



Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of the Philippines and the East European Socialist Bloc under President Ferdinand E. Marcos

Asst. Prof. Archie B. Resos PhD¹

University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Arts and Letter, Department of History¹
Corresponding Author: archieresos@yahoo.com

Abstract: Diplomatic communiqués between the Philippines and the Eastern European Socialist Bloc found in the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of the Philippines reveals a compendium of original data significant in tracing the inception of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the Eastern European Socialist Bloc i.e. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. This is a pioneering work about the beginning of diplomatic relations between the Republic of the Philippines and the Eastern European Socialist Bloc under the administration of President Ferdinand E. Marcos from 1965 to 1986 including the establishment of formal diplomatic ties, signing of trade agreements and the strengthening of cultural relations between the Philippines and Eastern European Socialist Bloc.

Key Words: Republic of the Philippines; Eastern European Socialist Bloc; diplomatic relations; Diplomatic History; Foreign Relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Formal Diplomatic Relations between the Philippines and the EESB

The EESB (i.e. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia.) did not have any official relations with the Philippines until after World War II. The Iron Curtain in Europe limited Philippine relations with European countries, so that the Philippines focused only on relations with Western Europe. Salvador (1998) From President Manuel Roxas to President Diosdado Macapagal, the idea of opening formal diplomatic relations with Communist countries was practically non-existent. This included the EESB.

In 1965, under Ferdinand E. Marcos' presidency, the general opinion of the people in the diplomatic and business sectors was for establishing diplomatic relations with the Socialist countries. This included the USSR and the EESB. The People's Republic of China was exempted at that time because of suspicion that it was a potential threat as it is geographically nearest to the Philippines. At the same time, the Philippine military knew that the People's Republic of China had direct links with the insurgency movement in the country, which included the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army.

1.2 A Flurry of Diplomatic Activities

While the introduction provided a brief overview of the context that drove the Philippines to engage with



Eastern Europe, this section densely approaches each of the main milestones in the normalisation of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and members of the Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe. The Foreign Policy Council chaired by Marcos immediately adopted the Romulo Report to establish diplomatic ties with Romania and Yugoslavia as a stepping stone to opening relations with others in the EESB. Following the decision, on 12 January 1972 the Department of Foreign Affairs instructed the Permanent Representatives to the UN, Ambassador Narciso G. Reyes, to make contacts with his Romanian and Yugoslav counterparts regarding the establishment of diplomatic ties. Castro (1985)

Marcos deferred the signing of diplomatic accord with the USSR and the People's Republic of China (PRC). He opened diplomatic relations with Romania as a testing ground on 28 February 1972, and with Yugoslavia on 01 March 1972. This was done through an exchange of letters from Manila. Ambassador Luis Moreno Salcedo was designated the Philippine non-resident envoy to these two countries. Jocano (1988) In turn, Romania appointed its ambassador to Japan, Nicolae Finantu, as non-resident envoy to the Philippines, while Yugoslavia designated its ambassador to Japan, Josef Smole, as a non-resident envoy to our country. Philippine Diplomacy: Chronology and Documents (1981)

Likewise, Yugoslavia's diplomatic relations with the Philippines was prolific after the signing of diplomatic relations on 01 March 1972. On 06 June 1976, Yugoslav Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lazar Majsov, who was later to become President of the UN General Assembly, visited Manila. Ingles (1982) From 28 June until 02 July 1979 Vice President Hadilj Hodza of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia paid a state visit, resulting in the signing of a joint statement with Marcos

On 21 September 1973, the Philippines and the GDR (German Democratic Government or East Germany) established formal diplomatic relations, and exchanges were immediately carried out.

Domingo (1983) On 02 September 1977, Ambassador Leticia Ramos-Shahani submitted her credentials to President Erich Honecker, and on 08 June 1978, Ambassador Eberhard Feisher submitted his credentials to President Marcos. Honecker officially visited the Philippines from 06-08 December 1977 and he was very warmly received by Marcos in Malacañang Palace.

