

## INTRODUCTION

Since the successful defense in March 1992 of the doctoral dissertation from which this book is based, the present government has adopted the policy of development diplomacy which, among others, identifies access to technology as a priority concern. It has pinpointed diplomacy for development as the central core of the country's foreign policy.

This policy may be gleaned from the speeches of President Fidel V. Ramos and Foreign Affairs Secretary Roberto R. Romulo as well as in the *Medium-Term Philippine Plan, (MTPDP) 1993-1998*. To provide impetus to this policy direction, the President on March 29, 1993 signed Executive Order No. 74 directing the adoption of the country team approach in the conduct of development diplomacy.

The direction of the Administration's foreign policy was clearly articulated by President Ramos in his inaugural address: "Diplomacy for development will be our central foreign policy thrust. Securing continued access to world markets and technology must become our most vital concern."

According to Secretary Romulo, the overriding objective of development diplomacy is to "jumpstart the economy. The drive for foreign adventures, the obsession with political maneuvering and the imperative of ideological zeal have in large measure given way to economic reform, the search for export markets, technology and managerial expertise, the raising of capital in the world's financial markets, and the cultivation of international economic ties."

Aware of trends toward the primacy of economic concerns in international affairs, the present administration adopted the policy of adjusting to these trends and to meet the challenges presented and to grasp the opportunities that they offer for the benefit of the people. "Against this backdrop, we therefore need to translate what we keep advocating as development diplomacy into practical and actual application. First, we have to determine target markets or countries so that we do not dissipate our capabilities, resources and manpower. Second, we have to determine specifically what we have to promote, sell or secure from these countries...Diplomats and other personnel of the government posted abroad should not only pay lip service to development diplomacy. Their mindset must be changed," Romulo stressed. He defined economic diplomacy as a gameplan to draw from target countries better terms in trade, tourism, investments and technology.

The foreign trips of President Ramos to Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia and the United States exemplify what he termed "top level diplomatic and economic missions." The various

business delegations that accompanied the President in his state visits give credence to the observation that the Philippines is back in business despite the challenges posed by peace and order and power outages which are, incidentally, being addressed by the Administration.

Technology transfer inevitably presents itself in the signed investment deals. This is paralleled by conscious efforts to include science and technology centers and institutions in the President's itinerary. The *STAC Report* of January-June 1993 describes the state visits as Philippines' version of the Japanese Meiji initiative, wherein Japan sent its people abroad to absorb applicable Western technology for their home country.

Another relevant development is the country team approach which directs foreign service posts to place emphasis on the efforts to secure external resources necessary for the development of the Philippines through economic and commercial representation. This involves a broad range of activities such as promotion of trade in goods and services, investments and tourism; the protection of workers' welfare; representation in trade policy; negotiations for official development assistance and bilateral debt; the facilitation of technology transfer and overseas employment; and economic information. It requires that concerned government agencies with personnel posted abroad put their act together as a country team under the leadership of the Ambassador.

The plans of action to implement this central foreign policy of the government are the creation of an Economic Diplomacy Unit at DFA; the establishment of a Development Diplomacy Committee to provide guidance and support in the formulation of work programs by the country teams; and the implementation of the DFA Attachment Programme for officers in the DFA geographic offices in Manila to enable them to closely coordinate the efforts of foreign service posts with relevant economic departments.

The MTPDP itself has adopted as a major strategy the harnessing of development diplomacy to obtain access to external resources, to break into new external markets and expand existing ones, promote tourism and technology transfer. The focus of these diplomatic initiatives on improving external relations for agro-industrial development include, among others, strengthening the foreign service corps as diplomat-merchants through intensive training to equip them with adequate skills for economic and technological scanning and to harness Filipinos overseas in the promotion of trade, investment and technological development.

Unlike the previous Plan, the MTPDP, 1993-1998 does not have a separate chapter on science and technology. S & T policies are placed mainly in the chapter on Sustainable Agri-Industrial Development (AID). The objective is to integrate science and technology with the production sectors which has been overlooked in the previous plan.

The recent approval by the Cabinet of the Science and Technology Agenda for National Development or STAND is another significant development. For the Philippines 2000 vision to be achieved, STAND identifies specific priority commodities to be developed by the government and the private sector for the next five years. These priority

commodities were selected from products falling under the leading edge technologies of the Science and Technology Master Plan (STMP). STAND itself reaffirms the primacy of the strategies of the STMP, particularly those which focus on the modernization of production, upgrading of research and development, and provision of infrastructure to the various sectors of the country. It emphasizes on the maximum use of resources to accelerate economic growth.

