French authorities on April 25, 1941. Sihanouk was only 19 years old when he was crowned. He abdicated the throne in 1955 in favor of his father Norodom Sumaratir, who died in 1960.


23 Ibid.


27 Ibid.

28 The organization can trace its roots to the Second World War just as the Khmer Issarak in Cambodia and the Viet Minh and Vietnam People’s Army did. Its original name has been forgotten, but in 1950 it was renamed the Pathet Lao (Land of Laos), when it was adopted by Lao forces under Prince Souphanouvong, who joined the Viet Minh revolt against the colonial French authorities in Indochina during the First Indochina War. As a Communist, nationalist group in Laos, it took control of the country in 1975.


30 Martha Glauber Shapp. Lands and People: Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. (New York: Grolier, Inc., 1976) p. 120


35 In spite of Soviet aid to Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Syria, Communists in the Arab World have frequently been repressed, despite being influential in Iraq and Syria in late 1958, and again in Iraq in the 1970s. Why has Marxist-Leninist ideology done so poorly in the Middle East? Perhaps it is because, being atheistic, it has a hard time gaining ground in lands where Islam is very strong.


38 See www.history.com/this-day-in-history/eisenhower-gives-famous-domino-theory-speech.


47 See the work of Joao M. Cabrita, Mozambique: The Tortuous Road to Democracy (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 5.


51 Ibid.


54 Ibid. p. 4


61 The Gulf of Aquaba or Gulf of Eilat is a large gulf located on the northern tip of the Red Sea, east of the Sinai Peninsula and west of the Arabian mainland. Its coastline is divided between four countries: Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.


64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.


70 Richard John Kessler Jr., Developmental Diplomacy: The Making of Philippine Foreign Policy under Ferdinand E. Marcos (United States of America: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1985), 177.

71 Op. cit. p. 185

72 Ibid. p. 187