The Polish People's Republic and the Republic of the Philippines established diplomatic relations on 22 September 1973. Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo and Polish Foreign Minister Stefan Olszowski signed a letter of agreement at the office of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York. In November 1974, a Polish trade mission led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade Tadeusz Zylkowski arrived in Manila for possible trading partnership.

The next goal was the Hungarian People's Republic and on 28 September 1973, the Philippine government directed Secretary Romulo to forge diplomatic ties with Hungary led by Foreign Minister Janos Peter. The diplomatic agreement was signed in the Philippine Mission office in New York. Erni Horvath was assigned as non-resident ambassador in Manila, while Leticia Ramos-Shahani became his counterpart in Budapest.

Then, on 05 October 1973, the Philippines signed an agreement with Czechoslovakia for formal diplomatic relations. Secretary Romulo signed the formal accord with Foreign Minister Bohuslav Chnoupek at the Philippine Mission office in New York. Castro (1985) To strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, Romulo made an official visit to Prague between 02 and 03 September 1974. Karel Houska of Czechoslovakia presented his credentials on 28 June 1977, while Rolando Garcia of the Philippines did the same in 1978.

A month after the diplomatic accord with Czechoslovakia, the Philippines signed a joint communique with the People's Republic of Bulgaria on 16 November 1973. Signing in behalf of the



Philippines was Romulo, while his Bulgarian counterpart was Deputy Foreign Minister Guero Grozev.

2. METHODOLOGY

History is both descriptive and analytical. This paper subscribes to this definition aptly expressed in the phrase "descriptive-analytical." The facts will be culled from primary sources strengthened by secondary sources which will provide the context. The descriptive aspect will focus on the phenomenon as it unfolded. On the other hand, the analytical aspect will go beyond mere description or narration but will define the perspective upon which the study is anchored. Leaving the facts alone will render the narration at best a naive depiction of reality that follows a positivist outlook. Events require explanation and lend themselves to analysis. Lemon (2003) Narration of events is therefore informed by the theory of "particularized logic" that is used to explain them.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Trade Agreements between the Philippines and EESB

As early as 1968, the vision of fostering diplomatic ties with Socialist countries was already lingering in the minds of various sectors of Philippine society and Marcos viewed such a move as a means to opening of new markets for Philippine products, especially since the Philippines wanted to expand its trade relations to strengthen its economy. Fervent nationalists argued that diversification was needed to end the unfavorable dependency relationship between the Philippines and the US. Kessler (1985) The forging of diplomatic relations with Socialist countries began in earnest in 1972 when Marcos ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs to coordinate with their Romanian and Yugoslavian counterparts. In 1973, the normalization of relations was made with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Trade Relations with between the Philippines and EESB from 1971 to 1984.

Table 1. Trends in Philippine-Eastern European Socialist Bloc Trade from 1971 to 1975 (in US dollars)

Country	Imports from Eastern European Socialist Bloc					Exports to Eastern European Socialist Bloc				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	x	28,742	28,765	x	x	2,720	x	18,417
Czechoslovakia	x	88,888	75,507	777,645	1,047,161	x	x	x	100	X
East Germany	x	x	x	2,235	6,605	x	x	x	x	X
Hungary	x	1,125	37,177	29,395	61,169	x	x	x	x	X
Poland	x	x	113,868	4,209,322	71,978	x	x	x	x	118,430
Romania	x	x	333,220	819,093	4,601,514	x	x	x	x	15,738
Yugoslavia	x	8,176	60,481	9,822,948	4,726,823	103,000	x	49,287	116,766	380,741