The components of the STAND Agenda are:

1) *Export Winners*. These are market-specific products that are highly competitive in the world market. The criteria used in selecting these winners are influenced by the existing market, technology used and the available human resources. An initial list of export winners for 1993 include computer software, fashion accessories, marine products, fruits, gifts, toys and housewares, furniture and metals fabrication;

2) *Basic Domestic Needs*. These are products necessary to maintain a productive population and build the infrastructure for growth. These include food, housing, health and nutrition, clothing, environment, energy, transportation and communications, defense, manpower and disaster/hazard mitigation;

3) *Support Industries*. These are industries designed to serve the needs of both the export and domestic market and are crucial to the development of both. These include packaging, metals and chemicals; and

4) *Coconut Industry*. Special interest is proposed for this industry in view of the following: one-third of the population depends on the industry directly; and three million hectares of arable land are planted to coconut. Science and technology support shall be directed towards improving the productivity of coconut trees, alternate processing methods and improved/new products.

Relatedly, Executive Order 130 instituting the Balik Scientist Program under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) was signed by the President on October 23, 1993. The DOST is formulating the guidelines to the program.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Joint Commission has also launched the Return of Knowledge and Technology (RKT) program in the Philippines. About US\$30,000 has been made available for the funding of a needs study to conform with MTPDP objectives. The amount will likewise cover the cost of consultancy services of RKT expatriates from Australia and Canada, donor countries of the IOM fund.

Within the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is one of the main concerns of Philippine foreign policy, the DOST has advocated increased cooperation in science and technology through joint research and development, technology transfer and human resource development. In his keynote address during the 29th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Science and Technology (COST) held in Manila on January 26, 1994, Secretary Ricardo T. Gloria underscored that the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) would have different impacts on ASEAN member-countries as far as their technological development is concerned.



This situation, he said, calls for even closer regional economic and technical cooperation. He further stated that the differences could be minimized by reciprocal measures aimed at increasing the level of competitiveness of individual members such as increased technology transfer activities, joint research and development, intraregional investments and human resources development.

The Meeting of ASEAN Ministers for Science and Technology on February 2, 1994, resulted in a Plan of Action which will set the direction of ASEAN scientific and technological cooperation. The objectives are to work towards a high level of intra-ASEAN cooperation that is synergistic and self-sustaining and having the participation of the private sector, and to establish a network of S&T infrastructure and programs to develop the region's human resources.

To achieve these objectives, the strategies formulated by the ASEAN S&T Ministers include: supporting regional S&T programs that are economically and socially beneficial to ASEAN; providing close coordination and management of S&T activities; developing S&T human resources; information networking of centers of excellence; promoting technology transfer and promoting S&T awareness.

The latest development concerning the Science and Technology Advisory Councils (STACs) abroad is the use of electronic mail through STACNET initiated by STAC Sweden which enables members to communicate extensively with each other. STAC San Francisco prepared its database project through STACNET to generate a directory of professionals and experts who can be tapped for specific needs in the Philippines. Another project initiated by STAC San Francisco called Pilot Phase of the Philippine Rural Education Project (PREP) Via Satellite and Television was adopted for implementation by the Institute of Volunteers for the Enhancement of Science and Technology (INVEST) Foundation, Inc., a local NGO. The Operations Plan for the Pilot Phase was transmitted by INVEST to STAC San Francisco on July 29, 1993. INVEST has requested STAC to stress to funding agencies that PREP is basically anchored on the MTPDP, 1993-1998 which includes as priority activities for education, the implementation of various educational programs and projects geared towards the adoption of alternative learning delivery schemes. As designed, the PREP is envisioned to utilize primarily video instructional materials to help improve relevance, quality and equity in the education system.

In his State of the Nation Address in 1993, President Ramos stated that science and technology are pivotal in our programs on education, rural development, energy and environmental protection. In addressing these concerns, the President, in his letter to expatriates dated September 1992 called for "a partnership with the Science and Technology Advisory Councils in major cities abroad and other professional groups in all countries to hasten the rebirth of the Filipino nation."