Country	TOTAL TRADE					BALANCE OF TRADE				
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Bulgaria	x	x	2,720	28,742	47,182	x	x	2,720-	28,742-	10,348-
Czechoslovakia	x	88,888	76,307	777,713	1,047,161	x	88,899-	76,307-	777,542-	1,047,161-
East Germany	x	x	x	2,235	6,605	x	x	x	x	6,605-
Hungary	x	1,125	37,177	29,395	61,169	x	1,123-	37,177-	29,395-	61,169-
Poland	x	x	113,868	4,209,322	190,408	x	x	113,868-	4,209,322-	48,492-
Romania	x	x	333,220	819,093	4,617,232	x	x	333,220-	819,093-	4,582,756-
Yugoslavia	103,000	8,176	106,748	9,797,711	8,107,983	103,000-	8,176-	11,194-	9,306,179-	4,346,081-

Table 2. Trends in Philippine-Eastern European Socialist Bloc Trade from 1976 to 1979 (in US dollars)

Country	Imports from Eastern European Socialist Bloc				Exports to Eastern European Socialist Bloc			
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	6,024,000	1,818,000	237,000	14,282,000	13,636,000	3,882,000	x	7,711,000
Others	4,494,000	2,348,000	3,596,000	9,604,000	8,631,000	5,797,000	1,802,000	1,264,000

Country	TOTAL TRADE				BALANCE OF TRADE			
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1976	1977	1978	1979
Romania	19,692,000	7,490,000	237,000	31,993,000	7,632,000-	4,364,000-	237,000-	4,371,000-
Others	10,123,000	8,148,000	7,311,000	10,368,000	1,137,000-	3,449,000-	3,761,000-	8,340,000-

Table 3. Trends in Philippine-Eastern European Socialist Bloc Trade from 1980 to 1984 (in US dollars)

Country	Imports from Eastern European Socialist Bloc					Exports to Eastern European Socialist Bloc				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	1,147,648	1,337,123	2,237,630	3,979,333	304	x	82,467	793,333	2,413,763	127
Czechoslovakia	3,933,996	3,294,892	3,126,216	4,921,818	1,475,243	x	219,937	497,003	34,182	48,480

East Germany	4,811,088	5,184,602	1,180,384	2,689,528	482,877	4,743,284	299,437	x	488,816	87,353
Hungary	130,629	637,775	629,976	229,923	85,483	15,750	226,682	2,892,389	1,145,721	127,546
Poland	5,496,907	2,012,340	1,771,454	1,427,469	1,438,772	3,695,230	375,718	335,872	370,493	418,771
Romania	2,036,871	2,479,072	4,810,336	1,725,405	3,534,490	4,175,650	5,938	50,000	x	100
Yugoslavia	34,244	284,805	227,444	1,149,331	443,618	4,203,792	3,823,866	380,507	43,403	12,181

Country	TOTAL TRADE					BALANCE OF TRADE				
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984
Bulgaria	1,147,648	1,419,590	2,991,185	3,994,918	471	1,147,648-	1,234,656-	1,324,073-	1,163,392-	137-
Czechoslovakia	2,933,996	2,474,849	3,623,231	4,975,997	1,517,723	2,933,996-	2,084,935-	2,692,211-	4,867,633-	1,426,763-
East Germany	9,264,372	5,484,039	2,188,384	3,178,344	320,430	222,196-	4,885,165-	2,180,384-	2,200,712-	345,324-
Hungary	186,379	884,457	3,322,965	1,375,644	213,029	194,879-	431,091-	2,262,913-	915,798-	42,063-
Poland	9,192,137	2,388,267	2,307,326	1,997,967	1,897,342	1,891,671-	1,636,831-	1,335,582-	856,971-	1,020,000-
Romania	6,012,821	2,485,010	4,860,336	1,725,405	3,534,390	2,138,779-	2,473,134-	4,760,336-	1,725,403-	3,534,390-
Yugoslavia	4,258,036	4,113,671	607,951	2,192,934	455,799	4,149,348-	3,344,061-	153,063-	2,106,123-	431,437-

Source: Collated from the Central Bank Statistical Bulletin and Philippine Statistical Yearbook 1975, 1976, 1985 and 1986.



From the opening of trade relations in 1972 and 1973, the Philippines gradually increased its import of Eastern European products – particularly machinery and equipment – however, the balance of trade was favorable to the EESB. Yet, between 1976 and 1977 there was a shift and the balance of trade favored the Philippines as compared to Romania and other Socialist states. It is noteworthy that from 1980 to 1984, total trade increased substantially between the Philippines and the EESB. With the exception of Hungary and Yugoslavia, the Philippines had a negative trade balance with other Socialist countries. The Eastern European countries exported tractors, machinery, equipment and other industrial products to our country, while we exported coconut oil, minerals and other agricultural products.

3.2 Strengthening Cultural and Scientific Relations between the Philippines and the EESB

Cultural exchanges proliferated between the Philippines and the states of the EESB. Since the signing of diplomatic agreements in the 1970's, various cultural performances were staged in the Philippines by Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Bulgaria. Romania sent its finest violinists, Petru Csaba – the first Romanian concert artist to set foot on Philippine soil on 12 December 1977 – and Lenuta Ciulei on 06 December 1982. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1977 and 1982) A Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Science and Technology of the Philippines and the Mining Research and Technology of Romania on cooperation in science and technology undertakings was also signed in Manila on August 22, 1994. Malaya (2012)

Hungary participated in the cultural exchange with the performance of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble under the direction of Zoltan Vereb on 03 September 1977. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1977) Hungarian musicians also performed in the country like pianists

Bela Siki in 1978, 1981 and 1983 and Gyorgy Sandor on 19 June 1981. A scientific agreement was created between Hungary and the Philippines on February 22, 1980. The scientific and technical cooperation consisted of exchange of experts and technicians for study, grant of fellowships, provision of scientific data, exchange of delegations for short visits and joint technical studies in industry and agriculture. Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation RP-Hungary (1980)

Czechoslovak musicians Bozena Steinerova, a pianist, staged a performance on 16 October 1979 and Vladimir Mikulka, guitarist performed on 20 March 1982. Slovak Folklore Artistic Ensemble, compose of five Czechoslovak musicians namely, Jan Berky-Mrenica, Ondrej Kurucz, Bertok Alexander, Alojz Rigo and Juraj Helcmanovsky rendered their local music to Filipino audiences on 18 October 1982. The Zilina Black Theater, the first professional puppet theatre in Czechoslovakia entertained Filipino audiences on 01 February 1986. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1986) The Philippines and Czechoslovakia also signed an agreement on June 1, 1983 for the promotion and development of scientific and technical cooperation. It included the provision of scientists, experts and technicians, equipment, instruments, accessories, and organization of theoretical and practical training programs. Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation RP-Czechoslovakia (1983)

The GDR also had their share of cultural performances in the Philippines. Horst Forster, the country's leading conductor, visited the Philippines on 19 November 1979 and Werner Taube, soloist cellist, performed on 24 September 1980. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1980) However, GDR did not forge scientific and technical agreement with the Republic of the Philippines.

And, a top pianist from Poland rendered outstanding performances. Ruth Slenczynska, known as 'the First Lady of the Piano,' was in Manila on 05



March 1980. Mona Golabek, who won the Chopin International Competition in Warsaw in 1970, performed in the Philippines on 06 June 1981. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1981) Pawel Checinski, another Polish pianist rendered a performance on 05 March 1982 at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines. Poland on the scientific and technical aspects, did not establish linkage with the Philippines.

Bulgaria also made its presence felt in the Philippines by staging a performance of Youlia Radounova, a dramatic soprano on 18 September 1981. To expose the Filipinos to local music and dance performances, the Pirin Folk and Dance State Company (Blagoevgrad), a music and dance cultural group performed on 04 October 1981 at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines. Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (1981) To promote economic and technical cooperation, both governments agreed to undertake feasibility studies, research and designs, and delivery and installation of plants, machinery, and equipment as well as provide technical assistance. Agreement on Technical Cooperation RP-Bulgaria (1979) Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and People's Republic of Bulgaria was signed on May 10, 1979, Manila, Philippines.

During the 1970's and 1980's, Filipino cultural performers were also sent to various countries in the EESB. Among these Filipino performers were the Ballet Philippines founded by Alice Reyes in 1969, Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, Dance Concert Company founded by Eric Cruz in 1973, Filipinesca Dance Company founded by Leonor Orosa-Goquinco in 1958, and the Hariraya Ballet Company. In 1983, Toni Lopez Gonzales, a Filipino choreographer and dancer became a semi-finalist in the 11th International Ballet Competition in Bulgaria.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As early as 1972, the Philippines had been contacting Romanian and Yugoslav representatives in the UN for possible diplomatic ties. Prior to the opening of formal ties with the USSR and the PRC, Marcos wanted to test the waters. An exchange of letters was initiated to open diplomatic ties with Romania and Yugoslavia. The result was favorable and trade and cultural relations were formed between the Philippines and these countries. In 1973, other nations belonging to EESB followed suit, the Philippines initiating the move to have official diplomatic relations. The German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria inked official agreements with the Republic of the Philippines in 1973.

Trade relations increased tremendously from 1971 to 1984. However, the balance of trade was favourable to the EESB. This was primarily because these countries exported machinery, tractors, heavy capital equipment and industrial products, while Philippine exports consisted mostly of raw minerals and agricultural products. In terms of cultural relations, exchanges of books, periodicals, non-commercial cinematographic films, arts, cultural exhibitions, professors, scholarships, physical education and sports provided greater awareness and understanding of the varied cultures of the Philippines and EESB. The scientific and technical exchanges were also very prolific resulting in the exchanges of scientific endeavours, new equipment, machineries and exposure to practical and theoretical training programs.

6. REFERENCES

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Federal Executive Council of the Assembly of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (Signed, 7 June 1983).



DLSU
RESEARCH CONGRESS
"Responding to the Challenges of the ASEAN Integration"

2016

Presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2016
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines
March 7-9, 2016

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Signed, 9 March 1977).

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the German Democratic Republic (Signed, 6 July 1983).

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic (Signed, 14 October 1976).

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (Signed, 2 May 1975).

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Polish People's Republic (Signed, 12 February 1976).

Basic Document. Trade Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania (Signed, 13 April 1975).

Castro, P. (1985) Diplomatic Agenda of Philippine Presidents 1946- 1985, Manila: Foreign Service Institute.

Central Bank Statistical Bulletin.

Domingo B. (1983), Marcos Diplomacy: Guide to Philippine Bilateral Relations, Manila: Foreign Service Institute.

Ingles, J. (1982), Philippine Foreign Policy, Manila: Lyceum Press.

Jocano, F. L. (1988) Philippine-USSR Relations: A Study in Foreign Policy Development, Manila: NDCP Foundation.

Kessler R. Jr. (1985), Development Diplomacy: The Making of Philippine Foreign Policy under Ferdinand E. Marcos, United States of America: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

Lemon, M.C. *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students*, London and New York: Routledge.

Malaya, J. Eduardo et al. (2012) Philippine Treaties Index: 1946-2010, Pasay City: Foreign Service Institute.

Ocampo-Salvador, A. (1998). 'Philippine-European Relations,' in Aileen San Pablo-Baviera and Lydia N. Yu-Jose (1998), Philippine External Relations: A Centennial Vista, Pasay City: Foreign Service Institute.

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "Romanian Opera Singers in the Philippines from 1979 to 1983."

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "The Hungarian State Folk Ensemble in its Philippine Debut." September 3, 1977.

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "Zilina Black Theatre." February 1, 1986.

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "Horst Forster, Great Conductor" November 19, 1979 and Werner Taube, Soloist Cellist" September 24, 1980.

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "Mona Golabek, Pianist" June 6, 1981.

Performance Program of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, "The Pirin Folk and Dance State Company" (Blagoevgrad) October 4, 1981.

Philippine Diplomacy: Chronology and Documents, 1972-1981 (1981), Manila, Philippines: Foreign Service Institute.

Philippine Statistical Yearbook, 1975, 1976, 1984, 1985 and 1986.